

# JOHN ALLWRIGHT FELLOWSHIPS FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

## GUIDELINES

2012

### **Background**

The ACIAR Fellowships Scheme was introduced in 1986 to provide the opportunity for partner country scientists involved in ACIAR-supported collaborative research projects to obtain postgraduate qualifications at Australian tertiary institutions. ACIAR students are managed by ACIAR and co-funded by ACIAR and AusAID. AusAID assists ACIAR in providing some administrative services in particular partner countries.

The primary aim of the Scheme is to enhance research capacity in ACIAR's partner country institutions. Whilst individual awardees will benefit from the Scheme, it is important to emphasise that partner country institutions are the key targets.

ACIAR's research priorities are determined through regular consultation with partner countries. Alignment of postgraduate training with research will ensure that the training needs of partner countries are met. Thus, postgraduate studies undertaken by each awardee are usually based on the research work being carried out under the collaborative research project in which the awardee is engaged prior to taking up the award.

However, it is important that the student's research project forms a discrete topic related to, but not part of, the existing ACIAR project. The study program should be designed to provide the awardee with the opportunity of continuing active involvement in the project work throughout his or her studies, and sufficient knowledge to continue the research effort on final return to their home country.

ACIAR will also support a limited number of course work postgraduate degrees in situations where the partner institute requires development of a broader skill set rather than in depth research training.

Project Leaders are requested to ensure that a project will not be jeopardised should their applicant receive an award, as the ACIAR project **must** be able to function in the absence of a successful awardee. More than one person may be nominated from a project but the Project Leader must be able to demonstrate that the project can function in the absence of more than one awardee.

An ACIAR Fellowship award usually covers the cost of return airfares, a contribution to living expenses, initial settling in allowance, the fees charged by the tertiary institutions (including an orientation program) and miscellaneous course related costs. In selected cases, ACIAR will consider postgraduate research programs that include some fieldwork in the applicant's home country, where in the opinion of both the Australian and overseas project leaders, it is essential for the project. A maximum of two field visits for a Masters and three for a PhD are usually permitted and it is essential that the component of time spent in Australia is more than 50% (this should not just consist of thesis writing). ACIAR will pay the return international travel for fieldwork in home countries. ACIAR will not support fieldwork in a third country.

Project Leaders wishing to nominate partner country project staff for a Fellowship should contact the relevant ACIAR Research Program Manager to discuss the eligibility of the candidate, possible study programs and the impact of a successful fellowship award on the project.

The following pages detail the various steps that are involved in the application and selection processes and the respective responsibilities of ACIAR, AusAID, and the overseas posts in the fellowships process.

## Eligibility criteria

### *Country of residence*

Although applications are welcome from participants in both bilateral and multilateral (IARC) projects, applicants must be working in the following ACIAR bilateral partner priority countries. Currently these are:

- Papua-New Guinea and in the Pacific - Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati
- in SE Asia - East Timor, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Philippines
- in S Asia - India, Bangladesh, Pakistan
- in N Asia - Western China
- the Republic of South Africa and other African partner countries with ACIAR projects

Applicants must be citizens of the country in which they are working.

### *Other eligibility criteria*

To be eligible for selection under the ACIAR Fellowship Scheme, a candidate **must**:

- at the time of applying, hold qualifications that would be assessed to be equivalent to at least an Australian bachelor's degree in a discipline that is relevant to the proposed area of postgraduate study;
- be a scientist or economist from the developing country partner, who is actively involved in a collaborative research project supported by ACIAR at the time of application (in some cases, ACIAR will consider supporting researchers from "advanced pipeline" projects, i.e. in cases where a full project proposal has been approved by ACIAR);
- be jointly supported in the application by the Australian and partner country project leaders;
- obtain approval from both the employing institution and home government training authority who must agree to the absence of the candidate should he/she receive a fellowship for the period involved in obtaining the postgraduate qualification; and
- demonstrate that he/she is employed on a permanent or long-term basis, rather than short-term contract basis.

Criteria for selection reflect the aim of the fellowship scheme to enhance the research capacity of ACIAR's partner country institutions. Thus, **strong preference** will be given to a candidate who:

- can demonstrate that the studies he/she proposes to undertake under the award will be relevant in the short term to the general thrust of the research supported by ACIAR and in the longer term, will significantly benefit the candidate's employing institution in the partner country;
- can demonstrate through the Australian project leader that placement at an appropriate tertiary institution can be assured subject to the candidate being awarded a fellowship;
- can demonstrate that the Australian project leader together with other co-supervisors, if appropriate will be responsible for monitoring the awardee's academic progression for the duration of his or her study in Australia; and
- can demonstrate that he/she has a sufficiently high level of English to be accepted into an Australian tertiary institution (English language testing can be arranged through the Country Manager). If the results of English testing suggest that **limited** additional training is required in order to be accepted into an Australian tertiary institution (e.g. the applicant has a least an IELTS score of 5.0 for each of speaking, listening, reading and writing), ACIAR may provide support for limited English training in the home country of the Fellowship applicant. ACIAR will support at most six month's English training, and it is expected that any formal training supported by ACIAR will be complemented by the applicant's private study. In rare circumstances, where in the opinion of ACIAR that suitable English training in the home country is unavailable, ACIAR may support limited full-time English training within Australia.
- is under 40 years of age at the time of application.
- has not previously undertaken tertiary education in a developed country;

Within the fellowship scheme, ACIAR strives to meet the Australian government policy on gender equity, and reflect ACIAR's training policies and strategies.

### **Application procedure**

Candidates must submit their applications by **31 July** of the year prior to the study taking place. ACIAR program areas are responsible for advising project staff of the forthcoming selection process. This will usually be done via email to project leaders in May/June of the year preceding the commencement of the projected study.

It is important that project leaders check the eligibility of proposed candidates before application, including the selection criteria used by the Training Committee in the competitive process. Any queries may be directed to the appropriate Research Program Manager or the Project Officer, Education and Training Programs, ACIAR.

Australian and partner country project leaders should **jointly** identify candidates and forward to ACIAR an application using the current John Allwright Fellowship Application Form (2011) endorsed by the employing organisation and government of the collaborating country.

Australian project leaders should be aware that, under the eligibility criteria for the Fellowships Scheme, **they (or a suitable alternative approved by ACIAR) will be responsible for monitoring the awardee's academic progress for the duration of his/her study in Australia.** It would be advisable therefore to obtain from prospective candidates a copy of their academic transcripts as soon as possible to determine whether or not the candidate's academic background is sufficient for entry into postgraduate studies at that tertiary institution.

An offer of an award is only valid for the Australian academic year following the calendar year in which the offer is made.

The John Allwright Fellowship application procedure was arrived at in consultation with the training coordination authorities in partner countries; it complies with the requirement of partner country governments that formal nominations originate with their own training coordination authorities and are applied, with minor variations, in all partner countries.

### ***Applications***

- > One electronic copy and one hard copy of the application form and all attached documentation **must** be submitted to:

Mrs Sharon Harvey  
 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research  
 GPO Box 1571  
 Canberra ACT 2601 Australia

ACIAR House, 38 Thynne Street  
 Fern Hill Park, Bruce ACT 2617

harvey@aciarc.gov.au  
 Fax +61 2 6217 0501

- > One hard copy should also be sent to the ACIAR Office in the candidate's home country if applying from the following countries: Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Philippines, India, Western China

### ***Referee Reports***

Referee Reports from both Project Leaders should be forwarded **separately** to the Project Officer at ACIAR). The **report should address the following points:**

The report should address the following points:

1. Describe the role of the applicant in the ACIAR project. When did the applicant start working on the project and what percentage of their time is spent on the project?
2. Provide an explanation of the object of the training course being requested, together with an indication of how the skills of the applicant will be used and be of advantage to the future needs of the partner country. In most cases the student's research project will form a discrete topic related to, but not part of, the existing ACIAR project.
3. Provide a clear evaluation of the ability of the applicant to undertake postgraduate research/studies in Australia. How does his/her research/academic skills and potential compare with other scientists of the same age in his/her discipline? For example, would they be in the top 5, 10, 20 or 50%?
4. Has the applicant done any research before? If so, comment on his/her performance.
5. Provide an overall impression of the candidate and their ability to enhance the research capacity of the partner country institution on their return from studies.

### ***Submission and selection***

ACIAR's Research Program Managers will be required to submit a confidential appraisal of each of the applicants from their program areas to the ACIAR Training Committee. Where a Project Leader has endorsed more than one candidate from his/her project, he/she will also be required to comment on and rank those candidates.

The ACIAR Training Committee will undertake selection as soon as possible after the final date for receipt of endorsed application forms. All candidates (both successful and unsuccessful), their project leaders, ACIAR Research Program Managers and the post will be advised of the outcome of the selection process as soon as possible after the Training Committee has met, usually within 8 weeks.

### ***English testing and training (if applicable)***

The post will arrange (where necessary), English testing of the candidates to assess the pre-course English tuition required before formal academic study in Australia can be undertaken. Only the applications of these candidates assessed as requiring six months or less pre-course English tuition will normally be processed further. In most cases, obtaining English language tuition is the responsibility of the applicant. Candidates must achieve an appropriate level of English prior to departure for Australia (for most institutions, this is usually an IELTS result of 6.5). Unless there are exceptional circumstances, ACIAR does not permit English tuition to be undertaken in Australia, although it covers agreed costs of pre-departure English tuition. Queries regarding exceptions to this should be directed to the ACIAR Project Officer, Education and Training Programs.

### ***Medical examination***

For visa purposes, candidates are required to undergo a medical examination. A list of accredited doctors and hospitals, including those nominated by the host government is available at the post.

### **Placement process for study in Australia**

1. Once the Country Manager has received advice regarding the outcome of the selection round, the Country Manager may informally notify the successful candidates.
2. Most Australian universities are contracted by AusAID to provide education services for AusAID and ACIAR students, and all new students will travel to Australia on an **AusAID Student Visa (subclass 576)**.

3. ACIAR postgraduate students are encouraged to travel alone to Australia in the first instance to settle into their studies, familiarise themselves to life in Australia and to allow them sufficient time to organise appropriate accommodation for their families and enrolment of any school aged children. ACIAR has similar conditions to the ADS scholarships – **the student is responsible for all costs associated with bringing their family to Australia** (medical, police checks, air tickets) and arranging the visas with DIAC. Children on AusAID student dependent visas are permitted to attend Australian government schools and this is usually free of charge.
4. ACIAR Canberra will forward the original application and academic transcripts to the tertiary institutions, along with a covering letter identifying the successful candidate as an ACIAR Fellowship awardee.
5. The tertiary institution will send the placement offer to ACIAR Canberra, who will generate ACIAR award offers (in contract form) in duplicate. The award offer includes level of study, institution at which study is to be undertaken, number of months of study granted under the award, proposed date of travel to Australia and responsibilities of the awardee. The awardee and their employer are required to sign both copies, retain one copy and return the other to the post within 30 days. The Post will then forward the document to ACIAR Canberra.
6. Only after the ACIAR award offer has been signed and returned to Canberra will the Country Manager or AusAID officer at the Embassy/High Commission in countries where there is no Country Manager, make all arrangements (including visa arrangements) for the awardee to travel to Australia. The Country Manager must ensure that the awardee's employer is aware of the award details, including date and time of departure and duration of absence.
7. The Country Manager must inform ACIAR Canberra of the arrival date and time of the awardee in Australia. ACIAR Canberra will ensure that the tertiary institution is aware of the arrival details, and a representative of the tertiary institution will meet the awardee at the airport and take them to temporary accommodation. ACIAR students may attend the AusAID pre-departure briefing if they wish.

### Costs covered by the award

- Airfare (from the airport closest to their home city/town to the town/city closest to the Institution where they will be studying in Australia) at commencement;
- Airfare (Australia to home country) at completion; an economy class fare via the most direct route is to be purchased
- Fortnightly living allowance (*Note that the award may be reduced at ACIAR's discretion to local rates for long-term fieldwork in the home country*);
- New students are under the same stipend conditions as AusAID students. Payment of the stipend and Overseas Health cover for these students will be at the unaccompanied rate.
- Establishment allowance;
- Tertiary fees; and
- Basic medical and hospital care in Australia through the Overseas Student Health Cover, (OSHC).
- Return airfares to the home country for approved fieldwork. Up to two return airfares for a Masters student and up to three for a PhD student are permitted for fieldwork in the home country on the advice of the university supervisor and ACIAR. If fieldwork travel is considered necessary it should be included in the study program submitted with the application for a fellowship. As more than one field trip to the home country is available it should be noted that ACIAR students are **not** eligible for ADS Reunion airfares.

### Changes to level of studies and award extension requests

An awardee being accepted for studies at Masters degree level will not normally be allowed to upgrade to PhD level once he/she is in Australia unless the application papers were originally endorsed to the effect that the student would be allowed to progress to PhD if the progress at Masters level was suitable for this. Course upgrades would only be permitted in most exceptional circumstances and must have the approval of the ACIAR Executive. If approval for an upgrade is sought, this must be accompanied by a request for an extension of the award. ACIAR expects that students will be able to complete their studies/research project in full within the original scholarship period. Extensions will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and must have the approval of the ACIAR Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

**Before any action is taken to alter the situation of an ACIAR Fellowship awardee, project leaders responsible for the academic supervision of the awardee must seek ACIAR's approval.** In addition, approval for any extensions (or upgrade if this is being sought), must be obtained from the awardee's home government training co-ordination authority (consistent with the agency authorisation in the original Fellowship application). The endorsement of both project leaders and the awardee's supervisor is also required. It is usually the responsibility of the applicant and supervisor to obtain these approvals.

The Student Contact Officer appointed by the university, must seek approval from ACIAR for any extension. Visa amendments that may be necessary as a result will be arranged through consultation with ACIAR and the Student Contact Officer. ACIAR must formalise the extension by obtaining the signature of the awardee and a witness, on a letter of variation to the award contract.

### **Reception, accommodation and induction**

The relevant tertiary institution is responsible for arranging airport reception and initial accommodation for students for the first seven days they are in Australia. The student is responsible for the entire cost of initial accommodation. The university will provide advice about availability and costs of residential colleges, international houses or hostels, but students are responsible for finding their own long term accommodation and meeting all associated costs. Students are provided with a once-only Establishment Allowance upon arrival in Australia. The establishment allowance is a contribution toward expenses such as rental bonds, text books, study materials, additional medical insurance, home contents insurance and excess baggage upon return home etc. The Allowance is paid in a lump sum to give students the flexibility to use it at their discretion.

The tertiary institution will provide an Introductory Academic Program which covers course orientation and commencement assistance and is intended to assist students to prepare themselves for study in Australia.

### **Allocation of responsibilities for the ACIAR fellowships scheme**

#### **ACIAR**

- Annual allocation of budget
- Calling for applications, provision of application form and guidelines
- Selection of awardees
- Final approval of universities for placement, project proposal and supervision arrangements
- Advice to candidates, project leaders, post and tertiary institutions
- Entry of awardee's details on Online Australian Scholarships information System (OASIS)
- Processing of formal award offers
- Monitoring of academic progress (through Project Leaders and Research Program Manager)
- Appropriate mentoring of awardees
- Authorisation of travel
- Authorisation of any variation to the award

#### **Student Contact Officer at tertiary institution**

- Reception and induction
- Assistance with location of accommodation
- Payment of allowances and other entitlements
- Home leave arrangements
- Welfare services as required
- Assist with establishment of health cover

**ACIAR Country Managers** Located in Indonesia, PNG, Philippines, Thailand (for Laos and Cambodia), China, Vietnam, and India (for South Asia). Where an ACIAR Country Manager is not located the **AusAID Officer at the Embassy/High Commission** (where arrangements have been previously agreed) will carry out these \*functions.

- Distribution of Application Forms and Guidelines to partner country Project Leaders
- Liaison with Project Leaders and candidates
- English testing
- Processing of award offers

- Organising travel arrangements and issue of visas, including medical clearances
- Liaison with applicant and employing organisation
- Pre-departure briefing
- Travel arrangements for family (if appropriate)

#### ***Project Leaders and candidates***

- Ensure that eligibility criteria are met
- Provide certified true copies of academic transcripts and degree certificates
- Ensure that full information is given. Submission of applications to ACIAR by the due date (31 July)
- Project Leaders to provide Referee Reports separately to ACIAR by application closing date
- Follow up, where possible, the process of obtaining official endorsement of employing agency and home government training co-ordination authority
- Provision of, or advice on, academic supervision

#### ***ACIAR Research Program Managers***

- Advise Project Leaders of candidate's eligibility if requested
- Monitor application progress and assist where necessary
- Provide expert advice to ACIAR Training Committee regarding candidates within their program
- Monitor progress of awardees in Australia, and visit if possible awardees and supervisors at least once per year
- Following visits to awardees and supervisors, report in writing on the progress of awardees to the Training Committee, via the Project Officer Education and Training Programs
- Keep Project Leaders and awardees informed of any ACIAR initiatives that may impact on awardees

#### **Responsibilities listed in chronological order**

1.	Calling for applications & provision of guidelines	ACIAR – May/June
3.	Liaise with Australian university to obtain acceptance in-principle for the candidate to pursue studies	Candidates and Project Leaders - as early as possible
4.	Obtain endorsement of employing agency and home government training co-ordination authority	Candidate, Project Leaders, Country Manager – by 31 July
5.	Arrange English testing and medical examinations of candidates	Country Manager and AusAID Officer at Embassy/ High Commission – August /September
6.	Forward formal endorsed applications to ACIAR	Candidate and Post by 31 July
7.	Provision of certified true copies of academic transcripts and degree certificates from candidates	Project Leaders, for 31 July
8.	Examination of applications by Committee	ACIAR - August
9.	Informal advice of selection results	ACIAR – August/September
10.	Informal advice to awardees and Project Leaders to enable awardees to plan for departure, emphasising that a medical clearance must be obtained before formal offer can be made	ACIAR and Country Manager/AusAID Officer at Embassy/ High Commission
11.	Entry of awardee's details on Online Australian Scholarships information System (OASIS)	ACIAR , Canberra
12.	Advice to University of awardee details	ACIAR
13.	Placement of awardees at university	ACIAR
14.	Offer of awards generated	ACIAR
15.	Organisation of travel and visas	Country Manager/AusAID Officer at Embassy/ High Commission
16.	Finalising of travel and visas, liaison with awardee and employer, travel arrangements for family if applicable	Country Manager/AusAid Officer at Embassy/ High Commission
17.	Reception and induction	Tertiary Institution
18.	Assistance with locating accommodation	Tertiary Institution
19.	Payment of allowances and other entitlements	Tertiary Institution
20.	Provision of academic supervision	Tertiary Institution
21.	Monitoring of academic progress	Tertiary Institution
22.	Home leave arrangements	Tertiary Institution
23.	Welfare services as required	Tertiary Institution

