



Australian Centre
for International
Agricultural Research



Compendium of Topics for the Pacific Agricultural Scholarship and Support (PASS) Program

Intake 2027

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About PASS

The Pacific Agricultural Scholarships and Support (PASS) program is jointly delivered by Fiji National University (FNU), the University of the South Pacific (USP), and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). PASS aims to strengthen agricultural innovation systems in the Pacific region by providing scholarships and support to postgraduate students in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. PASS supports research that addresses critical agricultural and climate resilience challenges, contributing to sustainable development and food security in the region.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

- Fiji National University (FNU): <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/research/scholarships/pass-cr/>
- University of the South Pacific (USP): <https://www.usp.ac.fj/research/pg-affairs/post-graduatescholarships/australian-centre-for-international-agricultural-research-aciar/aciar/>

How to use the compendium

This compendium outlines proposed research topics and supervisors for PASS Intake 2027.

Steps for applicants:

1. Go to the USP/FNU websites and check that you meet the PASS eligibility and minimum entry requirements.
2. Review the Research Topics List: Choose a topic that matches your interests and/or expertise. If you cannot find a topic, contact the Graduate Officer for further advice.
3. Consult the Supervisors: Identify and contact the supervisors listed for your topic of interest.
4. Prepare Your Research Intent Form: Develop a research intent for your topic and prepare your responses to the PASS Application Questions in the Form. Online sessions will be available to support applicants with this Form and links will be on the USP and FNU websites.

FNU Research Topics and Supervisors

Fisheries

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor/s (International)	ACIAR Project
MSc	Scaling up community-based fisheries management in Tonga, Vanuatu and/or the wider Pacific	<u>Dr Shalini Singh</u> FNU shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Dirk Steenbergen</u> University of Wollongong dirks@uow.edu.au <u>Aurelie Delisle</u> University of Wollongong adelisle@uow.edu.au <u>Clara Obregon</u> University of Wollongong cobregon@uow.edu.au	Coalitions for change in sustainable national CBFM programs in the Pacific (FIS-2020-172) Integrating community fisheries and rural development in a changing Pacific region (FIS-2024-140) Strengthening community fisheries programs and resilience in the Pacific (FIS-2026-183)
PhD	Integrating indigenous knowledge in community-based fisheries management	<u>Dr Ravinesh Ram</u> FNU ravinesh.ram@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Dirk Steenbergen</u> University of Wollongong dirks@uow.edu.au <u>Aurelie Delisle</u> University of Wollongong adelisle@uow.edu.au <u>Clara Obregon</u> University of Wollongong cobregon@uow.edu.au	Coalitions for change in sustainable national CBFM programs in the Pacific (FIS-2020-172) Integrating community fisheries and rural development in a changing Pacific region (FIS-2024-140) Strengthening community fisheries programs and resilience in the Pacific (FIS-2026-183)
MSc	The role of women and/or youths in sustaining community-based fisheries management in the Pacific; particularly in the nexus between gender/social inclusion, fisheries and climate change	<u>Dr Shalini Singh</u> FNU shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Dirk Steenbergen</u> University of Wollongong dirks@uow.edu.au <u>Aurelie Delisle</u> University of Wollongong adelisle@uow.edu.au <u>Clara Obregon</u> University of Wollongong cobregon@uow.edu.au	Coalitions for change in sustainable national CBFM programs in the Pacific (FIS-2020-172) Integrating community fisheries and rural development in a changing Pacific region (FIS-2024-140) Strengthening community fisheries programs and resilience in the Pacific (FIS-2026-183)

PhD	Building community resilience to (climate) change through sustainable locally led management of fisheries	<u>Dr Shalini Singh</u> FNU shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Dirk Steenbergen</u> University of Wollongong dirks@uow.edu.au <u>Aurelie Delisle</u> University of Wollongong adelisle@uow.edu.au <u>Clara Obregon</u> University of Wollongong cobregon@uow.edu.au	Coalitions for change in sustainable national CBFM programs in the Pacific (FIS-2020-172) Integrating community fisheries and rural development in a changing Pacific region (FIS-2024-140) Strengthening community fisheries programs and resilience in the Pacific (FIS-2026-183)
MSc	Tagging of giant clams for the marine aquarium trade	<u>Dr Ravinesh Ram</u> FNU ravinesh.ram@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Professor Paul Southgate</u> University of the Sunshine Coast paul.southgate@usc.edu.au <u>Dr Monal Lal</u> USC/USP mlal1@usc.edu.au	Addressing bottlenecks in giant clam mariculture for the marine aquarium trade in the Western Pacific (FIS/2025/151)
MSc or PhD	Bamboo mabé pearl raft fish attraction	<u>Dr Shalini Singh</u> FNU shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Professor Paul Southgate</u> University of the Sunshine Coast paul.southgate@usc.edu.au <u>Dr Monal Lal</u> USC/USP mlal1@usc.edu.au <u>Dr Pranesh Kishore</u> University of the Sunshine Coast pranesh.kishore@my.jcu.edu.au	Towards more profitable and sustainable mabé pearl and shell-based livelihoods in the western Pacific (FIS/2019/122)
PhD	Influence of donor mantle colour on pearl yield/quality	<u>Dr Shalini Singh</u> FNU shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Professor Paul Southgate</u> University of the Sunshine Coast paul.southgate@usc.edu.au <u>Dr Monal Lal</u> USC/USP mlal1@usc.edu.au <u>Dr Pranesh Kishore</u> University of the Sunshine Coast pranesh.kishore@my.jcu.edu.au	Towards more profitable and sustainable mabé pearl and shell-based livelihoods in the western Pacific (FIS/2019/122)

MSc	Assess mabé pearl production from smaller pearl oysters	<u>Dr Shalini Singh</u> FNU shalini.singh@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Professor Paul Southgate</u> University of the Sunshine Coast paul.southgate@usc.edu.au <u>Dr Monal Lal</u> USC/USP mlal1@usc.edu.au <u>Dr Pranesh Kishore</u> University of the Sunshine Coast pranesh.kishore@my.jcu.edu.au	Towards more profitable and sustainable mabé pearl and shell-based livelihoods in the western Pacific (FIS/2019/122)
PhD	Ciguatera Poisoning in Kiribati – optimising mitigation and sampling strategies for early warning	<u>Dr Ravinesh Ram</u> FNU ravinesh.ram@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Professor Shauna Murray</u> University of Technology Sydney shauna.murray@uts.edu.au	Mitigating the incidence of Ciguatera Poisoning in Kiribati (FIS-2023-161)

Forestry (Health)

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor/s (International)	ACIAR Project
PhD	Investigating the biogeography of Phytophthora pathogens in Fiji as a model for understanding Biosecurity pathways and risks in the Pacific	<u>Dr Mereia Fong</u> , FNU, and <u>Dr Nari Williams</u> , Adelaide University mereia.fong@fnu.ac.fj nari.williams@adelaide.edu.au	<u>Professor Mike Furlong</u> University of Queensland m.furlong@uq.edu.au	Sustaining responsive crop health and biosecurity capacity in the Pacific Islands in the face of a changing environment (HORT/2025/108)

Horticulture

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor/s (International)	ACIAR Project
PhD	Strengthening Biosecurity Surveillance Systems for High-Risk Plant Pests in Fiji/Pacific	<u>Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa</u> FNU Kaliova.Ravuiwasa@fnu.ac.fj deanagr@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Professor Mike Furlong</u> University of Queensland m.furlong@uq.edu.au	Sustaining responsive crop health and biosecurity capacity in the Pacific Islands in the face of a changing environment (HORT/2025/108)

MSc	Biology, ecology and control of sweet potato leaf folder in Solomon Islands	<u>Dr Mereia Fong</u> FNU mereia.fong@fnu.ac.fj <u>Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa</u> FNU Kaliova.Ravuiwasa@fnu.ac.fj deanagr@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Professor Mike Furlong</u> University of Queensland m.furlong@uq.edu.au	Sustaining responsive crop health and biosecurity capacity in the Pacific Islands in the face of a changing environment (HORT/2025/108)
MSc	Diamondback moth resistance to insecticides.	<u>Dr Mereia Fong</u> FNU mereia.fong@fnu.ac.fj <u>Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa</u> FNU Kaliova.Ravuiwasa@fnu.ac.fj deanagr@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Professor Mike Furlong</u> University of Queensland m.furlong@uq.edu.au	Sustaining responsive crop health and biosecurity capacity in the Pacific Islands in the face of a changing environment (HORT/2025/108)
MSc or PhD	Strengthening Community-Based Plant Health Systems through Gender-Inclusive, Climate-Resilient and Digital Approaches	<u>Dr Mereia Fong</u> FNU mereia.fong@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Dr Caroline Smith</u> University of Tasmania Caroline.Smith1@utas.edu.au <u>Dr. Lilly Sar</u> University of Goroka lsarnorah@gmail.com	Sustaining responsive crop health and biosecurity capacity in the Pacific Islands in the face of a changing environment (HORT/2025/108) Advancing Climate-Smart Pest Management and Plant Health Education through Localized Solutions in Timor Leste (HORT/2025/142)
MSc or PhD	Reducing Crop Losses through Integrated Pest and Disease Management in Climate-Resilient Farming Systems. Case study: Sweet potato leaf roller in the Solomon Is.	<u>Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa</u> FNU Kaliova.Ravuiwasa@fnu.ac.fj deanagr@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Professor Mike Furlong</u> University of Queensland m.furlong@uq.edu.au	Sustaining responsive crop health and biosecurity capacity in the Pacific Islands in the face of a changing environment (HORT/2025/108)

Livestock

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor/s (International)	ACIAR Project
MSc or PhD	Antimicrobial stewardship in livestock sector in Fiji: an exploration of factors that influence or contribute to the implementation of the initiative	<u>Dr Royford Magiri</u> FNU royford.magiri@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Dr Walter Okelo</u> CSIRO walter.okelo@csiro.au <u>Dr. Anthony Keyburn</u> CSIRO anthony.keyburn@csiro.au	Enhancing the Management of Antimicrobial Resistance (EMAR) in Fiji and Samoa (LS/2019/119)
MSc or PhD	Antimicrobial resistance at the farm level; using participatory methods to explore behaviours that drive AMR in Fiji.	<u>Dr Royford Magiri</u> FNU royford.magiri@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Dr Walter Okelo</u> CSIRO walter.okelo@csiro.au <u>Dr. Anthony Keyburn</u> CSIRO anthony.keyburn@csiro.au	Enhancing the Management of Antimicrobial Resistance (EMAR) in Fiji and Samoa (LS/2019/119)
MSc or PhD	An in-depth assessment of knowledge, attitude and practices about transmission of zoonoses, food safety, antimicrobial resistance and in livestock at value chain in Fiji: one health approach	<u>Dr Royford Magiri</u> FNU royford.magiri@fnu.ac.fj	<u>Dr Walter Okelo</u> CSIRO walter.okelo@csiro.au <u>Dr. Anthony Keyburn</u> CSIRO anthony.keyburn@csiro.au	Enhancing the Management of Antimicrobial Resistance (EMAR) in Fiji and Samoa (LS/2019/119)

USP Research Topics and Supervisors

Climate Change

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor/s (International)	ACIAR Project
MSc or PhD	Enhancing Water Security for Sustainable Agriculture in Pacific Island Communities Under a Changing Climate	<u>Dr Krishna Kumar Kotra</u> USP krishna.kotra@usp.ac.fj	<u>Professor Patrick Nunn</u> University of the Sunshine Coast pnnun@usc.edu.au	Water security for locally relocated coastal communities in the western Pacific region (WAC/2022/128)
MSc	Estimation of coastal biodiversity through Autonomous Reef Monitoring Structures, Molecular analysis and eDNA.	<u>Dr Ashneel Ajay Singh</u> USP ashneel.singh@usp.ac.fj	<u>Dr Monal Lal</u> USC /USP mlal1@usc.edu.au <u>Professor Paul Southgate</u> University of the Sunshine Coast paul.southgate@usc.edu.au	Addressing bottlenecks in giant clam mariculture for the marine aquarium trade in the Western Pacific (FIS/2025/151) Towards more profitable and sustainable mabé pearl and shell-based livelihoods in the western Pacific (FIS/2019/122)
MSc	Empowering Smallholder Farmers Through Participatory Evaluation and Adaptation of Climate-Resilient Vegetable Varieties in the Pacific	<u>Dr Leslie Ubaub</u> USP lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj	<u>Derek W. Barchenger</u> World Veg derek.barchenger@worldveg.org	Sustaining responsive crop health and biosecurity capacity in the Pacific Islands in the face of a changing environment (HORT/2025/149)

Innovation, Empowerment and Sustainability

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor/s (International)	ACIAR Project
MSc or PhD	Early detection of the Dalo Leaf Blight disease in the Fiji and Pacific region using deep image classification models	<u>Professor Utkal Mehta</u> USP utkal.mehta@usp.ac.fj <u>Dr Kaylash Chaudhary</u> USP kaylash.chaudhary@usp.ac.fj	<u>Professor Mike Furlong</u> University of Queensland m.furlong@uq.edu.au	Sustaining responsive crop health and biosecurity capacity in the Pacific Islands in the face of a changing environment (HORT/2025/108)

MSc or PhD	Manipulating light quality in protected structures (e.g. greenhouses and tunnel houses) to manage insect pests of high-value crops in the Pacific	<u>Dr Leslie Ubaub</u> USP lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj	<u>Professor Phil Brown</u> Central Queensland University p.h.brown@cqu.edu.au	Resilient commercial vegetable production systems for Pacific Island Countries (HORT/2023/165)
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Water

Program	Possible Research Topic	University Principal Supervisor (Pacific)	Co-Supervisor/s (International)	ACIAR Project
MSc or PhD	Supporting agri-environmental health outcomes in Honiara Catchment	<u>Dr Sarah Pene</u> USP sarah.pene@usp.ac.fj	<u>Dr Regina Soutar</u> Griffith University r.souter@griffith.edu.au	Generating Resilience through One Health Watersheds – (GROW) Solomon Islands (WAC/2025/134)