

APRU NEW INITIATIVE

By University of Auckland

APRU MIND **Mobility for International Network Development**

Introduction

Student mobility models at APRU universities have historically focused on semester exchanges for undergraduate students. To date, the mobility of postgraduate (and in particular PhD) students has been underdeveloped. As it is an expectation of today's top researchers and academics that they develop extensive international collaborative networks, APRU can take the lead in allowing the future researchers and academics of the network to get a head start in developing these links early on in their career.

For this reason, it is proposed that APRU establish a new initiative to promote the mobility of PhD students within the network through the provision of targeted mobility grants. The encouragement and creation of a substantial cohort of internationally connected early-career researchers and academics within the APRU network stands to provide substantial benefits both to individual institutions and to the network as a whole.

Programme Overview and Benefits

It is proposed that the "APRU MIND" PhD student mobility programme be focused, on an annual basis, on themes of particular significance to the Asia-Pacific region. To this end, the following themes might be appropriate:

- Year 1: Communicable Diseases
- Year 2: Trade Policy and Financial Regulations
- Year 3: Regional Security
- Year 4: Immigration
- Year 5: Population Health

Themes should be chosen in such a way as to allow students from a wide variety of disciplines to participate in the programme.

Students will normally be expected to spend a period of no less than 3 weeks at the partner APRU university. Where possible, host universities are encouraged to make free or subsidized accommodation available to the visiting students.

During the visit, students might

- Engage with specialists in their field
- Relate to other graduate students
- Make use of specific research equipment
- Conduct experiments in collaboration with counterpart laboratories
- Make use of library facilities and visit archives

Students will be encouraged to give guest seminars on their research at the host university.

In addition, Students will be expected to submit a brief written report on their exchange to the Secretariat, which may use this information for publicity purposes.

This program would be an excellent opportunity for both students and universities to exhibit the world-class research being conducted at their respective institutions. In addition, these exchanges will also help to enhance the learning experience of doctoral students by providing both networking opportunities and giving them the chance to develop or further their research from an international perspective.

Implementation and Costs

It is proposed that there be two application rounds for these mobility grants annually. Each university would receive the proposals from their own doctoral students and make a shortlist (number to be determined in consultation with the Secretariat). These shortlists would then be forwarded to the Secretariat, which would convene a small selection panel to choose the grant recipients. Although an equitable spread of awards between APRU sub-regions will be sought, the primary criteria will always be the quality of the proposal.

In order for this innovative mobility programme to become a reality, it is proposed that the APRU Secretariat consider making US\$24,000 available annually to support a three – year pilot programme. It is suggested that member universities continue the programme beyond the pilot period by making available two APRU MIND grants per annum to their PhD student body.

As these will be targeted mobility grants, a grant of up to US\$2,000 be awarded per successful doctoral student applicant. Such funding would, based on a per – student grant of US\$2000 allow 12 doctoral student to participate in the programme each year. The grant would help support the student with travel expenses and living costs. Home institutions would also be encouraged to supplement the grant to an appropriate amount if the US\$2000 is insufficient for the student to complete this research visit.