



Australian Centre
for International
Agricultural Research



Frequently Asked Questions

Pacific Agriculture Scholarships Support (PASS) Program – 2027 Selection Process

1. What is the [PASS Scholarship Program](#)?

The [Pacific Agriculture Scholarships and Support \(PASS\)](#) Program provides scholarships and support to postgraduate students in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries at [The University of the South Pacific \(USP\)](#) and [Fiji National University \(FNU\)](#). Since 2008, ACIAR has supported research scholarships at Pacific Universities. The scholarship program has achieved significant results, strengthening agricultural innovation systems in the Pacific.

ACIAR's PASS scholarships are offered in the Pacific, to Pacific Islanders. This enables scholars to research agricultural problems within the context that the solutions need to work, to build professional networks which will be relevant post-study and remain close to family and culture.

The [PASS Program](#) aims to strengthen the Pacific agricultural innovation system through building on the strengths of Pacific universities and their regional partners. It is part of the Australian Government's support to our Pacific neighbours.

2. Who are [ACIAR](#)?

The [Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research \(ACIAR\)](#) are an Australian Government agency who brokers and invests in research partnerships in developing countries in the Indo-Pacific region to build knowledge to support crucial development objectives.

Since 1982, ACIAR has supported research projects in four regions—eastern and southern Africa, East Asia, South and West Asia and the Pacific. Their research projects focus on agribusiness, climate change, crops, fisheries, forestry, horticulture, livestock systems, social systems, soil and land management and water. They deliver specific development outcomes.

To date, ACIAR has commissioned and managed more than 1,500 research projects in 36 countries, partnering with 150 institutions along with more than 50 Australian research organisations.

3. Which Universities are offering scholarships under the PASS Program?

The [University of the South Pacific \(USP\)](#) and [Fiji National University \(FNU\)](#)

4. Which scholarships are available at USP?

Masters by Research and PhD scholarships.



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5. Which scholarships are available at FNU?

Masters by Research and PhD scholarships.

6. What does the Scholarship include?

Tuition and Allowances

Tuition and Allowances will be paid for up to 24-months for Masters students and 36-months for a PhD candidate.

Allowances* are outlined below:

Description	Allowance*
Book Allowance	FJD750 as a one-off payment
Living Allowance	FJD21,450 per year
Establishment Allowance	FJD1,900, as a one-off payment, if applicable
Dependent Allowances	FJD32, 472 per year, if applicable

*Please note that these are indicative only and are dependent on your personal circumstances. For more exact details, please discuss with the contact at your chosen university.

Research Grant

Successful scholarship holders will have access to a Research Grant of up to a maximum of:

- FJD20,000 (USP)/FJD17,500 (FNU) for Masters' students, and
- FJD45,000 (USP)/FJD40,000 (FNU) for PhD students

This grant funding is to cover research operating costs, minor equipment, and travel expenses essential to undertake research.

The Research Grant will be considered and allocated based on a detailed research proposal and supporting budget prepared by the student in consultation with his/her supervisor and the co-supervisor.

Additional Assistance

The ACIAR PASS Administration team based at FNU provides additional support to PASS scholars and academic staff including professional development, peer-to-peer learning, research collaboration, and supervision training. Student work placements and career development are included under the PASS Program through the Job Ready program to build ongoing industry connections.



7. What are the eligibility criteria?

The eligibility criteria for both the Masters and PhD programs is outlined below. Note that for Educational Requirements, these are specific to the University that you are applying to and can be confirmed with the key University contacts (see Question 10 for contact details).

You need to confirm your eligibility with the relevant University prior to applying. Contact details are provided in Question 10 for both USP and FNU key contacts to assist.

Eligibility Criteria	University	Program	Details
Citizenship	USP and FNU	All	Scholarships are open to current citizens of the Pacific Island Countries of Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.
Age	USP and FNU	All	Applicants must be 35 years or below when applying for Masters and 45 years or below for PhD. Flexibilities on the age criteria will be considered under exceptional cases.
Educational requirements	USP	Masters by Research	- Post Graduate Diploma with a GPA of 3.5 or above at both Undergraduate and Post Graduate levels. - Applicants with a Bachelors degree GPA of 4.0 or above for 200 and 300 level courses, are also eligible to apply (when applying directly from Undergraduate study). - The candidate may be required to complete Postgraduate course(s) as specified for admission to the Master's program.
	USP	PhD	A Masters degree by research, or a Bachelors degree with a GPA of 4.5 or above for 200 and 300 level courses
	FNU	Masters by Research	- A Postgraduate diploma with a GPA of 3.00 or above (or the equivalent from a recognised University). - A bachelor's degree with a GPA of 3.5. - An honours Bachelor degree with a GPA of 3.00 (from a recognised institution) - Master by coursework. - Recognised Professional experience: Evidence of academic qualifications and/or experience inclusive of research reports, or dissertations, or publications or other evidence of professional work that satisfies the Dean of the College that, the applicant has sufficient knowledge of the field of study, and capable of undertaking research and the writing of the thesis. The medium of instruction at FNU is the English language. Students must be sufficiently fluent in English to pursue the HDR Programme. HDR students will provide evidence from undergraduate qualifications/other English qualifications that confirm their English language competency.
	FNU	PhD	- A Master by Research degree. - Where the Master degree is by coursework a GPA of minimum 4.0 is required plus completion of a research method course. - An Honours Bachelor's degree with a GPA of minimum 4.0 and above or (First or upper Second-class Honours).



Eligibility Criteria	University	Program	Details
			- Recognised Professional experience: Evidence of academic qualifications and/or experience inclusive of research reports, or dissertations, or publications or other evidence of professional work that satisfies the Dean of the College that, the applicant has sufficient knowledge of the field of study, and capable of undertaking research and the writing of the thesis. - Any of the above-listed pre-requisites must have been attained from a recognised institution. The medium of instruction at FNU is the English language. Students must be sufficiently fluent in English to pursue the HDR Programme. HDR students will provide evidence from undergraduate qualifications/other English qualifications that confirm their English language competency.

8. Are women encouraged to apply?

The Program aligns to [ACIAR's Gender Equity Policy and Strategy](#). Women are particularly encouraged to apply.

9. How do I find out what the research projects and topics are for the 2027 scholarship round?

A link to the Research Projects and topic list for the 2027 scholarship program is available on:

- ACIAR website - <https://www.aciar.gov.au/scholarships/aci-ar-pacific-agriculture-scholarships-and-support-program>
- USP website - <https://www.usp.ac.fj/research/pg-affairs/post-graduate-scholarships/australian-centre-for-international-agricultural-research-aci-ar/>
- FNU website - <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/research/scholarships/pass-cr/>

Please review the list of research topics and choose a project that really interests you. Research the topic and email the USP/FNU Supervisor or contact person to discuss the topic. Please work with the supervisors to draft your research proposal.

Please note that your research proposal will **need** to be signed by both the USP/FNU Supervisor and Co-supervisors prior to submission of your application.

10. How do I apply?

You are required to check your eligibility with the relevant university prior to completing the application form.

For more information on how to apply and to check your eligibility, please email the key contacts for each university below. Application forms and research proposal templates are available on the relevant university website.



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The University of South Pacific (USP)

Mr Josevata Cava, ACIAR-USP Graduate Officer

Email: aciarga@usp.ac.fj

Website: <https://www.usp.ac.fj/research/pg-affairs/post-graduate-scholarships/australian-centre-for-international-agricultural-research-aciarg/>

Fiji National University

Ms. Varsha Dutt, ACIAR Graduate and Scholarship Officer

Email: aciarg-go@fnu.ac.fj

Website: <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/research/scholarships/pass-cr/>

11. Are there any online Q&A sessions where I can learn more?

Online briefing sessions about the program, how to apply, meet the supervisors and how to put together a research proposal will be held to support you through the application process. Dates and registration links will be provided later.

12. Do I need to check my eligibility before applying?

Yes, you need to ensure you have confirmed your GPA and Citizenship requirements are eligible before applying. Please contact the relevant contact at FNU and USP to confirm your eligibility (see Question 10).

13. How do I complete the application form and submit the required documents?

Before completing the application form, please reach out to the relevant University contact person (see Question 10) to discuss your eligibility to apply.

Fill out your personal details and use the checklist to make sure you have attached all the required documents. You are required to submit the document in **one PDF document** in the following order:

- Application Form
- Academic Transcript/s
- Certificate/s
- Letters of Support from proposed supervisors
- Birth Certificate/Passport

Please save your documents with the following name: PASS2027-your name-university-program (e.g. PASS2027Application-LisaWard-USP-MSc).

Once you have chosen your project and research topic (see Question 9), please also complete your research intent including detailed research proposal which must be signed by your USP/FNU supervisor and ACIAR co-supervisor.

Your research intent is to be submitted as a separate PDF with the following name:

PASS2027ResearchIntent-your name-university-program (e.g. PASS2027ResearchIntent-LisaWard-USP-MSc).

Please note that incomplete applications will not be considered.



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14. What documents are required?

- Certified copies of academic transcripts
- Completed application form
- Completed research intent including a detailed research proposal which has been signed by your USP/FNU supervisor and Co-supervisor

15. Can I enrol part-time?

- Students may not engage in paid employment while enrolled in the scholarship scheme, unless with the express permission of the supervisor and head of the relevant school. Short term work experience placements linked to the field of study approved by ACIAR may be organised by the Academic Support Team.
- Students enrolled in a full-time capacity are expected to maintain a full-time study load.
- In the case of applicants who are already employed in the public sector, a letter confirming release of the applicant, if successful, from his/her duties by the relevant Public Service Commission for the term of the scholarship, is a requirement.

16. I am already enrolled in a Masters or PhD program, am I able to apply?

Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If your current study is aligned with an ACIAR Project and you have the support from a USP/FNU Supervisor and Co-supervisor, you can apply.

17. How will my application be assessed?

A Selection Panel at each university, has been established to review the applications. Applications will be assessed based on eligibility and merit.

18. What is the application process and expected timeframes?

Process	Timeframes
Applications Open	Thursday 20 August 2026
Applications Close	5pm FJT, Wednesday 21 October 2026
Applicants advised of outcome of process	Late November/Early December 2026