

James Cook Fellowships Terms of Reference

Preamble

A small number of prestigious Fellowships are to be awarded annually to researchers who are recognised leaders in their respective fields. Established in 1995/96, the scheme subsumes two pre-existing individual fellowships. These were the Hodge Fellowship (awarded for research in the social sciences), and the James Cook Fellowship (for science in New Zealand and the Pacific). The Royal Society of New Zealand will have regard for continuity of the spirit of these fellowships in administering the suite of fellowships.

The fellowships represent one way in which the Government seeks to meet its goals for research, science and technology by supporting the development of people with knowledge, skills and ideas. This contributes to the Knowledge Goal.

Objective

The primary objective of the scheme is to support researchers with knowledge, skills and ideas and to recognise research professionals of excellence.

Mechanism

Funding support will be provided to researchers who are recognised for their sustained excellence, to undertake study or research in their field of scientific eminence. This study or research may be undertaken in a location and institution of their own choosing whether in New Zealand or overseas. The normal term of the fellowship will be two years extendable to three years depending on the outcome of a review after the initial two-year period.

The award shall normally provide a stipend at the rate equivalent to an Associate Professor in a New Zealand university (but this may be varied at the discretion of the Society on a case-by-case basis), expenses specifically associated with taking up the Fellowship and possibly a contribution to research costs.

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Royal Society Te Apārangī, 11 Turnbull Street, Thorndon, PO Box 598, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
Phone: +64 4 472 7421, Fax: +64 4 473 1841, www.royalsociety.org.nz

Fellows will be required to present their work, and its relevance to society, to the New Zealand public (in plain language) at some time during their tenure.

Targeting of Support and Criteria

At least five fellowships should be in operation at any one time, one of which shall be exclusively in the social sciences, as a continuation of the intentions of the previous Hodge Fellowship. The other fellowships shall not have any restrictions as to the field of research.

Fellows will be:

- researchers recognised for their sustained excellence in research; and
- normally resident in New Zealand or of New Zealand nationality.

The award is intended to be prestigious and this should be recognised in assessing candidates.

Administration

The Fellowship Scheme will be administered by the Royal Society of New Zealand. Selection procedures shall be at the discretion of the Society but must involve a strong element of peer assessment.

Reporting

The Society will provide evidence that the Fellowship Programme:

- provides advancement of scientific and technological knowledge;
- supports researchers recognised for sustained excellence within their respective disciplines;
- enhances the international reputations of New Zealand researchers; and
- generates national media coverage.

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