

Motu Āheitanga Thesis Scholarship

for students of Māori descent doing an Honours, Masters or PhD Thesis

Information Sheet

Background of award

Every year, the Motu Research and Education Foundation offers a one-year \$5,000 scholarship to up to two promising university students of Māori descent who are working on (or are planning to work on) an Honours, Masters or PhD thesis.

The thesis must be in econometrics, applied economics, data analysis, statistics, finance, policy evaluation, or other quantitative social science areas — and the student must be using a quantitative methodology.

Purposes of award

- To enhance Māori research capacity and support sound public policy by helping students of Māori descent to do research relevant to public policy development.
- To provide students with academic support from top researchers.
- To build networks with promising researchers.
- To build meaningful, long-term links between researchers and iwi.
- To make Aotearoa New Zealand a more attractive location for top researchers, including expatriate New Zealanders, to work.

Selection criteria

The scholarship is open to university graduates of Māori descent who are or will do a graduate thesis at a university in Aotearoa. We will also consider programmes at overseas universities. We will give preference based on academic performance, topic relevance (to Motu Research's current research programmes, see www.motu.org.nz) and the programme of study. We also look for people with a strong interest in a research career and/or contributing to sound public policy.

The thesis must be in econometrics, applied economics, data analysis, statistics, finance, policy evaluation, or other quantitative social science areas — and the student must be using a quantitative methodology.

Value

\$5,000 is paid in total, each for up to two candidates. It is paid quarterly in advance (or as decided by Motu Research).

Decision makers

Motu Research's Executive Director, Board members and Senior Fellows make the final decision. The choice to award the scholarship each year is at the discretion of the decision-makers.

How to apply

Please complete the application form and referee report ([see our website](#)), and email or mail it to Motu Research with the following documents:

- Cover letter
- Curriculum vitae
- Academic transcript.

Please send your information to:

Emma Williams
Motu Economic and Public Policy Research Trust
PO Box 24390
Wellington 6142
E-mail: emma.williams@motu.org.nz

Closing date for applications: 5pm, 12 October 2026

How and when do students learn of the decision?

Applicants will learn of the outcome of their application by late October 2025 (or at a time discussed with Motu Research).

Conditions attached to acceptance of the scholarship

These conditions are mostly for the benefit of the scholarship recipient.

We require the scholarship recipient to devote themselves full-time to their programme of study/research during the tenure of the scholarship.

Before the start of the academic year, we expect the recipient to visit Motu Research's office in Wellington to discuss their proposed research (or attend a meeting by video call). They may be asked to give an informal seminar on some of their work or the proposed topic.

If the student is studying in Aotearoa, before the submission of their thesis, we expect the recipient to attend a session at Motu Research's office to discuss their findings – either via video call or in person.

If the student is studying overseas, we will make alternative arrangements for checking in and feedback. This would likely involve a teleconference before the thesis is finalised, to ensure a chance for final academic assistance and comment from Motu's senior fellows. In this case, Motu Research also requires that on return to Aotearoa, the recipient gives a presentation at Motu Research to discuss the thesis findings.

During the tenure of the scholarship, we expect the recipient to stay in regular contact with a nominated Motu Research senior researcher and/or support staff.

Motu Research will cover travel and any meal and accommodation costs associated with the above meetings.