

CROPS FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH CENTRE and UNIVERSITY of NOTTINGHAM CFFRC `250PLUS` Research Studentships Guidance Notes for Applicants

CFFRC and University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus (UNMC) are offering 250 'postgraduate years' of full-fee PhD and MRes studentships for research on underutilised crops. Applications for studentships are open to academic staff across all Nottingham campuses. Cross-campus collaborations are strongly encouraged but at least one supervisor should normally be based at UNMC.

The first round of applications will be open until **1 June, 2012** with decisions on successful proposals announced on **15 June, 2012**.

Crops for the Future Research Centre (CFFRC)

- Launched in August 2011, CFFRC is the first global centre with a mandate for research on underutilised plants for food and non-food uses. It operates as the research arm of the global Crops for the Future (CFF) entity hosted in Malaysia by Bioversity International and UNMC.
- CFFRC is a unique partnership between a national government and an international research university. Incorporated under the Malaysia Companies Act, it is guaranteed by the Government of Malaysia and the University of Nottingham in Malaysia but is an independent entity with the freedom to drive innovative research within the wider objectives of CFF and its stakeholders.
- CFFRC will help Malaysia become a global hub for research and knowledge on underutilised crops. In addition to new laboratory and field research facilities and a botanical garden of alternative crops adjacent to UNMC, CFFRC will have access to facilities and expertise at the University of Nottingham in Malaysia, UK and China, national institutions and universities in Malaysia, and links with CFF, Bioversity International and other international and national agencies, especially in Africa and Asia.
- The CFFRC Research Strategy has three related priority areas, viz.
 - 1) Knowledge Systems
 - 2) Sustainable Nutrition
 - 3) High Value Agriculture
- CFFRC will develop projects across a 'Research Value Chain' spanning four research themes, viz.
 - 1) Biotechnology, breeding and seed systems
 - 2) Physiology, agronomy and agro-ecological potential
 - 3) Nutritional, processing and end-user values
 - 4) Economic and marketing potential

Each Theme is led by a Research Theme Director with support from co and principal investigators, postdoctoral research assistants and administrative staff.

- CFFRC will carry out fundamental and applied research, scoping and policy studies and develop outputs that provide improved opportunities and products for growers, consumers and wider stakeholders, especially in developing regions of the world.

Crops for the Future Research Centre and the University of Nottingham

- In addition to its own resources, CFFRC has access to academic and technical support through a co-operation agreement with the University of Nottingham in Malaysia (UNiM). The agreement includes substantial scholarship provision for research students working on underutilised crops based primarily at UNMC with the option to conduct part of their research at other Nottingham campuses or partner institutions.
- By leveraging on CFFRC links with the University of Nottingham and other leading higher education institutions in Malaysia and beyond, graduate students will have opportunities for PhD and Masters-level research on underutilised crops. Collaborations with other universities and research agencies will allow further exchange and strengthening of research capacities.

CFFRC `250PLUS` Scholarship Scheme

- To provide support for postgraduate research students working on underutilised crops, CFFRC and the University of Nottingham have launched a joint Scholarship Scheme, `CFFRC 250PLUS,' effective between 2012 and 2017.
- The term `250PLUS' indicates initial funding for more than 250 postgraduate years of PhD and Masters by Research (MRes) students registered at the University of Nottingham for studies that `Provide Links to Underutilised Species (PLUS). It is envisaged that a significant proportion of scholarships will be awarded in the initial two years of the scheme (2012 and 2013).
- Students from all nationalities (Home and International) are eligible for CFFRC250 scholarships. However, a minimum of 10% of the awards (i.e. at least 25 scholarship years) will be for students from Africa and the developing countries of the Commonwealth. These scholarships will contribute to the University of Nottingham's flagship `Developing Solutions' scheme.
- Prospective students cannot apply directly for a CFFRC250PLUS scholarship but must apply for specific PhD or MRes studentships awarded to successful staff. The studentships will be advertised through the Schools and Faculties of award winners as well as through the University of Nottingham and CFFRC websites.

Key features of CFFRC`250PLUS` include

- 250 `postgraduate years' for PhD and MRes scholarships registered at the University of Nottingham. Students will normally be based at UNMC with the option to spend up to one academic year (PhD) or six months (MRes) at the UK and/or China campuses.
- 125 UNMC stipends for 36 months (PhD) or 12 months (MRes). Students may receive additional UK and/or China stipends for up to one year (PhD) or six months (MRes).
- Contributions to consumable costs for all students registered on the scheme.
- CFFRC 250PLUS studentships will be awarded through a competitive process to staff at any of the Malaysia, UK or China campuses of the University of Nottingham who are eligible to supervise postgraduate studies. Applications may either be for `Full-Fees only' or for `Full-Fees plus stipend' studentships.

CFFRC 250PLUS Application Process

- Eligible staff can bid for one or more CFFRC 250PLUS studentships through a competitive university-wide process.
- Applicants may apply for studentships that contribute either to;
 - Any of the six initial CFFRC programmes (StarchPlus, FishPlus, BiomassPlus, FoodPlus, BamYield and CropBase) or
 - Any of the three CFFRC research priority areas (Knowledge Systems, Sustainable Nutrition, High Value Agriculture).
- Proposals need not be exclusively on underutilised crops but must either provide comparative research against major species or generic research that can be applied to underutilised species.
- Proposals can be from any research discipline applicable to underutilised plant species.
- The supervisory team must normally include at least one supervisor from UNMC, where most of the research will usually be based. Where supervisors identify additional funds, co-supervision may be jointly with other institutions subject to approval by the relevant Nottingham faculty.
- Where the research is primarily based and funded from the UK or China, the CFFRC`250PLUS` scheme may be accessed for up to one year of supervised study in Malaysia.

Selection Process

- To bid for 250PLUS` studentships, applicants must complete and submit a proposal using the application form available at:
<http://www.nottingham.edu.my/CFFRC/documents/CFFRC250studentApplication.pdf>.
- The deadline for the first tranche of applications is **Friday 1 June, 2012**.
- Applications should be submitted online to Applications@cffresearch.org.
- A 250PLUS Selection Panel will review all proposals and inform all applicants on the outcome of their proposal/s by **Friday 15 June, 2012**.

Advertising Process

- Once awarded, supervisors who secure CFFRC`250Plus` awards will be able to advertise and recruit prospective students through their usual School/Faculty procedures as well as advertising these scholarships through the UNMC and CFFRC websites.
- Whilst the admission process for all applicants will follow standard academic procedures, the final approval of each studentship will be made by the 250PLUS Selection Panel.

CFFRC '250PLUS' Scholarship Scheme

Studentship Application & Registration Process

