

The University of Waikato Doctoral Catalyst Scholarship was established in 2026 to support excellence in postgraduate research and promote successful and timely completion of doctoral degrees. The intent of this scholarship is to provide financial support to outstanding doctoral researchers that are currently enrolled in the mid to late stages of a higher research degree at the University of Waikato and who have demonstrated exceptional research success, commensurate with their degree stage, throughout research outputs, research leadership and collaboration, and contributions to the wider research community.

The number available to award each year is dependent on the pool of funding available. Candidates become eligible to apply following confirmed enrolment. The tenure of the scholarship for new recipients is pro-rated based on the period of doctoral enrolment remaining up to 36 months full-time equivalent (3 years, 360 points) at the time of awarding. Current University of Waikato Doctoral Scholarship Suite holders may apply for an additional 6 months (60 points) of scholarship extension (or equivalent for part-time) through the Doctoral Catalyst scholarship.

1. Purpose

To provide financial assistance to high-achieving candidates who are enrolled in an approved doctoral qualification at the University of Waikato, and who have achieved confirmed enrolment, to promote research success and support timely completion of their degree.

2. Eligibility, Selection Criteria and Application Process

2.1. To be eligible, candidates must:

- 2.1.1. be a New Zealand Citizen, New Zealand Permanent Resident, New Zealand Resident Class Visa holder, Australian Citizen/Permanent Resident domiciled in New Zealand, or an international student.
- 2.1.2. be currently enrolled in a doctoral qualification at the University of Waikato (i.e., a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Health Science (DHSc), Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA), Doctor of Juridical Science (SJD), or Part 2 of a Doctor of Education (EdD)¹.
- 2.1.3. have achieved confirmed enrolment (usually expected within six months of starting enrolment)
- 2.1.4. normally be intending to study full-time at the University of Waikato (but see Clause 6.2 below).
- 2.1.5. not be employed by the University of Waikato. However, employment as a fixed-term sessional assistant, or similar, may be permitted, provided the hours worked do not contravene Clause 6.

2.2. Candidates will be considered ineligible if they:

- 2.2.1. already hold a doctoral qualification (or equivalent).
- 2.2.2. have not yet achieved confirmed enrolment by the closing date of the scholarship round in which they have applied. In this case, applicants may reapply for the next round, if all other eligibility criteria are met.
- 2.2.3. have already been considered once for this scholarship.

¹Candidates enrolling in a EdD may apply for the [University of Waikato Taught Postgraduate Scholarship](#) for Part 1 of the enrolment.

- 2.2.4. have exceeded the maximum enrolment durations outlined in clause 2.3 by the closing date of the scholarship round in which they have applied.

2.3. Application timing and latest eligible round

- 2.3.1 Applicants who do **not** currently hold a scholarship within the UoW Doctoral Scholarship Suite may apply to any Round that has a closing date **after** achieving confirmed enrolment and **before** reaching 30 months full-time equivalent of enrolment (300 points, 2.5 years).
- 2.3.2 Current UoW Doctoral Scholarship Suite holders may apply to any Round that has a closing date **before** reaching 36 months full-time equivalent of enrolment (360 points, 3 years) for an additional six months FTE (60 points) of scholarship.

2.4. Selection is based on:

- 2.4.1. Research Excellence, which includes consideration of:
 - 2.4.1.1 research outputs (e.g., peer-reviewed journal article; conference paper; book chapter; creative practice or other non-traditional research output; Mātauranga Māori; software or code; technical report or briefing paper; public science communication activity or content)
 - 2.4.1.2 evidence of research leadership and collaboration
 - 2.4.1.3 contributions to the wider research community
- 2.4.2. Candidates would normally be expected to have achieved a minimum **grade point average (GPA) of A-** (calculated based on the qualification used for entry to the doctoral programme) in prior study.
- 2.4.3. Candidates would be expected to have up to date progress reports indicating satisfactory progress.
- 2.4.4. Other factors taken into consideration include: availability of other funding sources, knowledge of Mātauranga Māori and Pacific Knowledges; alignment with strategic research priorities of the University/Divisions/Faculties/Schools and/or Research Institutes; and the potential for generating impact including advancement of sustainable development goals.

2.5. Applications are:

- 2.5.1. considered in four rounds each year, with selection panels convening in **early March, early June, early September, and early December**, alongside applications to the University of Waikato Doctoral Scholarship Suite. Applications **are not** considered outside these rounds.
- 2.5.2. considered only where candidates have submitted a complete application to the University of Waikato Doctoral Catalyst Scholarship, including all materials required in clause 3, by the closing date of the round in which they would like to be considered.
- 2.5.3. ranked by a sub-committee of the Faculty or Division.
 - 2.5.3.1. The University of Waikato Scholarships Executive considers the applications, and decides on the number of offers each round based on total available funding, ranking by the Faculty or Division, and selection criteria in clause 2.3.
 - 2.5.3.2. Ranking does not necessarily result in an offer, and in any one round a Faculty or Division may not have a Scholarship recipient.

- 2.5.3.3. The Scholarships Executive's decision is final; no further correspondence will be entered into following the selection meeting.

3. Application

- 3.1 The closing dates for online applications are **31 January, 30 April, 31 July, and 31 October** each year.
- 3.2 As part of the online application process, each applicant must provide information on the following:
- 3.2.1 A statement outlining how your current research project will advance knowledge or influence practice in your field and explaining why this contribution is timely and important. *[Guidance note: consider explaining the problem or knowledge gap that your research is addressing or how the creative process will provide a novel perspective on the topic]*
 - 3.2.2 A description of your key research achievements to date and explaining how you consider these to demonstrate excellence or innovation in your field.
 - 3.2.3 A statement identifying any potential risks to remaining on track with your research plan and explaining how you plan to mitigate these. Please explain how receiving this scholarship would support your ability to complete your research successfully.
 - 3.2.4 A reflection on the broader significance of your research and how it is creating impact beyond academia or may do so in the future. *[Guidance note: Research impact can be realised through benefits to society, economy, environment, health or culture. In your response, consider how your research might be used by different audiences to bring about positive change and development]*
 - 3.2.5 A statement describing how you have shown research leadership and/or developed effective collaborations, and reflecting on how you have contributed to supporting the wider research community within the university or beyond (e.g., service, mentoring).
 - 3.2.6 A statement describing how your research, or your research approach, gives effect to the principles and values of Te Tiriti o Waitangi The Treaty of Waitangi.
- 3.3 Applicants will need to upload a research plan with their application, showing the timeline to completion by the projected scholarship end date.
- 3.4 Applicants will also need to request submission of up to two references, and provide contact details for the referee(s) within the application, including
- 3.4.1 **one** academic reference from your Chief Supervisor at the University of Waikato (mandatory)
 - 3.4.2 one professional reference (optional) from a member of staff at an external organisation collaborating either formally or informally in your doctoral research.
 - 3.4.3 Referees are contacted to provide a reference following the closing date of the scholarship.

4. Awarding and ongoing eligibility:

4.1. Successful recipients:

- 4.1.1. will be advised of the Scholarship outcome up to 8 weeks after the closing date of the round in which they have applied.
- 4.1.2. must accept the offer of a Scholarship within 28 days of the offer being made, or the offer will lapse.
- 4.1.3. the tenure of the scholarship will commence from the 1st of the month following the awarding decision being made.
- 4.1.4. for recipients who are current University of Waikato Doctoral Scholarship Suite holders, the Doctoral Catalyst will commence from the 1st of the month immediately following the end date of the existing Doctoral Scholarship Suite stipend, or the awarding decision, whichever is later.

4.2. In accepting the Scholarship, the recipient will:

- 4.2.1. be deemed to have read, understood, and accepted these regulations, as well as the associated terms and conditions of the Scholarship, and the [Scholarships Policy](#).
- 4.2.2. agree to participate in any publicity concerning the Scholarship arranged by the University of Waikato.
- 4.3. A Scholarship may only be taken up by a candidate who has formally completed the entry qualifications for, and enrolled in, a doctoral qualification.
- 4.4. The accepted Scholarship will remain valid as long as the associated enrolment in the doctoral qualification is also valid.
- 4.5. If a recipient's circumstances change in a manner which may affect their continued eligibility for this Scholarship, including becoming employed by the University, they must inform their Supervisor and the Scholarships Executive (via scholarships@waikato.ac.nz) immediately. Any change of circumstances will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

5. Value and Tenure

5.1. The value of the **standard** Scholarship is:

- 5.1.1. A living allowance of **\$33,000** in total every 12 months, payable in monthly instalments for up to 30 months (see clause 5.4).
- 5.1.2. The living allowance is paid on a pro-rata basis for approved part-time students.
- 5.1.3. The **domestic** tuition fees for enrolment in the doctoral qualification during the tenure of the Scholarship; and
- 5.1.4. The Student Services Fee.

5.2. Where an applicant has requested, or the Scholarships Executive has deemed it appropriate, a **fees-only** Scholarship may be offered. The value of a fees-only Scholarship shall normally be:

- 5.2.1. the domestic tuition fees for enrolment in the doctoral qualification during the tenure of the Scholarship; and
- 5.2.2. the Student Services Fee.

5.3. Any additional costs such as medical insurance, moving costs, and research expenses must be met by other means.

5.4. The total **tenure** of the Scholarship:

- 5.4.1. will not exceed **30 months of full-time doctoral enrolment** (or equivalent for part-time study) for new recipients. The tenure of the Doctoral Catalyst scholarship will be from the 1st of the month following the award decision until the candidate reaches 36 months of full-time doctoral enrolment (i.e. 360 points, 3 years).
- 5.4.2. Current University of Waikato Doctoral Scholarship Suite holders may apply prior to the end of their scholarship tenure (see clause 2.2) **for a further 6 months of scholarship** (or equivalent for part-time study). In this case, the tenure of the Doctoral Catalyst scholarship will not exceed 6 months of full-time enrolment (i.e. 60 points).
- 5.4.3. For candidates enrolling in a EdD programme, they may apply to the UoW Doctoral Catalyst Scholarship for their Part 2 EdD enrolment, subject to clause 5.4.1 above.
- 5.5. If a recipient's [doctoral enrolment](#) ends during the Scholarship term, due to the recipient submitting their thesis for examination, or for any other reason², the Scholarship will end from the same date as the end of the recipient's doctoral enrolment.

6. Part-time Study, Employment, Suspension, and Holidays

- 6.1. The University of Waikato is committed to ensuring the wellbeing of its students. Thus, **full-time scholarship recipients:**
 - 6.1.1. Are expected to undertake their doctoral studies full-time (i.e., 37.5 hours per week) and may take up to four weeks holiday each year (not including University and Public Holidays) without applying for suspension of their scholarship.
 - 6.1.2. Are not permitted to undertake paid employment that exceeds an annual total of 500 hours (i.e., not work more than 6 days per week when combining doctoral studies and paid employment). Permission to exceed an annual total of 500 hours paid employment must be sought from the Scholarships Executive (via the [Scholarship Variation Request form](#)) and will only be approved in exceptional circumstances (e.g., where the work is part of the data collection).
- 6.2. **Part-time scholarship recipients:**
 - 6.2.1. Recipients who have socially compelling reasons for enrolling in part-time study (e.g., illness, disability, parent or carer responsibilities) may apply to the Scholarships Executive for permission to retain the scholarship part-time. The recipient should submit a [Scholarship Variation Request](#) outlining the reasons for the request and providing appropriate evidence of the need to study part-time. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - 6.2.2. During any period of part-time enrolment, the value, tenure, employment allowances and duration of a recipient's Scholarship will be adjusted on a pro rata basis.
 - 6.2.3. Recipients will not be granted permission to hold this Scholarship on a part-time basis to undertake full-time paid employment or where combined days worked on doctoral studies and in employment exceed 6 days a week, or where annual holidays are forfeited.
 - 6.2.4. Recipients are required to transfer to full-time enrolment if a change in their circumstances means they no longer qualify to hold the Scholarship part-time.

² For example, completion, withdrawal, or termination of enrolment.

6.3. Suspension of studies

- 6.3.1. Scholarships may only be paid to enrolled students. This means that doctoral recipients on suspension are not eligible to receive any Scholarship funds for any reason. This includes suspension related to parental, medical or compassionate leave. In the cases of overpayment, the School of Graduate Research will work with the recipient to recoup the funds.

7. Co-tenure

- 7.1. The recipient may hold other awards that provide funds for research and/or conference purposes. However, recipients:

- 7.1.1. may hold lower-value awards which also allow co-tenure, provided the combined value of all other awards does not exceed fifty percent of the living allowance of this Scholarship in any one year.
- 7.1.2. must seek permission to retain both scholarships where one or multiple award(s) with a combined value higher than fifty percent of the full value of the living allowance of this Scholarship (which also allows co-tenure) have been attained. The recipient must apply to the Scholarships Executive (via [Scholarship Variation Request form](#)), providing adequate details.
- 7.1.3. must relinquish their University of Waikato funded Scholarship if also offered a scholarship by a government sponsoring body, or a partner of the University (e.g., [China Scholarship Council \(CSC\) Scholarship](#)). In some cases, recipients may apply to the Scholarships Executive for permission to hold both scholarships concurrently via the [Scholarship Variation Request form](#).

- 7.2. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

8. Other Conditions

- 8.1. If a recipient is in receipt of a student allowance, another scholarship, or any type of financial assistance, it is their responsibility to check their entitlement to other income and any tax implications.
- 8.2. The Scholarships Executive may terminate this Scholarship at any time, and recoup any funds disbursed, if the recipient:
 - 8.2.1. has their enrolment terminated for any reason (e.g. see clause 23 of the [Higher Research Degree Regulations](#));
 - 8.2.2. is not following the approved programme of study; or,
 - 8.2.3. brings the University into disrepute³, or otherwise does not comply with the regulations governing the Scholarship.
- 8.3. The Scholarship recipient will have the right to appeal against any decision to terminate a Scholarship by writing to scholarships@waikato.ac.nz, who will forward the appeal to the Research Committee.
- 8.4. The University of Waikato may, from time to time, vary these regulations.

³ See the [Student Code of Conduct](#).