

## **AMSI/MASCOS VACATION SCHOLARSHIPS**

### **Background**

AMSI will fund Vacation Scholarships for students at AMSI member institutions. The Scholarships give intending honours students the opportunity to undertake a research project under the guidance of a supervisor.

**This year it will only be possible to fund up to 22 scholarships across all members.**

Application for the scholarships will be competitive, as judged by the Director of AMSI. This will be based on a combination of the past grades of the nominee student and the substance of a 1-page project application. In the event of large numbers of applications, preference may be given to the top two from each institution.

The scholarship payments have 2 components:

- an award of \$380/week for up to 6 weeks
- travel and accommodation costs for the student to attend CSIRO's Big Day In for 2 days and make a presentation about their project.

### **Student eligibility and requirements**

1. Nominees must be:

- Australian citizens or permanent residents.
- Outstanding students. In practice, this means that AMSI awards should be made to the best candidates before any locally funded awards are made.
- Third-year students doing a major in the mathematical sciences and with the expressed intention of proceeding to an honours year. This includes students doing joint degrees that include mathematics, and students from disciplines such as physics, engineering or economics who take a substantial amount of third year mathematics (taught by the mathematics department) in their degrees. However, outstanding second-year students may also be nominated if they will be undertaking a course of study in their third year along the lines just described.

AMSI Vacation Scholarships will not be awarded to students already doing honours or postgraduate study, or who have received an AMSI/ICE-EM scholarship previously.

2. After completion of the project, vacation scholars must submit a project report of about 300 words by the end of February for the AMSI web site. The report should summarise the project and address the nature of the topic, methods of investigation, results found, and benefits of the experience. It needs to be provided as a word document.

3. AMSI vacation scholars, together with CSIRO vacation scholars, are expected to attend the CSIRO Big Day In (BDI) for 2 full days in February 2009. At this event they will make 15-minute presentations about their project and take questions for up to 10 minutes. This will enable them to

- meet and socialise with their peers,
- gain experience presenting to their colleagues and supervisors, and
- learn about a range of careers in science by interacting with several CSIRO scientists (including mathematicians) in a discussion panel.

AMSI covers the cost of airfares and accommodation and CSIRO covers the cost of

meals for this event. Detailed information will be available to vacation scholars in early January.

4. In preparation for the Big Day In, supervisors are expected to:

- assist vacation scholars to prepare a 15-minute presentation on their project, suitable for an audience of their peers. The end result should be a set of pdfs or PowerPoint.
- arrange an opportunity for students to do a trial run of their presentations locally. The aim is to provide feedback from experienced presenters so that students can improve their presentations before the BDI.

AMSI strongly encourages supervisors to attend their student's presentation at the BDI, both to provide support and to assist with questions if required. Travel and accommodation are not covered, but meals are provided.

### **Nomination Process**

Nominations are recommendations to AMSI and will be judged by them on a competitive basis, as described above. Supervisors who have not ensured that previous students completed their requirements in a timely manner will not be approved. The process is as follows:

1. Departments or Schools of Mathematical Sciences call for applications from eligible undergraduates. (Some Departments ask their staff to pre-nominate projects that they are willing to supervise.)
2. Departments select the most outstanding applicant for nomination as an AMSI vacation scholar, complete the nomination form, attach most recent statement of results and return it to Simi Henderson at AMSI by 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008.
3. AMSI contacts the Departments soon after and indicates whether the nomination was successful. Those accepted are designated 'AMSI Vacation Scholar' and receive a certificate, which is presented at the BDI.

### **Payment Process**

1. The value of each Vacation Scholarship is \$380 per week (plus GST if applicable) for up to 6 weeks. It is paid in 2 installments: all but the final 2 weeks at the beginning of the period, and the final 2 weeks at the end of the period.
2. On being notified of acceptance, the nominating Department invoices AMSI for the initial period of the scholarship (being the total period less the final 2 weeks). It is expected that Departments pay the awardees out of their own funds and treat the AMSI payment as a reimbursement.
3. AMSI reimburses the last two weeks of the Vacation Scholar stipend when the student's final report is received. The Department needs to invoice AMSI for the final amount at that time.