

New Zealand:PhD studentship in plant evolutionary biogeography

We are seeking a PhD candidate with interests in phylogenetics and the evolutionary biology of plants. The studentship is funded for three years as part of a new Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Fund project on 'the evolution of the functional diversity of forests' led by Prof. Steven Higgins (Botany, University of Otago, New Zealand, <http://biogeog.zohosites.com>) and Prof. David Bryant (Mathematics and Statistics, University of Otago, New Zealand, <http://www.maths.otago.ac.nz/~dbryant/>).

The project aims to explore the relationships between the evolution of species and functional diversity in plants. We will estimate how niche geometry evolves in conifer and angiosperm forest tree lineages by integrating recent progress in biophysical niche modelling with phylogenetic methods for ancestral trait reconstruction. The exact project tasks will, however, be tailored to reflect your expertise and interests.

The project requires skills in plant physiology, evolutionary biology, mathematical ecology and phylogenetics or an aptitude to learn these skills. Candidates should have first degrees in Biology, Ecology and Evolution, Mathematics, Physics, Statistics or related subjects. For admission to the Otago PhD program evidence of previous research experience is essential (BSc-Honours, MSc or equivalent).

The position offers a stimulating research environment. The university of Otago is New Zealand's top-ranked university for research. The Dunedin campus provides a lively intellectual environment and is home to excellent research groups in ecology, evolution, genetics and ecological and evolutionary statistics. Additionally, the project involves international collaborations with paleo-ecological and paleo-climatic groups based at BiK-F in Germany.

The preferred starting date is 4 January 2016 Applications should include a cover letter, a curriculum vita, copy of your university transcripts, a sample of your written scientific work and the names and contact details of three references. Applications should be submitted by 12 October 2016, although we will consider applications until the position is filled. Please direct enquiries to Steven.Higgins@otago.ac.nz. The scholarship includes a NZ\$25000 annual stipend and tuition fees.

Tentative Submission Deadline : 16 October 2015