

Q&A FOR RUTHERFORD DISCOVERY FELLOWSHIPS

Q. What areas of research will be supported by the Rutherford Discovery Fellowships?

A. The Fellowships will be awarded on the basis of excellence, across all areas of research – including the humanities and social sciences.

Q. How much will the Rutherford Discovery Fellowships be worth?

A. The Fellowships will be worth up to \$200,000, though there will be two tiers. Details on the individual value of the Fellowships at each tier will be confirmed shortly. They will include both salary and research costs. They will be prestigious and substantial, and comparable with overseas schemes.

Q. What are the criteria a scientist needs to meet for the Rutherford Discovery Fellowships?

A. Details on the process for applying for the Fellowships will be confirmed shortly.

Q. How much funding will be available for Rutherford Discovery Fellowships?

A. When the scheme is fully operational in 2015/16 more than \$9 million a year will fund about 50 fellows at any one time. In the first four years government will invest more than \$24 million.

Q. How will the Rutherford Discovery Fellowship be funded?

A. The new Fellowships will be funded through a mixture of new funding, and reprioritised funding from the closure of the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology's Postdoctoral Fellowships.

Q. Why is the new scheme called the Rutherford Discovery Fellowships?

A. The name was chosen to link to the suite of prestigious programmes under the Royal Society of New Zealand's Rutherford Foundation.

'Discovery' links to the function of these early-career fellowships. They are designed to allow the researcher to follow an area of enquiry that excites them, and stimulates them to establish their career in New Zealand.

Q. When will the Foundation's Postdoctoral Fellowships close?

A. The Foundation's Postdoctoral Fellowships will close at the completion of the current round of Fellowships to be announced in June. People already holding Foundation

Postdoctoral Fellowships, including those to be awarded in June from the final round that closed on 7 April 2010, will continue to be funded in accordance with their contract.

Q. Why has the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology's Postdoctoral Fellowships scheme been closed?

A. The funding is being re-prioritised to an area of greater need. The most limiting stage for a scientist establishing their career in New Zealand is in their early career, from between three to ten years after they have earned their doctorate.

Q. What is the evidence that the most limiting stage for a scientist establishing their career in New Zealand is in their early career, from between three to ten years after they have earned their doctorate?

A. Consultation in developing the Advanced Skills Action Plan, published in 2008, highlighted the importance of supporting talented individuals. The option to 'refocus and expand investment in RS&T scholarships and fellowships' was the most consistently supported option among the submissions received.

Feedback was that the gap in support for early career researchers immediately after undertaking post-doctoral training has meant it is increasingly difficult to get to the stage of establishing an independent research career. It is difficult for good "unproven" researchers to establish a reputation, particularly the case in areas where there is significant 'overbidding' for the total funds available.

The Rutherford Discovery Fellowships will allow excellent new researchers to prove themselves.

Q. What other funding opportunities are available for scientists immediately after they gain their doctorate?

A. The Foundation for Research, Science and Technology alone funds research projects in which more than 250 FTE postdoctoral scientists are employed. The Health Research Council also funds projects that employ postdoctoral researchers. Grants and positions are also available through universities, Crown research institutes, other research organisations, firms and organisations such as the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Further questions on the operation of the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology's Postdoctoral Fellowships should be directed to the Foundation.

Q&A FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL SCIENCE TALENT

Q. How will top entrepreneurial science talent be attracted to New Zealand?

A. This scheme is in the early stages of development. More information will be available prior to the scheme's launch in 2011.