

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE RUTHERFORD DISCOVERY FELLOWSHIPS

Background

The Rutherford Discovery Fellowships are administered by the Royal Society of New Zealand (the Royal Society) for the New Zealand Government.

The Fellowships will develop and foster the future leaders in the New Zealand research, science and technology system. They will attract and retain New Zealand's most talented early- to mid-career researchers and encourage their career development by enabling them to establish a track record for future research leadership.

Receipt of a Rutherford Discovery Fellowship is expected to have significant value in the future career of a researcher.

Objective

The objective of the Rutherford Discovery Fellowships is to support excellent early- to mid-career researchers to gain the independence necessary to accelerate the development of their potential into researchers with a track record sufficient to compete with the best researchers in New Zealand and the world for mainstream research funds.

Description

Ten prestigious Fellowships of five years in length will be awarded on a competitive basis annually, for research based in a New Zealand host institution. The Royal Society will have responsibility for administering the Fellowships.

The scheme will be set up in a way that will promote multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary links across the science sector.

Eligibility

Fellowships are open to early- to mid-career researchers with the potential to become leaders in the New Zealand research, science and technology system. For the purpose of this scheme:

- Early- to mid-career researchers are researchers who have been conferred with their doctoral degree between three and ten years prior to the closing date for applications to the Fellowship.
- Applicants must be either:
 - New Zealand citizens; or,
 - New Zealand permanent residents who have continuously resided in New Zealand for at least three months prior to their application.
- Applicants must have engaged in an active research career up to the time of their application, e.g., as a post-doctoral researcher.
- The Fellowship is open to applicants from the disciplines of research, science and technology.
- Fellowship application must be associated with an eligible host institution.
- Eligible host institutions are:
 - New Zealand-based research institutions (including, but not limited to, Crown Research Institutes, universities, polytechnics, companies and private sector laboratories in New Zealand);
 - Able to demonstrate that they can provide the appropriate intellectual support and facilities to enable the applicant to succeed in their Fellowship for the full five years of the Fellowship's term.

Rules

- If the applicant is not already a full time employee of the host institution, the host must agree to employ the applicant under a permanent employment agreement if they are awarded the Fellowship.
- An applicant may make only one application for a Fellowship in any one application round.
- Where an applicant has previously submitted an unsuccessful application, they should discuss their subsequent application with the Fellowship Coordinator before reapplying.
- Successful applicants must commence their programme of research within a year of the award notification.
- Past Discovery Fellows may not apply for a subsequent Fellowship.

Criteria

The selection of Fellows is based on three criteria:

- Calibre of the applicant as a researcher.
- Assessment of the proposed research programme.
- Calibre of the applicant as a research leader.

Scheme Operation

The scheme will include two tiers of Fellowships: Tier 1 is aimed at excellent early- to mid-career researchers with the promise of future leadership potential; and, Tier 2 is aimed at early- to mid-career researchers who are able to demonstrate existing leadership in the New Zealand research community in addition to the Tier 1 criteria. Assignment of applicants to each tier is at the discretion of the Royal Society, with the selection of applications within tiers based on:

Tier 1: 80% on the calibre of the applicant as a researcher and their potential as a research leader, and 20% on the assessment of the proposed research programme.

Tier 2: 40% on the calibre of the applicant as a researcher, 30% on their capability as a research leader in the New Zealand or international research community, and 30% on the assessment of the proposed research programme.

From time to time, the Royal Society may adjust the weighting of the selection criteria to increase the Fellowship's effectiveness in achieving its objective.

The Tier 1 award will provide a contribution of \$70,000 per year towards the researcher's salary. In addition, Fellowships are accompanied by an annual award of \$60,000 in research related expenses, and \$30,000 per year for the host organisations to support the Fellow's research programme.

The Tier 2 award will provide a contribution of \$90,000 per year towards the researcher's salary. In addition, Fellowships are accompanied by an annual award of \$80,000 in research related expenses, and \$30,000 per year for the host organisations to support the Fellow's research programme.

At least 85% of the Fellow's time must be dedicated to the research objectives identified in the proposal. The remainder of their time may be used for other research, teaching and non-research related development opportunities.

Both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Fellows are permitted to continue to be involved with existing projects but should use released funds to buy out their time, i.e. to fund others to assist with the projects. Details of the variations are to be advised to the Royal Society in all cases.

Prospective and existing Fellows can submit other research proposals to the Royal Society or other funding agencies. Where making these proposals involve a time commitment of greater than, or equal to, 0.1 FTE by the Fellow, the Royal Society must be notified.

In the third and fourth year of their Fellowship, a Tier 1 Fellow may indicate in their annual report that they wish to be reconsidered for Tier 2. Movement of Fellows between Tiers is anticipated to be through exceptional circumstances. Movement between tiers will be at the discretion of the

Royal Society, after considering the advice of the selection panel for the next coming round of applications.

As a condition of the Fellowship, Fellows will participate in an annual workshop organised by the Royal Society.

At the end of the Fellowship period Fellows will, if requested by the Royal Society, present the findings and demonstrate the impact of their research at an appropriate forum identified by the Royal Society.

Reporting, monitoring and evaluation

The Royal Society will report to MoRST on the Rutherford Discovery Fellowships in accordance with the Funding Agreement. The reporting will include:

- information on the applications, monitoring of the Fellows and administration of the scheme;
- any suggested changes to the scheme that might improve it obtaining its objective;
- ongoing monitoring of Fellows after completion of their Fellowship.

An evaluation framework will also be developed by the Royal Society in consultation with MoRST. The Royal Society will provide evidence to MoRST that the Fellowship Programme:

- is helping New Zealand retain its best early- to mid-career researchers;
- is helping the researchers accelerate their personal development and the establishment of a competitive track record;
- provides advancement of knowledge;
- supports early- to mid-career researchers recognised for sustained excellence within their respective disciplines;
- enhances the international reputations of New Zealand researchers;
- is supporting increased research productivity; and,
- has attracted national recognition and prestige for the recipients of the awards.

Role of the Royal Society of New Zealand—Rutherford Foundation

Advice as to how the funding shall be allocated will be sought from the Royal Society of New Zealand—Rutherford Foundation. The advice of the Rutherford Foundation on funding decisions shall normally be accepted by the Royal Society. The Rutherford Foundation must ensure its recommendations appropriately take into account, and do not exceed, the funding the Royal Society has received for the Rutherford Discovery Fellowship from the Minister plus any interest on that funding.

In the event that advice on any funding allocation is not accepted by the Royal Society, the Royal Society shall immediately notify the Minister, in writing, that a disagreement has occurred and the reasons for non-acceptance of the advice. The Royal Society on behalf of the Minister shall then commission a review panel to review the Rutherford Foundation's advice. Panel representatives shall include Ministerial, Royal Society and Rutherford Trustees' nominee(s). The Royal Society shall seek the Minister's approval of the final review panel and its terms of reference. The Minister shall have the final decision as to its acceptance or not of the review panel's decision to accept or reject the recommendation of the Rutherford Foundation. The results of the review shall be made known to all parties.