XXXVII SCAR Delegates Meeting  
India, September 2022

SCAR Visiting Scholar Programme

Report Author(s)
Eoghan Griffin, Rosemary Nash and Johanna Grabow

Summary
The Visiting Scholars scheme is intended to facilitate capacity building for mid- to late career-stage researchers and academics, whose work contributes to the scientific objectives of SCAR. The Visiting Scholars programme complements the SCAR Fellowship scheme.

Prior to 2018, a number of issues with the scheme were identified, including applications not addressing the purpose of the scheme and the lack of female applicants. Following a review, the previous Visiting Professor scheme was replaced by the Visiting Scholars scheme at the end of 2018.

For 2021, 14 applications were received and 3 awards were made to Dr Faradina Merican (Malaysia), Prof Hongjie Xie (USA) and Dr Jeronimo Lopez-Martinez (Spain).

Recommendations
Delegates are asked to consider ways to help with the funding and advertising of the scheme.
Introduction

The scheme was inaugurated in 2013 as the Visiting Professor scheme. It is directed at mid- to late-career scientists and academics (more than five years after completing their PhD) whose work contributes to the research objectives of SCAR, offering the opportunity for them to undertake a short-term visit (from one to four weeks) to another SCAR member country to provide training and mentoring. Awards are intended to provide an international return flight and some contribution towards living expenses for the visiting period.

Several applications each year paid little or no attention to the basic mission of the scheme. There were also no female applicants in 2017 and there was only one female applicant in 2016. In 2017 there were 9 applications, up from 8 in 2016.

To address these issues, the Visiting Professor scheme was replaced in 2018 with the Visiting Scholar scheme. It introduced a much simpler application process, increased funding from USD$2,500 to USD$5,000 for each award, and emphasised that it is available to mid-career researchers with the capacity building being possible in either direction.

Recent Activity

For the 2021 Visiting Scholarships, we received 14 applications, which was a significant increase on the 9 received in 2020. However, the relaunched scheme had attracted 21 applications in 2019 and 26 in 2018. We believe the Covid pandemic has been the main cause of the drop in applications and it is encouraging to see that applications appear to be recovering as restrictions ease.

An analysis of the applications received in 2021 revealed the following diversity information:
Awards

The 2021 SCAR Visiting Scholars were:

**Dr Faradina Merican** will visit the British Antarctic Survey, UK. Her project investigates antibiotic resistance in eukaryotic algae and place this discovery in a wider context of Antarctic research efforts to identify potential key microbial contributions.

**Prof Hongjie Xie** will visit the Universidad de Concepción, Chile. His visit will support further capacity building of Antarctic research on remote sensing of sea ice, ice sheets and ice shelves, and on the better understanding of Antarctica's contribution to global sea level rise.

**Dr Jeronimo Lopez-Martinez** will visit the Mexican Agency for Antarctic Studies, Mexico. The main purpose of his visit is to carry out a series of capacity-building activities to contribute to the development of Mexico's Antarctic scientific research.