

June 2020

2021 PROJECT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

To use with forms:

2021 Project Expression of Interest (EOI) Form



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Part A: What is a Project?

1. Project introduction

HRC Projects should address well-defined research questions with the aim of making significant improvements in, or developing knowledge contributing to, health outcomes. The HRC will offer contracts worth \$400,000 per year to a maximum value of \$1,200,000 for a three to five-year term, or pro rata for a shorter contract. For example, a two-year project may have a budget of up to \$800,000 or a five-year project may have a budget of up to \$1,200,000 but most projects have a term of three years with a budget of \$1,200,000.

Applicants who submit randomised controlled trial project applications are able to request an increase in budget cap to a maximum of no more than 20% (\$1,440,000), if required. At the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage, applicants are advised to include a comment in their application that they anticipate seeking an increase in budget cap (should the EOI be successful) but no specific budget details are required at this stage.

2. Research Investment Streams

The HRC has established four Research Investment Streams (RIS) for the annual funding round:

- Health and Wellbeing in New Zealand: Keeping populations healthy and independent throughout life.
- Improving Outcomes for Acute and Chronic Conditions in New Zealand: Improving outcomes for people with illness or injury.
- Rangahau Hauora Māori: Supporting Māori health research that upholds rangatiratanga and utilises and advances Māori knowledge, resources, and people.
- New Zealand Health Delivery: Improving health and disability service delivery outcomes over the short-to-medium term.

Note: For the 2021 annual funding round, the New Zealand Health Delivery investment stream will be run out-of-cycle to the other investment streams.

Applicants must select one RIS. The HRC does not provide advice on choice of RIS, as that decision is best made by the investigator. Applicants may change their final choice of RIS by creating duplicate applications and making a decision for the most appropriate RIS before the closing date for registration or submission. For Project applications, the RIS cannot be changed between the EOI and Full stages.

3. Previous funding round success rate

Success rates for the 2020 funding round in each RIS are presented below:

RIS	EOI	Full	Funded
Health and Wellbeing in NZ	108	30	10
Improving Outcomes for Acute and Chronic Conditions in NZ	231	72	29
Rangahau Hauora Māori	14	7	4
Total	353	109	43

4. Rules regarding named investigators on Programme contracts

A 'named investigator' (NI) may lead only one HRC research Programme at a time but may collaborate and be funded as a NI on other HRC research contracts.

5. Rules regarding named investigators on Project contracts

There is a limit of **three** project applications for any one first-named investigator.

The same proposal cannot be submitted to different HRC funds, e.g. HRC Project, Rangahau Hauora Māori Project or Pacific Project, as this creates avoidable duplication of both application and assessment effort.

6. Important note – use of forms

Use these guidelines and the 2021 Project EOI Form when submitting a Project EOI Application for the Health and Wellbeing (HW) and Improving Outcomes for Acute and Chronic Conditions (IOACC) RIS.

Use the separate guidelines and forms (2021 Rangahau Hauora Māori Project EOI Form) when submitting a Project EOI Application for the Rangahau Hauora Māori RIS.

Use the separate guidelines and forms (2021 Pacific Project EOI Form) when submitting a Project EOI Application for a Pacific Project.

For the New Zealand Health Delivery (NZHD) RIS, use the separate guidelines and forms when submitting a NZHD application.

7. Project assessment process

Project applications, via a two-stage process, are assessed through several steps:

- An assessing committee meeting to assess EOI applications and select applications to invite for Full Applications.
- Review of the Full Applications by external reviewers.
- An assessing committee meeting to assess Full Applications.
- Grant Approval Committee (GAC) meeting to make the final recommendation for Council approval.
- Funding decisions by HRC Council.

For more details, please refer to the HRC Peer Review Manual which can be found on HRC Gateway.

Part B: What is an Expression of Interest (EOI)?

The EOI provides an overview of the proposed research and is the first stage of a two-stage application process for HRC Projects. The EOI is intended to provide sufficient information to enable the assessment of the score criteria and make an overall recommendation as to whether there is merit in inviting a full application. Although short in length, applicants must demonstrate a credible level of critical thinking (and action as appropriate) across all the score domains. Host organisations have an important role in supporting applicants to present their EOI in a clear and compelling manner. It is recognised that the level of detail able to be provided is restricted by the page limit, and assessors are encouraged to give consideration to this. The proposed research in the EOI must be substantially the same as that in the Full Application. Failure to do so will result in the disqualification of the Full Application.

There are 3 modules in an EOI application form. Module 1 is completed on HRC Gateway. All investigators must have an HRC Gateway account and current profile so that they can be included on an application. Module 2 is on a separate document (2021 Project EOI Form) that is completed offline and then uploaded using HRC Gateway. Module 3 is completed on the NZ Standard CV template and uploaded to HRC Gateway. The table outlines the process for submitting an EOI Application.

Applicants must allow time for host Research Office approval and processing of applications prior to final submission to HRC.

Event	Description	Date
EOI Opens	EOI round opens in Gateway	Opens 10 June 2020
Registration Closes	Registration deadline in Gateway	Closes 10 July 2020
EOI Closes	Complete online sections & upload 2021 Project EOI Form	Closes 17 July 2020
EOI Assessment	Review by HRC Assessing Committee	During September 2020
EOI results	EOI results	6 October 2020

Part C: General rules for submitting a Project EOI application

1. Use of 2021 Project EOI Forms

1.1 When to use the 2021 Project EOI Form

The 2021 Project EOI Form must be used when submitting a Project Expression of Interest for the Health and Wellbeing and Improving Outcomes for Acute and Chronic Conditions investment streams. For Rangahau Hauora Māori use the 2021 RHM Project EOI Form. Use the 2021 Pacific Project EOI Form for Pacific Project applications.

1.2 Prior to submission

The HRC only accepts applications on HRC Gateway. Prior to any submission, named investigators must have a current Gateway account, that must be updated annually. Key opening and due dates are in Section 4 below.

Before submitting this application form, applicants should read:

- This document for eligibility and specific instructions
- Research Investment Stream details
- The appropriate Peer Review Manual to understand application assessment
- Guidelines on Ethics in Health Research
- Guidelines on Health Research involving Māori
- Guidelines for Pacific Health Research
- HRC Research Impact Slideshow
- Māori Health Advancement Guidelines.

The regularly updated reference documents and forms are on HRC Gateway.

1.3 New host organisation

New host organisations that have not previously been funded by the HRC will be required to provide due diligence information before a contract can be offered. Please contact the HRC for further information. The host organisation is the institution or organisation that will be responsible for ensuring an awarded grant is completed according to the requirements of this grant type.

2. Format

2.1 General formatting

Proposals must be written in a clear, concise manner with sufficient detail to enable the reviewers to understand the scope and implications of the proposal.

Applications must be in English or te reo Māori; if in te reo Māori a translation in English must also be provided (any translation will not be included in the page limit).

Use the correct HRC form as it contains special features.

Applicants must:

- Use Arial 10-point type font or larger
- Use default margins
- Use single line spacing
- Not exceed any page limits.

2.2 Compliance

The HRC will not process any application that does not comply with stated page limits and font sizes/styles.

2.3 Additional documents

No other documents are to be included.

3. Copies of applications required

3.1 Electronic copy

Submit the form as a PDF file. Ensure that the PDF version meets page limits and that graphics and tables are converted correctly from the Word version.

The HRC Gateway will allocate file names.

Important

The application is submitted to the host Research Office when the applicant uploads the files through HRC Gateway. The application will be forwarded to the HRC after host Research Office approval. Always allow sufficient time before the HRC closing date for this approval step. For organisations without a Research Office, the application will be forwarded directly to the HRC.

3.2 Do not send files

Do not send digital files directly to the HRC. Independent researchers and research providers requiring assistance with using HRC Gateway should contact the HRC in the first instance.

4. Closing dates for EOI

4.1 Submission of EOI application online

Upload the 2021 Project EOI Form using HRC Gateway.

Submit the form as a PDF file created by using the PDF function in MSWord or other PDF generator. Ensure that the PDF version meets page limits and that graphics and tables are satisfactorily presented. HRC Gateway will allocate file names.

The EOI application is submitted in two parts. The first part involves submitting a registration via HRC Gateway by **1pm, 10 July 2020**. The closing date for online submission of the EOI to the HRC is **1pm, 17 July 2020**. The EOI is released to the HRC only after approval by the Research Office (for organisations with Research Offices). It must be submitted to the **HRC** online by closing date and time.

4.2 Incomplete applications

Incomplete applications will be regarded as withdrawn.

5. Privacy provisions

5.1 Statistical and reporting purposes

The information provided in an application will be used for assessing that application and, in a non-identifiable form, some information will be used for HRC statistical and reporting purposes. The HRC undertakes to store all applications in a secure place, which may include the New Zealand Research Information System (NZRIS) curated by MBIE with details provided by funders of the science sector.

5.2 Personal information

Personal information contained in the application will be available to members of the HRC Committees, and to external reviewers relevant to the review of the application.

5.3 Media release

The HRC publishes details of research contracts including named investigators, host institution, research title, lay summaries and the amount of funding awarded, for public interest purposes and to meet the statutory requirements of the Health Research Council Act 1990.

5.4 Official Information Act

Official Information Act requests for information about an application or research contract will be discussed with the host institution and investigator before responding to the request. Where appropriate, the request may be transferred to the host institution.

6. Enquiries

All enquiries related to HRC applications are be directed in the first instance to the Research Office of the applicant's host institution.

Where the Research Office cannot assist, or for technical enquiries relating to applications, contact the HRC's staff:

<https://www.hrc.govt.nz/contact-us>

Email addresses are "firstnameinitial+surname@hrc.govt.nz", eg. Jane Smith, jsmith@hrc.govt.nz.

Part D: Submitting an EOI – completion of the 2021 Project EOI Form

Module 1 of the EOI application must be completed on HRC Gateway. The 2021 Project EOI Form contains a coversheet and Module 2 of the EOI application. The form can be downloaded and completed before being uploaded to HRC Gateway as a PDF file. Module 3 is completed on the NZ Standard CV template and uploaded to HRC Gateway. The completed application (Modules 1-3) will be compiled by HRC Gateway; it can then be accessed for downloading and printing.

Note: By submitting an application to the HRC on Gateway the applicant is confirming that the submitted application complies with all requirements including formatting and page limits. The HRC will not accept changes after the closing date.

1. Use of 2021 Project EOI Form

Please use the original 2021 Project EOI Form as it contains special features:

- Complete all sections following the instructions on the form and described in the Guidelines.
- Enter the HRC Ref ID and NI Surname on coversheet.
- **HRC Gateway will remove the coversheet from the final system-generated PDF.**

2. Module 1: General information

This Module must be completed in HRC Gateway. Start the application process by clicking on the 'Apply now' button on the 2021 Projects information page. The 'Apply now' button will only appear when the application submission period is open. Clicking on the 'Apply now' button will open a dialog form when the following information will be required.

1st Step

The applicant will first be required to select a research investment stream, enter a research title and select a host organisation (there will also be options to select a specific Research Office and Research Office contact if applicable).

Research Investment Stream

Select the Research Investment Stream for the project.

The HRC cannot re-assign applications that are entered into the wrong stream. If you wish to change streams while applying, you need to create a new registration on Gateway.

Research title

The research title should be succinct and clearly describe the proposed project. The title must not exceed 80 characters, including spaces and punctuation (e.g. 'growth factors' contains 14 characters). Do not use all uppercase type.

Host organisation

The host organisation is the organisation that will be responsible for administering any contract awarded. For example, for those applicants at Wellington School of Medicine, Dunedin School of Medicine or Christchurch School of Medicine, the host institution is the University of Otago.

Select the relevant 'host organisation' from the drop-down list (this shows host organisations currently recognised by the HRC). If applicable, a specific Research Office and Research Office contact will be able to be selected.

Please note: If your host organisation does not appear in the drop-down list, please tick the check box 'My host organisation is not in the list'. A field 'Host organisation details' will appear in the next section and the name of the host organisation should be entered here.

If the host organisation has a Research Office with more than one staff member, please select the contact in the office who will most likely be handling the application, or who will be the principal contact.

If the host organisation has more than one Research Office, please select which office will be handling the application.

2nd Step

First named investigator (First NI)

Some of this information will be automatically populated from the First NI's profile in Gateway (e.g. organisation and department). If the profile is not current, details must be updated. The details listed on the application will be automatically refreshed after the profile is updated. Click on the 'Update' button to enter and update the information requested.

The First NI will be considered the first point of contact during the application and assessment process, and will be understood to be acting for, and in concurrence with, the other NIs. All correspondence for the application will be addressed to this person and the host. Once an application is created, the first NI cannot be changed.

3rd Step

Click on the 'Update' button to enter details for the following fields.

Note: if a field does not need to be completed until the full application stage, there will be a blank space next to that field – information will only be able to be entered at the full application stage.

Named investigators (NIs)

All NIs must be registered users of HRC Gateway before they can be added to the application. User profiles must be updated by each named investigator before submitting an application so that the current details are in the application. Click on the "Update" button to enter additional information as requested. All NIs on successful applications may be cited by the HRC in its various communication channels.

Role in project should include brief information on what the investigator will undertake in the project (1-2 sentences max).

Information on ethnicity, gender and whether the researcher is a clinician (and is practicing) is used for HRC information purposes only. Please note that ethnicity, iwi, clinician, or practising clinician are not required to be entered as these details will automatically populate from the individual person profiles. Each named investigator will need to sign-in to HRC Gateway and check and update their details before EOI applications are submitted.

You may wish to designate a hapū, iwi or Māori organisation conducting the research that needs to be acknowledged in their own right as investigators on the application. It is still essential to list supporting NIs.

The HRC has updated how it captures FTE in the EOI application, utilising the following FTE 'bands':

- 3% - 10% (Low FTE)
- 11% - 40% (Medium FTE)
- 41% - 100% (High FTE)

Selecting an **FTE band** for each NI is required at EOI stage, as the assessing committee needs to know the level of commitment or responsibility of each team member. It is particularly important to identify more junior investigators who may undertake key components for the proposed research.

Research location(s)

This is the specific department(s) and organisation where the majority of research or data analysis will be undertaken.

Discipline

Select from the drop-down box.

Duration

Enter the proposed term of the research (months).

Type of research

Choose from the dropdown list what you consider the most appropriate term for broadly describing the research proposal for assessment purposes. The HRC reserves the right to assign applications to the most appropriate Science Assessing Committee.

Commencement date

Enter the proposed commencement date. Please note that contracts cannot be activated until 1 July 2021 at the earliest. Recipients are required to begin within three months of contract offer.

Lay summary

The lay summary should summarise the intent of the research, planned methodologies, as well as the potential health benefits or outcomes that could arise as a result of the HRC supporting this application. This information will be used to inform the Council in the final approval process if the application is recommended for funding. The lay summary will also be publicised through the HRC's communication channels (e.g. website) and should be written to be readily understood by members of the public (150-word limit). This may be modified slightly for the full stage application.

ANZSRC and keywords

This information is for HRC evaluation purposes only.

Categorise the proposed research using the ANZSRC codes for the Fields of Research (FOR) and Socioeconomic Objective (SEO). Enter the percentage to the nearest 10% for each category to a total of 100%.

Enter keywords that categorise the research.

3. Module 2: Proposed research

The page limit for this Section is **3 ½ - pages (not including references)**.

The section headings provided must be used. The assessing committee membership is broadly discipline-based, matched to the range of applications assigned to that committee, so not all members will have working knowledge of every research topic. Write the proposal for scientists with a general understanding of the research area.

The use of graphics and tables is an efficient use of space. Ensure that the format of non-text content is compatible with PDF conversion software.

Rationale for research

Provide the research rationale with a robust demonstration of the research gap and a statement of purpose or research aims for scientific enquiry, hypothesis, new knowledge, technical advance and innovation.

Demonstrate that you have adequately reviewed what is already known in the area and that there is a clear case for further research. For example, refer to systematic reviews or an otherwise robust demonstration of a research gap. Include information that is essential for the reader to better appreciate or understand why your proposed research should be undertaken. What is the significant/important gap in knowledge, policy, practice or service delivery that your research will address? How does your proposed research build on existing knowledge and evidence, and how will it contribute to, or align with, research currently being undertaken either nationally or internationally? For example, is it unique to New Zealand? What is the significance of the health issue for New Zealand health and society? Has responsiveness to Māori been considered? Is this an extension of current ongoing research, e.g. additional tests or sampling? Preliminary or published data?

Research design and methods

Provide sufficient details for technical assessment of scientific protocol, feasibility and validity of data.

Include sufficient detail of study design and methods so that an assessment can be made of its appropriateness, robustness and/or innovativeness. This might include a description of subject recruitment and characteristics (including number, gender and ethnicity where relevant), study methodology, and proposed methods of data collection and analysis. Clinical trial applications are to include a description of data and safety monitoring arrangements. Where appropriate, provide an estimate of the likely effect size and the sample size required to detect this (power analysis). Indication of timelines for the research should be included. Consultation with specialists such as methodologists, statisticians, health economists, consumers, and Māori (if appropriate) before finalising your research design is recommended.

The Science Assessing Committees need this information to judge and appropriately score this criterion, so ensure that the practicalities are clearly stated, i.e. what will be done, how, by whom, where and when; preliminary data can be included.

Research impact

*Note: applicants for all investment streams are no longer required to link their impact section to the Goals of the relevant investment signal. This is to encourage applicants to consider all potential ways in which their proposal can add value for NZ, and what actions within their influence can help achieve this potential. Assessment of Impact for these streams has been restructured to include two components: 1) a **description** of how your research might be used and the anticipated benefits for NZ, and 2) the **action plan** to maximise the use and benefits of the research. See the HRC's Research Impact Slideshow for additional guidance on completing this section.¹*

What types of benefits are expected to arise from your research, and **who will benefit?**

This section should provide a realistic description of how research findings could contribute to improved health or other societal benefits over time (a 'line of sight' or 'pathway' to impact). Importantly, it should also identify the more immediate benefits, and users of the research who will form a focal point for your Action Plan (below). The balance between describing short-term benefits and potential longer-term impact will be dependent on the specific research context, with emphasis on considerations within your sphere of influence throughout the life of the research project.

The HRC's Research Impact Slideshow includes discussion of elements that should be covered in this section, including the **types of benefits and research users**, and the **geographical distribution of benefits** (such as how contribution to international research effort will benefit NZ). Research-related benefits, such as capacity and capability gains for NZ, and influence on future research agenda-setting, may be included where relevant.

What specific activities will you undertake, throughout the life of the research project, to maximise the use and benefits of your research?

Describe what targeted actions have been, or will be, taken² to improve the likelihood of research uptake and impact, and to ensure that the next users or end users (identified in the previous section) can meaningfully contribute to, and/or benefit from, the research. Describe other planned dissemination activities that are designed to reach broader audiences. Who can enable the uptake of your research, and how have they been involved in your research? Identify uncertainties to uptake, or systematic/institutional barriers, and your mitigation strategies (where relevant).

¹ Consult the HRC's Research Impact Slideshow for further discussion on the types of benefits that can arise from health research, and where these benefits might be expected to occur along a pathway to impact.

² Consult HRC Guidelines and funding rules for information on support of knowledge transfer activities and include these activities in objectives/milestones where appropriate. Progress against implementing the action plan will form part of the milestones HRC monitors with respect to contractual compliance and delivery.

What elements of the **team's track record of knowledge transfer** provide confidence in the likelihood of research uptake? For example: existing links, relationships, or networks with relevant research next-users or end-users; demonstrable examples of knowledge mobilisation, or changes in health outcomes or societal impact generated from similar research. This component is considered relative to opportunity.

Māori health advancement

For the 2021 funding round, an additional scoring criterion has been added for Projects assessment: Māori Health Advancement.

The HRC expects applicants for HRC research funding to consider all potential ways in which their proposal will advance Māori health, and to outline what actions they will undertake to help achieve this potential. Assessment of Māori health advancement will explicitly consider two components:

- An outline of contributions the research may make to advancing Māori health.
- Specific actions that have been, and will be, undertaken to realise the contribution to advancing Māori health through the life of the project and also beyond it.

All applicants for HRC funding will be required to address these two questions in their proposals. In responding to these questions, applicants should consider how their research is informed by the four domains of Māori health advancement (see the Māori Health Advancement Guidelines for more details). Researchers are encouraged to consider the domains during development of their research, as this may identify aspects of the research not previously considered. It is not a requirement that all four domains are specifically addressed in the proposal, but researchers are advised to consider each in formulating the strongest rationale for the application.

Consideration of Māori health advancement is context-specific, as determined by the nature and scope of the research.

Alignment of the response to the 'Māori health advancement' criterion and other assessment criteria will strengthen an application.

1. How will the outcomes of your research contribute to Māori health advancement?

Provide a realistic description of how this research could contribute to improved Māori health outcomes or reductions in inequity over time. Consideration should be given to potential short-term and/or longer-term Māori health gains, within the specific context of the research and where it is positioned along the research pathway (cf. potential 'line of sight' or 'pathway' to impact). In addition, more immediate users and beneficiaries of the research who can utilise the research findings for Māori health gain should be identified.

2. What activities have you already undertaken (that are relevant to this project), and what will you undertake during this project, that will realise your research contribution to Māori health advancement?

Describe specific actions that have been, and will be, undertaken (from the development of the research idea through to the completion of the project) to maximise the likelihood that this research will contribute to Māori health advancement. Outline actions taken to ensure that the next users or beneficiaries of the research can utilise the findings for Māori health gain.

If the research is not expected to make direct contributions to Māori health, identify actions that will be undertaken throughout the life of the project to contribute to other facets of Māori health advancement. Identify barriers to actioning your aspirations for advancing Māori health, and your mitigation strategies (where relevant). Identify elements of the team's track record that provide confidence that this research will optimally contribute to Māori health advancement. For example: existing links, relationships, or networks with relevant Māori communities and next-users or end-users of research; demonstrable examples of knowledge translation and uptake; or changes to practice or policy that have enhanced equity and advanced Māori health. This component is considered relative to opportunity (i.e. stage of career progression, nature of research, and institutional capacity and capability).

Expertise and track record of the research team

Evidence that the team has the experience, qualifications and infrastructure to deliver the research. The role of each team member is required.

Include a brief description of the team's track record, related to the proposal area, to demonstrate the ability to deliver proposed study outcomes. Highlight important skills and/or expertise in the team that would support delivery of the proposed research. Give consideration to capacity building.

Describe any career disruptions, and their impact, that may be relevant to your career history. A career disruption is defined as a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work due to pregnancy, major illness/injury, parental leave, and/or carer responsibilities.

Clearly define the role, expertise and track record of each member of the team giving particular weight to those with high FTE commitments to the project. Team members' unique identifiers on publication databases such as Scopus or Google Scholar may be provided in relation to their FTE. Justification for staff roles should be provided. The role and FTE band of each team member is required in Module 1. Please state if you have previously collaborated with the team assembled for this proposal. Note that changes in the research team between the EOI and the Full application require HRC's prior approval. In addition, state how you have utilised previous funding resources and your productivity.

The HRC recognises that applicants with experience in sectors other than public sector research may have gained valuable expertise or produced outputs (e.g. patents) relevant to research translation, and this may have limited the applicant's opportunity to produce more traditional research outputs.

References (one page)

Put references in this part of the form after the 3 pages describing the proposed research. Do not extend the research description onto the references page.

Details must include a **full list of all author(s)**, title of article, journal, year, volume and page numbers. Asterisks are to be placed beside applicants' publications. If references are multi-authored, there is discretion to limit the author list to a more convenient number to fit any space limitations.

Reference to Māori terms in the application with brief interpretation should be included here.

4. Module 3: NZ standard CV

Note: Two CVs can be provided at this stage.

Upload the CV of the 'first named investigator' who has overall responsibility for the Project, and another named investigator who may be most involved in the day-to-day research activity of the Project, on HRC Gateway. The NZ Standard CV template is downloadable from the HRC website.

Applications must use the original CV formatting including the default font and page limits. The HRC will not accept any other form of CV.