

August 2022

2023 PROGRAMME APPLICATION GUIDELINES

To use with the following form:

2023 Programme Application Form



[New Zealand Government](#)

www.hrc.govt.nz

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Part A: What is an HRC Research Programme?

1. Introduction

Health Research Council 'programmes' have a 5-year term and a budget of up to \$5,000,000. They are intended to provide support for the long-term development of a research field by a group of established investigators, with an outstanding track record of achievement. Collaboration between research groups and institutions is encouraged. Programmes will focus on specific research objectives that deliver outputs and outcomes with a pathway to impact, rather than inputs. The HRC supports research programmes with strategic, long-term visions that promote development of knowledge relevant to the health needs of New Zealand.

Programmes require three or more established researchers who are responsible for the scientific direction and quality of the research. A successful funding history of peer-reviewed contracts and knowledge translation by the proposed named investigators is required. Named investigators will also be expected to have had an outstanding track record of achievement in health research and to provide support for those seeking training in health research. Salaries of investigators within a research programme do not need to be funded by the Council, but each named investigator is expected to devote a substantial and specified portion of time to the research programme.

A programme application not meeting the criteria will sometimes be accepted based on the nature of the proposed research, e.g. when the budget for a clinical trial exceeds the Project budget maximum. Written approval for this exception must be obtained from the HRC before submission of the application.

If the HRC already has a significant investment in a research area, particularly if it already has a programme in the area, consideration will be given to whether increased capacity and additional long-term commitment of funds to this research area is warranted. The appropriateness of programme investment in any research area shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

2. Programme categories

Applicants **must** select one of the following programme categories:

- **Rangahau Hauora Māori Programme:** Supporting Māori health research that upholds rangatiratanga and utilises and advances Māori knowledge, resources, and people.
- **General Programme:** All other types of health research, including research that might be submitted through Pacific or Health Delivery investment categories that are separate in other HRC award types, and research that would previously have been submitted to the 'Health and Wellbeing in New Zealand' and 'Improving Outcomes for Acute and Chronic Conditions in New Zealand' research investment streams.

The HRC does not provide advice on category selection, as that decision is best made by the investigator. Applicants may create and draft duplicate applications, one in each category, and choose which one to submit before the closing date.

3. Programme director requirements

Resourcing a team with \$5,000,000 of taxpayers' investment requires a significant degree of accountability to be demonstrated with regard to managing the size and complexity of an HRC programme. A proven record of managing projects of a sizeable nature is therefore required. We will revise these criteria from time to time. Specified dates are to allow clarity in decisions on what funding meets the requirements.

A proposed programme director must meet one of the following requirements at the due date of application (14 October 2022):

1a) Director on a current HRC programme contract with no more than one year to run, i.e., director of a current programme contract that will expire before 14 October 2023; or

1b) Director on a current HRC programme contract which had an original end date before 14 October 2023 and:

- has been extended due to the impacts of COVID-19 with a new end date before 14 October 2024;
- AND has a significantly reduced programme of work to be completed in the period of the extension. The HRC will assess each case and will have the final say on whether the extension meets our judgement of 'significantly reduced'. This will include limited milestones to be completed and a significant reduction in the overall team FTE, including that of the director.

A programme director can only lead one programme except for the overlap allowed above.

2) Director of an HRC programme contract in the past five years, i.e., director of a programme contract that expired after 14 October 2017.

3) First named investigator on at least two HRC, or comparable national or international agency Project contracts that are current or have expired in the 24 months before 14 October 2022; i.e., a track record of current or recent research funding and experience in managing several research activities with other researchers.

4) First named investigator on one HRC, or comparable national or international agency Project contract, that is current or completed in the 12 months before 14 October 2022, and proposing to lead a programme team consisting of at least two other first named investigators on Project contracts from the HRC, or comparable national or international agency, that are current or completed in the 24 months before 14 October 2022; i.e. has recent or current research funding, teamed with at least two other researchers with recent or current funding and collectively managing several projects with related themes.

5) Director on an application that was shortlisted for and assessed by the Programme Assessing Committee in the previous round.

In this context, any health research Project of similar value and term to an HRC Project, typically \$1,200,000 for 3 years, from an agency that allocates funds using internationally accepted contestable processes and peer review, e.g. Marsden fund, MBIE Endeavour fund, NHMRC, NIH and MRC. Only HRC Projects awarded in the annual contestable round, similar value HRC Partnership projects, but not Feasibility Study Grants, Emerging Researcher First Grants, HRC Fellowships and awards less than \$500,000, qualify for inclusion in these requirements. Grants valued at around \$800,000 due to a lower overhead could also be considered for inclusion.

An HRC programme director must assign at least 20% FTE to the programme and have New Zealand as their principal domicile (see definition in the HRC Rules) and their principal place of employment. Note: Host organisations are responsible for ensuring that New Zealand is the principal domicile and principal place of employment for the applicant. By submitting an application, the host is satisfied that this condition has been met).

The programme director may not submit more than one programme application in a round.

The HRC welcomes proposals with programme co-directors under circumstances that would result in a research team of exceptional strength, such as interdisciplinary work. When a proposal is submitted with a co-director, the above requirements apply to both the director and co-director as individuals or in combination e.g. eligibility criteria 3 could be met by the director and co-director acting as first named investigator on one project each (in which case at least one of the projects must be current at the time of application). The sum of FTE for director and co-director must be at least 30% FTE. Residency conditions apply to both. The addition of a programme co-director is an opportunity to facilitate a broader range of skills, expertise, and diverse representation, and to encourage the development of leaders.

These criteria will be revised from time to time.

4. Research Programme qualifying parameters

It is recognised that awarding of programme status in any funding round may be restricted based on available funds. As such, the funding of a programme will be based on its ability to deliver quality research outcomes and potential impacts. Applicants should therefore ensure that their proposal demonstrates that their research programme can meet the following parameters:

- Māori health advancement: The research group's policies, general activities and research proposal with respect to Māori health advancement should be evident.
- Host organisation: The group of researchers applying for a programme should have strong support from their respective host organisation(s).
- Research team: It is the intent of the HRC to foster collaborative research efforts of multiple investigators. Evaluation of any programme will consider the strength of each member of its team of researchers. Named investigators should have an extensive track record of achievement (including peer-reviewed research contracts and publications).
- Qualifying research: Programmes should represent a substantive body of ongoing research, i.e. encompassed in a minimum of three distinct objectives addressing a common theme.
- Strategic nature of the proposed research programme: Priority will be given to the establishment of strategic research programmes that demonstrate a collaborative approach to improvements in health. Priority will also be given to programmes which demonstrate well-developed links from basic/fundamental to applied health research, and which are likely to impact on the health of New Zealanders.
- International competitiveness of the research: Preference will be given to research that is at the forefront of international research efforts, i.e. research areas in which New Zealand is at a particular advantage or which are 'leading edge' within their respective discipline.
- Collaboration: Interaction with other research groups, and if appropriate, connection with health services providers and the health policy development process are desirable.
- Training: Opportunities for young investigators should exist or be developed within the programme.

5. Negotiation of contract details

Following the approval by Council of a research programme, the HRC will negotiate with the director and the host organisation to confirm:

- the research objectives to be supported
- the final programme budget
- FTE commitments to the contract
- any funding to be provided by other agencies in support of the programme research objectives.

6. Overview of assessment process for HRC research programmes

Assessment of programme applications shall be the responsibility of a disciplined-based Science Assessing Committee (SAC) and the Programme Assessing Committee (PAC). These assessments inform final decisions on outcomes for 2023 Programme applications by the HRC Council.

Applications are assessed through several stages:

- The applications will be assessed by external reviewers and applicants will be able to comment in response to reviewer reports during the rebuttal period.
- The applications, supported by reviewer reports and applicant rebuttals, will be assessed and scored by a SAC, as described in Appendix 4.
- Applications will be shortlisted for PAC informed by the SAC outcomes. Applications that are not shortlisted for PAC will be declined at this point in the process.
- Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview with PAC and will then be assessed and scored by PAC on the following equally weighted criteria: quality of health research (20%), potential for outcomes (20%), vision of programme (20%), Māori health advancement (20%), research team collaboration and integration (20%).
- Scores from both PAC and SAC contribute to final ranking and funding outcomes determined by the HRC Council.
- Outcomes for research programme applications will be communicated in June of the year following submission.

For further information about scoring criteria, please refer to Appendices 4-7.

Part B: General rules for 2023 Programme applications

1. Programme application components

All 2023 Programme applications must be created, completed, and submitted via HRC Gateway. For some modules of the application, forms need to be downloaded from HRC Gateway, completed, and then uploaded to the application in HRC Gateway. Other required supporting documents also need to be uploaded to the application in HRC Gateway.

Once all components of the application are complete and all supporting documents attached, the application must be compiled and submitted via HRC Gateway.

Also note that prior to submission, all named investigators must have a current HRC Gateway account (updated within 12 months prior to submission).

Forms

These two forms must be used for research programme applications in any category:

- 2023 Programme application form (Word template)
- 2023 Programme budget form (Excel template)

The HRC templates for the above must be downloaded from the 2023 Programmes information page in HRC Gateway. Do not use any other templates; these have special features required for HRC processing.

The forms should be completed in Word and Excel, respectively, and then uploaded to the application in HRC Gateway. Note that the application form must be uploaded as a PDF, while the budget form must be uploaded as both Excel (.xlsx) and PDF formats.

2. Guidelines

Before submitting an application, applicants should read:

- this guideline for eligibility and specific instructions for 2023 Programme applications
- Guidelines on Health Research involving Māori
- Māori Health Advancement Guidelines
- Guidelines for Pacific Health Research
- Guidelines on Ethics in Health Research
- HRC Research Impact Slideshow
- ARRIVE guidelines for animal research (if applicable)
- Peer Review Manual

3. Host organisations

The host organisation is the organisation, institution or company that will be offered a contract with the HRC to deliver the activities described in the application, if it is successful. The host organisation will be responsible for ensuring that the contracted activities are completed according to the contract, the HRC Rules, and the requirements of this grant type.

Organisations that have not previously been funded as the host organisation on a research contract with the HRC will be required to provide due diligence information before a contract can be offered. The HRC will provide further information and relevant forms for the organisation to complete following a successful outcome for the application.

4. Proposals

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. Please note assessing committee membership is composed of a broad range of expertise.

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).

Applicants must:

- use Arial 10-point type font or larger
- use default margins
- use single line spacing
- not exceed page limits.

The HRC will not process any application that does not comply with the above.

5. Application registration and submission

5.1 Registration

Although there is not a separate closing date for registration of applications, this step is still required and must be signed off by the applicant's host Research Office (for organisations with Research Offices) before the HRC Reference ID# is issued, and so that the full application can be completed. The HRC recommends completing the registration as soon as possible after applications open.

5.2 Submission

The closing date for submitted applications to be released to the HRC, in HRC Gateway, is **1pm on 14 October 2022**. No applications will be accepted **after 1pm** on the closing date unless **written** authorisation has been received from the HRC.

Important: Applications are released to the HRC only after approval by the application host organisation's Research Office or equivalent. Applicants should submit their application before their host organisation's internal submission deadline, which is usually several working days before the HRC closing date to allow for host internal processing.

For host organisations without a Research Office, the application will be forwarded directly to the HRC.

5.3 Cautions

The HRC manages an assessment process that benefits greatly from the contributions of a large number of experts who act as peer reviewers and committee members. The HRC values the time of these very busy experts, as well as the effort of our applicants, and is not able to accept applications that do not meet our requirements or timelines. Please avoid these common pitfalls:

Do not send applications or supporting documents to the HRC via email or any means other than submission in HRC Gateway.

Researchers at host organisations with a Research Office (or equivalent) must have their application approved for it to be released to the HRC and must allow the appropriate time for that prior to the HRC's closing deadline. All queries regarding applications should be directed to the host's Research Office rather than to the HRC directly.

Independent researchers, researchers whose host organisation does not have a Research Office, and Research Office staff requiring assistance with using HRC Gateway should contact the HRC in the first instance.

Incomplete applications will be deleted from HRC Gateway after the closing date.

6. Privacy provisions

6.1 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 the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment with details provided by funders of the science sector.

6.2 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.

6.3 Media release

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

6.4 Official Information Act

Official Information Act requests for information about an application or research contract, beyond information that has already been publicly disclosed, will be discussed with the host institution and investigator before responding to the request. Where appropriate, the request may be transferred to the host organisation.

7. Enquiries

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

If your organisation does not have a Research Office or where the Research Office cannot assist, or for technical enquiries relating to applications, contact the HRC: info@hrc.govt.nz

Part C: Registering, completing and submitting a 2023 Programme application

Module 1 of the application must be completed in HRC Gateway to register the application and receive an HRC Reference ID#. This registration step must be approved by the host organisation's research office, if it has one, to allow completion and submission of the full application.

Module 5 contains named investigator CVs that must be uploaded separately.

Module 6 is the research classification for the proposal and must be completed in HRC Gateway.

The complete application with all Modules and uploaded documents will be compiled by HRC Gateway and can be downloaded and printed for checking prior to submission.

1. Module 1: Application details, investigators, objectives & milestones

This Module must be completed in HRC Gateway.

1.1 First step: Create application

Start the application process by clicking on the 'Apply now' button on the 2023 Programmes 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.

First named investigator

Please note that the first named investigator for the application will automatically be populated as the individual logged into HRC Gateway who is creating the application, and this cannot be changed. Therefore, the application must be created by the first named investigator, who must be the director for a Programme application.

The first named investigator 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 named investigators. All correspondence for the application will be addressed to this person and the host key contacts.

Programme category

Select the programme category for the application.

The HRC cannot re-assign applications that are entered into the wrong category. If you wish to change categories while applying, you need to register for and submit a new application in the correct category.

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 University of Otago's Wellington campus, 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 can 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 called '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.

1.2 Second step: Registration

The following additional information is required for registration. Click on the 'Update' button to enter details for the following fields.

- **Research location:** The specific department(s) and organisation where the majority of research activity (including data analysis) will be undertaken.
- **Discipline:** Select from the options in the drop-down box.
- **Type of research:** Select from the options in the drop-down box.

Note: Choose from the drop-down list what you consider the most appropriate term for broadly describing the research proposal for assessment purposes. Note that the HRC will assign applications to the most appropriate Science Assessing Committee.

- **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).

- **First named investigator** gender and ethnicity (automatically populated from Gateway profile – edit in profile if required).

Once you have completed the above information, click on the 'Submit to HRC' button to register and proceed to the full application.

1.3 Third step: Full application

Application details

In addition to the details entered during application creation and registration, click on the 'Update' button to complete the below fields:

- **Duration:** Intended duration in months, commonly 60 months (5 years) for a Programme
- **Commencement date:** Intended start date for contract if successful. Cannot be earlier than 1 July 2023, and should not be later than 1 October 2023 (recipients are required to begin within three months of contract offer, unless a different start date is approved by the HRC)

Support personnel: Can be added if applicable. Support personnel will be able to view and edit the application. Support personnel must **not** be named investigators or research office (or equivalent) staff. They must have an HRC Gateway account.

First named investigator (director)

Some of this information will be automatically populated from the first named investigator's profile on HRC Gateway. If the details pulled from the investigator's HRC Gateway profile are not current, they need to be updated in the profile rather than in the form. The details listed on the application will be automatically refreshed after the profile is updated.

Click on the 'Update' button to edit remaining fields. Note that the FTE of the first named investigator will default to 1 and can be edited.

The first named investigator's CV must be uploaded into this section using the 'Upload CV' button.

Named investigators

Click on the 'Add investigator' button to add each individual to the application. You will be able to search using their email OR first and last names OR HRC ID. Please add the co-director first (if applicable).

Named investigators' CVs must be uploaded into this section using the 'Upload CV' button.

All named investigators 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 the application so that the current details are in the application. Information on ethnicity, gender and whether the researcher is a clinician (and is practicing) is used for HRC information purposes only and will automatically populate from the individual person profiles.

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 named investigators.

All named investigators on successful applications may be cited by the HRC in its various communication channels.

Role in programme should include brief information on what the investigator will undertake in the programme (1-2 sentences max). If the programme has a co-director, this should be identified, and their role described, in this section.

Research costs

Click on the 'Update' button to enter the totals for staff costs, overhead, working expenses and total cost of research. The totals entered must match the totals in the uploaded budget form.

Unacceptable peer reviewers

Applicants are able to identify up to two individuals not acceptable as peer reviewers for the application. Click on the 'Update' button to enter the name, organisation, and reason for exclusion.

Objectives and milestones

Objectives and milestones are assessed, are included in research contracts, and are used for contract monitoring in progress and final reports.

Objectives

Briefly describe the intended objectives of this research application. Objectives should be **clear** and **measurable** to allow evaluation of research performance of an awarded contract. All objectives must be added before milestones can be added.

The HRC suggests a minimum of 3 objectives, with sufficient standalone operational detail and scientific information included to be able to inform progress assessment in subsequent years. There is no limit to the number of objectives and milestones.

Milestones

Provide key milestones that you aim to achieve by the end of each year of a resulting contract. Each milestone must relate to one or more of the objectives previously added.

For contract monitoring, and HRC accountability reporting, if the research requires ethics approval (human or animal), and/or clinical trial registration, these should be identified as separate Year 1 milestones, even if the applicant(s) expect to gain these approvals prior to commencement of the proposed research award.

Example milestones:

Year	Milestone	Objective(s)
1	Gain animal ethics approval	Objective 1
1	Complete animal study, data collection, and analysis	Objective 1
1	Register clinical trial prospectively in ANZCTR	Objective 2

1	Gain ethics approval for clinical trial	Objective 2
2	Publish results of lab-based study	Objective 1
2	Recruit 200 participants to clinical trial	Objective 2
3	Complete recruitment to clinical trial (300 total)	Objective 2
3	Complete statistical analysis of clinical trial	Objective 2
4	Submission of manuscript to NZMJ	All objectives

2. Modules 2, 3 and 4

These Modules are completed in forms that are then uploaded to the application in HRC Gateway. Detailed guidance on how to complete these Modules in the forms provided is included in **Part D** of this guidelines document.

Uploads

Upload the following documents into the 'Uploads' section of the application in HRC Gateway:

- **Full application proposal:** This is the completed 2023 Programme application form, converted to PDF format. This contains Module 2, Module 3, and Module 4 sections 4A-4D. Please check the PDF before uploading to ensure that all figures, tables, and text have converted intact, and that the application meets all other requirements detailed above.
- **Budget PDF:** This is the completed 2023 Programme budget form, converted to PDF format. This contains Module 4 sections 4E-4H that will be included in the compiled application. Please check the PDF before uploading to ensure that all sections are included.
- **Budget spreadsheet:** This is the completed 2023 Programme budget form, in .xlsx format.
- **Letters of collaboration/support documents:** Each letter or document listed in Module 4 section 4D of the application form should be uploaded here as a separate file in PDF format, up to a maximum of 15 documents.

3. Module 5: NZ standard CV

Use the NZ Standard CV template with default font from HRC Gateway. Do not exceed the page limits. The HRC will not accept any other form of CV.

The information provided in the CV **must be the same** as that provided elsewhere in the application and in the investigator's HRC Gateway profile.

The CV may indicate when career breaks (including pandemic-related disruptions) have taken place as track record will be assessed relative to opportunity.

4. Module 6: Classification

Click on the 'Update' button adjacent to each of the classifications required:

Classification of research is for HRC evaluation purposes only. The information is not used in allocating funding. Required details must be entered in HRC Gateway.

ANZSRC and keywords

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.

Economic benefits

Provide a brief description of any potential economic benefits you consider may arise from your research. If no direct economic benefits are anticipated, please state this rather than leaving the field blank. The HRC’s interpretation of economic benefits is broad and includes:

- contributing to maintaining a healthy and productive population
- contributing to an efficient and cost-effective health system, and
- value generated from IP and innovation.

Health issues

Applicants need to select the health issue that best describes their research and, if required, one secondary health issue.

Mapping category

Applicants need to select the one category that best describes the starting point for the proposed research. The following table provides a description of each category.

Mapping category	Description
Biomedical	
Gene	Research into the genetic basis of disease, identification of genes involved. Linkage analysis falls here and not under clinical studies.
Cell biology	Analysis of molecular-level interactions. This includes protein-protein interactions, determination of the function of genes involved in diseases, and whole cell studies (e.g. immunological studies, transfections, etc).
Physiology	This includes all physiology and anatomy. Animal models of disease are included in this category, and studies on host-pathogen interactions.
Diagnostics	This includes innovations, and the development/refinement of new or existing diagnostic tools.
Pharmaceuticals / treatments	This includes the development of new pharmaceuticals (drug design and development), as well as new treatments for diseases (e.g. vaccines, other therapies).
Clinical	
Clinical studies	Research involving human subjects. This excludes research in which samples from human subjects are used for fundamental biomedical research, such as genetic linkage analyses.
Clinical trials	Randomised clinical trials, usually randomised controlled clinical trials.
Health services	
Health economics	Research into the cost-effectiveness of treatments/services etc.
Clinical services	This includes primary and secondary care services. Access to and appropriateness of services are also included, and safety of services and compensation. Macro-level analysis of health system changes falls into this area.
Public health	
Knowledge resources	This includes all epidemiology, underpinning social science (qualitative and quantitative), development of tools and new methodologies, and development of indicators.
Risk factors	Research linking life experiences, behaviours, exposures etc. with health outcomes.

Mapping category	Description
Interventions	Research that includes the design and evaluation of interventions.
At-risk populations	Includes research on specific population groups. These groups may be based on age, ethnicity, occupation, etc. Includes research using diagnostics in a particular group.
Community services	Research around community-run services and community groups, e.g. Marae-based healthcare services.

Part D: Completing the 2023 Programme application and budget forms

The **2023 Programme application form** (Word template) contains a coversheet, Module 2, Module 3, and Module 4 sections 4A-4D. This must be downloaded and completed by applicants before being uploaded as a PDF file.

Section 4D is the Letters of collaboration/supporting documents. List the name of the documents in this form and upload each letter or supporting document as a separate file.

The **2023 Programme budget form** (Excel template) contains Module 4 sections 4E-4H. All sections must be completed and then the budget file uploaded to your application in HRC Gateway in both .xlsx and PDF formats.

1. Module 2: Research

1.1 Section 2A: Summary of proposed research programme (1 page only)

The summary should clearly describe goals and objectives, research plan (including outline of methods) and significance and/or relevance of the research programme. The summary should be a maximum of one page. A clear and succinct summary, including all the important points of the proposal, can help reviewers get an overview of the proposal, and is useful as a quick reference for Assessing Committees. Use the suggested headings and add others if required.

1.2 Section 2B: List of proposed research objectives

Use the table in the form to list the proposed research objectives/project within the programme and the named investigator leading that objective/project.

1.3 Section 2C: Description of proposed research programme (16-page maximum)

This section is for the applicants to provide an overall description of their research programme. The following should serve as headings and as a guide for completion of this section. Throughout this description, remember that readers include not only discipline-specific assessors (reviewers and Science Assessing Committees), but also the more **broadly** experienced Programme Assessing Committee. Usage of the terms 'objectives' and 'projects' are not tightly defined and in some contexts may be interchangeable. The following areas should be considered; it is easier to read the application when the headings and questions are not deleted:

- Describe the research objectives - How do they form a cohesive theme of research (use diagrams as appropriate)? For each objective, the rationale, design and methods, impact¹,

¹ <http://www.hrc.govt.nz/news-and-publications/publications/presentations>

Māori health advancement and research team track record should be covered as these are the scoring criteria assessed by the Science Assessing Committee (SAC). In addition, the SAC considers 'cohesiveness of research programme' and the Programme Assessing Committee will score 'quality of health research' and 'potential for outcomes'.

- The long-term research goals of the group as they relate to benefit for Aotearoa New Zealand. How will this programme help the group achieve its goals? 'Vision of Programme' is a scoring criterion assessed by the Programme Assessing Committee.
- The collective benefits of the programme and overall progress towards impact on improving human health, including clearly articulated potential benefits for population groups experiencing inequitable health outcomes. 'Potential for outcomes' is a scoring criterion assessed by the Programme Assessing Committee.
- The research programme's contribution to Māori health advancement. The following should be addressed:
 - How will the outcomes of your research contribute to Māori health advancement?
 - What activities have you already undertaken (that are relevant to this programme), and what will you undertake during this programme that will realise your research contribution to Māori health advancement?
 - Please note that potential benefits for other population groups experiencing inequitable health outcomes in Aotearoa New Zealand (e.g. Pacific peoples) should not be conflated with contributions to Māori health advancement, and will not be considered in assessment and scoring of the MHA criterion.
- Collaboration with other research groups and connection with the next-users and end-users of the research, including health services providers and the health policy development process (where appropriate).
- The staffing, management and organisation of the research programme, including leadership and communication, administrative mechanisms, resource and financial management. The group's productivity and synergy of skills. Declare any relevant career disruptions. 'Research team collaboration and integration' is a scoring criterion assessed by the Programme Assessing Committee.
- The training opportunities for young investigators that exist or will be developed within the programme. The leadership opportunities for mid-career researchers. The consideration of gender balance throughout the research team.
- The level of support and facilities provided by the host organisation.
- The group's track record of, and policies and practices for, the dissemination and uptake of research results. Include plans for stakeholder engagement and plans for maximising the potential use of research findings.

See Appendix 2 for further detail regarding the Māori health advancement criterion. This scoring criterion (20% total) is assessed by the Science Assessing Committee (General Programmes) and by the Programme Assessing Committee (General and Rangahau Hauora Māori Programmes).

See Appendix 1 for applications with clinical trials objectives.

2. Module 3: References

References

Ensure this section is on a new 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.

New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework Domains

This information will not influence the assessment of proposals, rather it is an opportunity to think critically about where the research fits into the prioritisation framework in preparation for changes coming up over the next 12 months.

Applicants applying in the General category only are required to complete the following question:

There are four Domains in the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework (NZHRPF). Please read the [NZHRPF](#) for more details and identify the primary Domain that your proposed research is most aligned with, and one additional secondary Domain if relevant.

Domain 1: Healthy people, whānau and communities

Domain 2: People-centred healthcare

Domain 3: Meeting our needs in a changing world

Domain 4: Connected government and systems.

The HRC does not provide advice on the choice of Domains as that decision is best made by the investigator.

3. Module 4: Contract information and budget

Sections 4A–4D are parts of the Word application form.

Sections 4E–4H are to be completed on the separate Excel budget file.

3.1 Section 4A: Justification of expenses

Justification of research staff

Use this section to justify the role and % FTE of the named investigators and any other research staff for whom CVs have been provided, including roles in mentoring of junior team members. Also explain the role of ALL OTHER personnel (named or un-named, funded or not funded by the proposal), who will be actively associated with the research and for whom you are seeking funding. These may be research assistants, technicians, medical staff, interviewers and support staff or similar, whose names or position titles are listed in the budget under 'research staff' and who have specific FTE involvements. Time-only staff require clear justification. Un-named postdoctoral fellows should be justified here, but it is recommended that named postdoctoral fellows should be included as named investigators and should provide a CV. Science and Programme Assessing Committees may decline funds for roles that are not fully justified or are simply described as a 'training opportunity'. Provide evidence that biostatisticians, data managers and health economists are integrated into the team as appropriate e.g. sufficient FTE is allocated for each year of the contract. It is the responsibility of the applicants to ensure that no personnel justified in this section will exceed 100% FTE of their combined commitments during the term of the contract. The roles of students and casual staff should be justified in the following section (Justification of working expenses and casual staff).

Justification of working expenses and casual staff

All items listed under 'materials and research expenses' in the budget must be justified, with costs broken down per item unit, and full costs per item for number of units requested. The application review process will consider the appropriateness of the budget and working expenses. If there are exceptional requests for working expenses, ensure that the Science and Programme Assessing Committees will clearly understand why the requested materials, travel, or research tools and significant one-line items are necessary for the successful completion of the research.

Clearly justify the roles of students and casual staff so that the Science and Programme Assessing Committees can appreciate how these roles contribute to the proposed research activity.

For students, stipends must be included at the per annum values approved by the HRC: \$30,000 for PhD students and \$20,000 for Masters students, and up to \$7,500 for summer students, or pro-rata for part-time students. Fees required for the student's enrolment (e.g. tuition fees) can be included and should be justified.

Students should be named if they have been identified at the time of application, and their expertise relevant to their role should be described in the justification. Unnamed students can be included in the application budget as e.g. "PhD student (not yet appointed)". The HRC must be advised of the student's name and relevant expertise once appointed. Where an unnamed student is included, the applicant **may not** include any information about their intention to recruit and appoint a student with any particular expertise or other characteristic, such as ethnicity or gender. Any such supplementary detail on unnamed students will be considered unjustified and will be disregarded in the assessment process.

It is the responsibility of the applicants to ensure that no students justified in this section will exceed 100% FTE on their combined commitments with the host organisation during the term of the contract. The HRC encourages the inclusion of allowable costs associated with knowledge transfer activities.

Quotes must be provided to support discretionary costs, where available.

List all supporting budget documents in Section 4D (Letters of collaboration/supporting documents list) and upload separately into HRC Gateway.

3.2 Section 4B: Previous/current contracts and awards

List contracts awarded within the past 5 years

Using the table provided, outline current and previous support from any agency that has been received by the first named investigator and any named investigator, who was first named investigator on those grants and whose FTE contribution is 10% or more on the current programme application. Copy the table and repeat for each received grant as required. This section is intended to provide the HRC reviewers and committee reviewers with an overall summary of the applicants' abilities to secure research funding for this type of research.

For 'nature of support', indicate whether the funding supports salaries only, working expenses only, both salary and working expenses, equipment, a junior research fellow, etc.

Note: The table and text after the heading of this subsection can be deleted and replaced by an Excel spreadsheet using the layout and required information in the original table.

Previous HRC end of contract report(s)

The HRC no longer requires, or accepts, the submission of previous HRC contract reports to be uploaded as part of the application process.

Please note that the submission of progress and end of contract reports are an HRC contract requirement. For existing HRC contracts, delayed submission without justification will result not only in contract suspension but also will prohibit the submission of new research applications.

3.3 Section 4C: Other support

Project applications related to this proposal

Provide details if any named investigators on this programme application are also named investigators on a Project application. Please indicate if the Project is a component of this programme application such that the Project will be considered withdrawn or not if the programme is fully funded.

Other research applications awaiting decisions

List in this section the applicant's research applications pending with the HRC and other agencies. If applicable, indicate in the spaces provided any overlap (research, resources and personnel) that the listed application might have with this application. **The applicants agree that the HRC may seek clarification details from the other funders if required.**

Applicants should disclose and provide details of any significant relationship to third parties (e.g. commercial sector entities contributing to project costs, equipment, staff joint appointments). A clear description of how the current application relates to those relationships is desirable but assessment of commercial links is **not** part of the HRC peer-review process. This statement has been presented to HRC reviewers and members of Science and Programme Assessing Committees.

Co-funding

Please indicate and provide details if the applicant has approached other agencies for joint funding of this research. If applicable, detail the support and joint funding arrangements.

Financial or other interest(s)

For the purposes of HRC funding applications, a financial or other interest is anything of economic value or potential political/philosophical perspective, including relationships with entities outside of the research host organisation. While not an exhaustive list, examples of financial interests include positions such as consultant, director, officer, partner or manager of an entity (whether paid or unpaid); salaries; consulting income; honoraria; gifts; loans and travel payments. Examples of other interests include alignment with special interest groups seeking to advance or promote a particular world view or policy.

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual's financial relationships or interests may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the individual's professional judgment in conducting or reporting research. In the event that an applicant has identified financial or other interests in a funding application, the applicant should also outline the specific details of their proposed conflict management strategy.

3.4 Section 4D: Letters of collaboration/supporting documents list

List any subcontracts/MOU, letters of collaboration, appendices and any other supporting documents.

The documents themselves should be uploaded separately into HRC Gateway.

A letter of collaboration should outline how the interested party intends to implement the findings of the research upon its completion, or provide material or actual support for the research, **not simply to state that the research is necessary**. Please ensure that any organisation providing a letter of collaboration recognises their intended commitment to the conduct of the proposed research and timeline of their involvement.

3.5 Section 4E: Research proposal budget

The budget spreadsheet in Section 4E can be used for different types of applications. Select from the drop-down list the application type you wish to submit. Further instructions are contained in the Notes tab of the file.

The guidelines below should be considered only a summary of the HRC's funding rules. For more information, please refer to the HRC Rules document, which is available on HRC Gateway.

Budget calculations and spreadsheet

All calculations should be GST exclusive and be in whole dollar amounts, i.e. no cents or decimals.

The 'salary', 'working expenses' and 'total cost of this research' are components of Section 4E. The spreadsheet automatically calculates totals for each year of costs. Insert more rows into the table if required.

The 'total cost of research' shaded section automatically calculates all the figures in this box.

Do not enter any details into any shaded areas as these are completed automatically.

Salary

Only enter **contract research staff** employed or to be employed by the host organisation (this includes academics) in this section.

All positions should specify grade and level, FTE and salary; time only permissible. The monetary value (\$) should be the **actual** salary amount that the named staff member is expected to receive for their part the research proposed for each year.

The budget form does not accept FTE less than 3%. The HRC and Science and Programme Assessing Committees do not favour listing numerous investigators with a very low FTE and salary

requests should only be for significant input and involvement in the programme. Advisory groups of contributors, who have FTE commitments less than 3%, may be a consideration for the research team.

Note: Overheads will be paid at a negotiated rate for each institution on all eligible contracts.

Do not enter **salary associated costs** (i.e. amounts requested for employer's contribution to approved superannuation schemes and accident compensation levies) for research staff in this 'salary' section – instead enter them in the 'working expenses' section.

Staff that must **not** be entered into the Salary section of the budget are subcontracted staff, named or unnamed Masters and PhD students on stipends, and casual staff.

- a) Subcontracted staff are those who are **not** employees of the host organisation. The salary and all other expenses for these staff should be broken down into appropriate categories on a detailed subcontract/MOU between the host organisation and non-host organisation using Section 4G. The total GST-exclusive dollar figure for the subcontract/MOU should be all-inclusive, including overhead calculations (**note:** the HRC doesn't cover overheads for overseas-based organisations). The subcontract/MOU total should then be entered under 'Working expenses - subcontracts' for each year.
- b) If funding to provide a stipend for a PhD student (\$30,000 per year) or Masters student (\$20,000 per year), and/or student fees, is requested, enter these into 'working expenses – materials and research expenses'. Students should be named if they have been identified at the time of application. Unnamed students can be included in the application budget as e.g. "PhD student (not yet appointed)". The HRC must be advised of the student's name once appointed.
- c) Casual staff (those persons without an ongoing role or commitment to the research but providing one-off services to the research on a part-time, hourly or per diem basis, e.g. interviewers) should also be requested under 'working expenses - materials and research expenses'.

Working expenses

Working expenses include 'direct costs' only. The only exception is in the case of subcontracts, as described above. Estimates of costs should be expressed in current prices **exclusive of GST**.

Materials and research expenses

The direct costs of the research include all the disbursements that can be identified, justified and charged to a contract and may include the following:

- Research consumables (these should be itemised at current cost per unit and full cost for number required).
- Other costs **directly** related to the research – telephone calls/communications, mail and freight.
- Computer-related license fees for research-specific software; access to High Performance Computing infrastructure (NeSI).
- Minor research equipment (to a total of \$5,000).
- A proportionate part of new specialised equipment (equipment to be acquired) may be included and justified on research applications (insert all budgetary supportive documents at the end of Module 4 with the printed application).
- Depreciation on specialised equipment: depreciation and capital costs on existing equipment are included in the overhead rate. If an institution's auditors have certified that specific items of equipment have been excluded from the research rate, then depreciation on the excluded equipment can be included in research applications and justified in the same manner as other direct costs.
- Expenses of research participants.
- Costs associated with knowledge transfer activities.
- Travel costs **directly** related to the conduct of the research. Contract funds may be used to provide assistance with overseas travel provided the HRC is satisfied that such travel is directly relevant to the conduct of the research and that alternative sources of funding are not

available. This is not intended to relieve the applicant's host organisation of its obligation to assist with the costs of overseas travel by its employees.

- Costs for both stipends and fees can be requested for Masters and PhD students. Stipends must be included at the HRC approved rates (Masters \$20,000 pa; PhD \$30,000 pa). Fees should be justified as reasonable estimates for the course of study and institution at which they would be enrolled. Both named and unnamed students can be included; in both cases, a description of the student's research project/contribution to the research activity should be provided in Section 4A. Funding for stipends will be conditional upon the organisation arranging a tax-free stipend that satisfies the Inland Revenue and host organisation's rules.
- Dissemination of research results (fair and reasonable charges associated with the approved publication of the results of HRC-sponsored research in journals, reports, monographs or books may be paid from contract funds. Also, costs incurred from other forms of dissemination, such as meeting with community groups, or conference dissemination can be claimed if reasonable and justified).
- Conference allowance: The maximum allowance for conference attendance is \$1,000 per annum per named investigator if **fully supported at 100% FTE** by the grant and must be fully justified. The allowance cannot be distributed proportionately between grants. This allowance is distinct from the cost to disseminate findings from this proposed research; this cost must also be fully justified. Fares and allowances should be calculated in accordance with the regulations and scales of the host organisation.
- **Note:** If you are intending to ask the HRC's Data Monitoring Core Committee (DMCC) to monitor this study, there is no cost involved. However, the proposal must include adequate provision for statistical support to provide the DMCC with all data and analysis they request to carry out their monitoring including preparation of biannual statistical reports. Also, costs for members of the study team (including the study statistician) to attend the meetings need to be included in the budget for the application. If you have any questions, please contact the secretary to the DMCC, ethics@hrc.govt.nz.

Subcontracts/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Subcontract staff are not employees of the host organisation. The salaries for these staff and all other expenses (e.g. working expenses) requested for the subcontract should appear in a detailed subcontract/MOU between the host organisation and non-host organisation. A MOU should also include overhead calculations for salaries (**note:** the HRC doesn't cover overheads for overseas-based organisations). A *pro forma* MOU is available upon request from the HRC. If a subcontract/MOU is greater than \$50,000, all expenses requested should be broken down into the appropriate categories in Section 4G (MOU budget). [Upload the MOU with this form.](#)

MOUs should also be provided for time only subcontracted staff not employed by the host. If MOUs are unable to be provided for time only subcontracted staff, it is acceptable to include a support letter with a description of the level of involvement and role of these individuals in the application. If the application is successful, copies of MOUs for any time only individuals not provided in the application may be required at the contracting stage.

Salary associated costs

Amounts requested for employer's contribution to approved superannuation schemes and accident compensation levies for research staff – these are not to be entered in 'salary' but in the 'working expenses' section. The amounts for each year should be entered separately in the budget form and the percentage rates for both ACC and super should be noted for each individual (and justified in Section 4A where required, i.e. for non-standard rates).

International expenses

The HRC will not contribute to the overhead of the overseas investigators and the total proportion of contract budget allocated to overseas investigators must not exceed 10% for programmes.

Total cost of research

Enter the appropriate overhead rate (OHR) in the budget. Researchers should seek advice from their host organisation Research Office on the costing of their research applications and the overhead rate negotiated with the HRC.

After entering the appropriate overhead rate, the total cost of the research will be automatically calculated. Enter this amount in the HRC Gateway section of the research application.

3.6 Section 4F: MOU budget

When a substantial proportion of the total budget of a research proposal is contained in a subcontract/MOU, the expenditure must be itemised in the same way as the overall research proposal budget (see above). Use Section 4F to provide budget details for all MOU requesting more than \$50,000; add a copy of Section 4F for each subcontractor. The overhead rate used should be that for the host institution of the subcontracted staff, not that of the main host institution of the applicant (**note: the HRC doesn't cover overheads for overseas-based organisations**). The total dollar amount for each year should then be entered under 'Working expenses – subcontracts' and a copy of the subcontract/MOU should be uploaded separately in HRC Gateway.

A CV must be provided in Module 5 for all named investigators on MOUs to enable the Science Assessing Committees to determine whether the investigator's expertise is appropriate and/or necessary. Without this information, the Science Assessing Committees may decide not to support the budget for the MOU. CVs are not necessary for employees of commercial enterprises providing service for fees.

All subcontracts/MOUs must be listed in Section 4D (Letters of collaboration/supporting documents list). If there are no subcontracts/MOUs for this application, or none requesting more than \$50,000, you may delete or ignore Section 4F.

3.7 Section 4G: FTE summary

List the time involvement of **all** personnel (including those on a subcontract/MOU) in terms of full-time equivalents, e.g. 10% FTE. Give all names (for un-named positions, indicate as 'technician', 'research nurse' and 'postdoctoral fellow' etc.). Half percentages (e.g. 4.5%) are not allowed. Indicate when named investigators are 'time only' (i.e. **not** receiving salary for their involvement in the programme). Identify all postgraduate students by 'masters' or 'PhD'. Ensure the FTE figures are the same as those in the budget and MOU budget sections (Sections 4F and 4G), as well as Module 1. Heads of department will be required to agree to provide workload relief for research staff working on HRC contracts (principles of full cost funding).

3.8 Section 4H: List of collaborators (national and international)

Please complete the collaborators (not named investigators) table by providing full name, organisation, and country (the location where the organisation is based, and the collaborators undertake their research).

For **collaboration purpose**, select one of the following options: research; commercialisation; knowledge transfer.

For **support**, please indicate the value of any funding for this research provided by the collaborator in NZ dollars or list any in-kind support.

Appendix 1: Proposals including randomised controlled trials (RCTs)

The Controlled Trials Assessing Committee (CTAC) is responsible for the assessment of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) across all disciplines. The purpose of establishing this committee was to ensure consistency in the assessment of RCTs and to improve the quality of HRC-funded RCTs. CTAC members are selected for their knowledge and experience of RCTs and have expertise in disciplines reflecting the nature of applications assigned to the committee. Member(s) of the Data Monitoring Core Committee may also be represented on CTAC.

Issues with methodological quality and poor demonstration of knowledge of clinical trial conduct are generic weaknesses that have been highlighted by CTAC. In order to improve the rigor and completeness of clinical trial proposals, applicants are encouraged to refer to SPIRIT 2013 Statement (Standard Protocol Items: Recommendations for Interventional Trials)² when developing their trial protocols and applications to the HRC should reflect protocols that conform to the SPIRIT 2013 guidelines.

With regard to the content of HRC applications, consideration should be given to all 33 items on the SPIRIT checklist, with particular attention to the items listed in the Methods section (items 9–23). Addressing these items is likely to improve methodological quality and enhance the demonstration of knowledge of clinical trial conduct. Furthermore, applicants should give consideration to designing phase III trials with 90% power to detect well justified minimum important differences. Exceptions would include research questions of importance to New Zealanders that can only be addressed in New Zealand, and the trial size is limited by the pool of patients and the pressure for a timely answer.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the broad expertise of their audience (CTAC) when describing their trial protocol. For example, when describing sample size (SPIRIT item 14) in Section 2B/Design and methods of the applications form, justify all information in the calculation and clearly describe the minimum important difference and how this translates into meaningful clinical benefit.

It has also been noted that a significant number of clinical trial research proposals are requests for funding for the New Zealand arm of an international study. Clear administrative information relating to funding (SPIRIT item 4) is required in Section 4G/Co-funding of the application form, including the status of all sources of funding and whether the proposal is dependent on international funding. Roles and responsibilities (SPIRIT item 5) should be stated explicitly in Section 2B/Expertise and track record of the research team, including the specific role of the New Zealand investigator (e.g. as distinct from the site co-ordinator role) and any New Zealand-led trial components. Additionally, it is expected that applicants will address New Zealand-specific health significance and impact on clinical care in New Zealand (in Section 2B/Rationale for research and Research impact, respectively), rather than replicating generic information from the international protocol.

Clinical trial registration

As part of our commitment to supporting best practice in clinical trials, the HRC is a signatory to the World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Statement on Public Disclosure of Results from Clinical Trials (the Joint Statement). The Joint Statement sets out policy and monitoring requirements for mandatory timeframes for:

- prospective clinical trial registration, and
- public disclosure of the results of clinical trial research.

We endorse the requirements of the Joint Statement as reflective of the ethical and quality standards that must be met by HRC-funded clinical trials. This will enhance the evidence base for clinical medicine both in New Zealand and internationally while simultaneously providing easily accessible information for the public, patients and their whānau.

² *Chan A-W, Tetzlaff JM, Altman DG, et al. SPIRIT 2013 statement: Defining standard protocol items for clinical trials. *Ann Intern Med* 2013; 158: 200-07. This guidance builds on ICH GCP E6 guidance regarding protocol items. The CONSORT Statement (2010) for clinical trial reporting should also be considered at the protocol design stage.

The HRC's full policy statement on clinical trial transparency can be found here in our Resource Library: <https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/clinical-trial-transparency-policy-statement>

All RCTs funded by the HRC, either wholly or partly, are required to be registered on an established clinical trials registry (e.g. ANZCTR; Clinicaltrials.gov). Registration should be prospective and should be added to the application as a Year 1 milestone, even if the applicant expects registration to be achieved prior to commencement of a resulting contract.

Appendix 2: Māori Health Advancement criterion

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.

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 use the research findings for Māori health gain should be identified.

What activities have you already undertaken (that are relevant to this programme), and what will you undertake during this programme, 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 programme) 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 use 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.

Appendix 3: Updates and changes since last round

The annual salary increase cap of 3% has been removed.

Unnamed Masters and PhD students can be included. The HRC must be informed of the student's name, qualifications and/or expertise relevant to their role in the research activity, when the student has been appointed. Please note that when an unnamed student is included, the applicant may not add supplementary information about their intent to recruit or appoint a student with particular expertise or other characteristic, such as ethnicity or gender. These will not be considered justified for unnamed students and will be disregarded in the assessment process.

Student fees can now be requested (in addition to stipends) and should be justified as a reasonable estimate based on the expected programme of study and fees set by the organisation at which the student would be enrolled.

Regulatory approvals and other requirements including ethics approvals (human and animal) and clinical trial registration should be added as Year 1 milestones to support contract monitoring (even if the applicant expects to attain these prior to contract commencement).

Appendix 4: Programme application assessment process

1. Overview

Programme applications are through a one-stage process assessed in several steps:

1. assignment to a Science Assessing Committee (SAC)
2. review by external reviewers and applicant response
3. assessment by SAC against SAC scoring criteria (informed by reviewers)
4. assessment of shortlisted applications by the Programme Assessing Committee (PAC) against PAC scoring criteria (informed by SAC and reviewers)
5. consideration of fundable applications by the Grant Assessing Committee (GAC)
6. funding approval by the HRC Council.

2. Assessment by SAC

The SAC for General Programmes do not make a recommendation about whether programmes should proceed to PAC assessment as shortlisting for PAC is based on normalised rank score.

The SAC for Rangahau Hauora Māori (RHM) Programmes makes a recommendation about whether RHM programmes should proceed to PAC assessment.

2.1 SAC membership

Applications will be assessed by a SAC that has extended expertise matched to the applications. SAC members will be provided with documents relating to the work of each committee forms, guidelines.

In order to minimise potential conflicts of interest, the following specific HRC guidance for SAC membership has been developed:

a SAC member should not sit on a committee if they are a first named investigator or a named investigator on an application under consideration by that committee.

This means that anyone who is a **first named investigator** or a **named investigator** on an application under consideration in that round should not sit on the committee that is reviewing their application; however, they may sit on or chair a different committee.

2.2 Before SAC meeting: Reviewers

Reviewers (external reviewers plus the CR1) score applications on a 7-point scale, provide comment and ask questions for each of the following criteria:

1. Rationale for research
2. Design and methods
3. Research Impact
4. Potential for outcomes
5. Expertise and track record of the research team
6. Research team collaboration and integration

The 7-point scale corresponds to a word ladder of descriptors:

Score	Criteria descriptor
7	Exceptional
6	Excellent
5	Very good
4	Good
3	Adequate
2	Unsatisfactory
1	Poor

Reviewer reports are available for applicants' comments and response on HRC Gateway. These are sent to the SAC prior to the meeting. The HRC aims to provide 4-6 reviewer reports for Programme applications. Applicants are usually not required to respond to more than 6 reports in their three-page response.

External reviewer reports are anonymised for applicant response, but not for the SAC.

2.3 SAC meeting procedure

Some applicants may apply for Project support as well as Programme support for the same research. Applicants are required to declare the relationship of Projects to a Programme and would not receive overlapping support, i.e. a Project application that is completely included in a Programme application would be withdrawn if the Programme is funded. At the SAC meeting, the Programme applications should be assessed and scored before the Project applications.

Programmes are assessed at SAC level before Projects to give all applications the same level of consideration, although related Projects will have been read by the SAC. Discussion should be focused on the Programme application, reviews and responses without reference to the related Project. This limitation can work both ways in terms of advantage/disadvantage and the outcome for the related Project will be available to the PAC.

The chair is responsible for ensuring that a fair and balanced assessment is reached. General discussion by all members is essential for a balanced committee opinion, not unduly influenced by one committee member and should not be cut short nor unduly extended.

The discussion time allocated to each proposal is 50-60 minutes:

- declaration of conflicts of interest - 2 minutes
- CR1/CR2 comments - 10 minutes
- general discussion of the proposal - 40 minutes
- scoring - 2 minutes
- note key points for review summaries - 2 minutes.

2.4 SAC scoring criteria for General Programme applications

In the SAC meeting, General Programme applications are scored on a 7-point scale for **six** criteria. These are listed below with full description in Appendix 5:

1. Rationale for research
2. Design and methods
3. Research impact
4. Māori health advancement
5. Expertise and track record of the research team
6. Cohesiveness of the research programme.

The Cohesiveness of research programme criterion score provides an opinion to PAC but is not included in the total score for ranking by the SAC or PAC.

The 7-point word ladder assists SAC scoring according to the descriptors rather than other considerations such as success rates of applications. Reviewers only allocate whole numbers.

Score	Criteria descriptor
7	Exceptional
6	Excellent
5	Very good
4	Good
3	Adequate
2	Unsatisfactory
1	Poor

The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale of equal weighting, as listed in the table, and that the total maximum score is 35.

Criteria	Points	% score
Rationale for research	7	20
Design and methods	7	20
Research impact	7	20
Māori health advancement	7	20
Expertise and track record of the research team	7	20
Cohesiveness of the research programme	7	0
Total	35	100

The committee also takes into consideration and may make recommendations on:

- the appropriateness of the timeline for the proposed research
- the milestones and objectives
- the appropriateness of the requested FTE involvement of the researchers and any direct costs requested
- the total cost of the research with respect to 'value for money'.

The HRC research investment manager will provide the committee with information on the consistency of the budget with regard to HRC rules and policy. However, it is the responsibility of the committee to determine whether the budget is appropriate for the proposal.

2.5 SAC scoring criteria for Rangahau Hauora Māori (RHM) Programme applications

In the SAC meeting, RHM programme applications are scored on a 7-point scale for **five** criteria. These are listed below with a full description in Appendix 6.

1. Rationale for research
2. Design and methods
3. Research impact
4. Expertise and track record of the research team
5. Cohesiveness of the research programme

The Cohesiveness of research programme criterion score provides an opinion to PAC but is not included in the total score for ranking by the SAC or PAC.

The 7-point word ladder assists SAC scoring according to the descriptors rather than other considerations such as success rates of applications. Reviewers may only allocate whole numbers.

Score	Criteria descriptor
7	Exceptional
6	Excellent
5	Very good
4	Good
3	Adequate
2	Unsatisfactory
1	Poor

The committee also takes into consideration and may make recommendations on:

- the appropriateness of the timeline for the proposed research
- the milestones and objectives
- the appropriateness of the requested FTE involvement of the researchers and any direct costs requested
- the total cost of the research with respect to 'value for money'.

The HRC research investment manager will provide the committee with information on the consistency of the budget with regard to HRC rules and policy. However, it is the responsibility of the committee to determine whether the budget is appropriate for the proposal.

2.6 Scoring procedure

Each proposal is confidentially scored by individual committee members and collected by the HRC for the SAC ranked list.

2.7 Score normalisation

If there are two or more SAC appointed to assess Programme applications, statistical normalisation will be applied to minimise the effect of scoring variation between committees. Statistical normalisation calculates the z-score of a number using the mean and standard deviation of the larger distribution (all SAC total scores). The normalised scores are used to rank and shortlist applications for consideration by PAC. Normalisation does not apply to RHM Programmes.

2.8 Review summary

The CR1 writes the review summary, which is used by the PAC in its discussion of each application. The format is similar to a Project review summary with an additional paragraph on Programme cohesiveness (see Appendix 8. SAC review summary).

The review summary version provided to the PAC includes a section for specific comments and questions for the Programme Assessing Committee to ask the applicants (this section will not be sent to applicant).

3. Assessment by the Programme Assessing Committee (PAC)

3.1 PAC membership

The PAC is a multidisciplinary committee chaired by an independent chair, who provides leadership and ensures fair and full discussion during the meeting. The independent chair does **not** score applications.

The number of committee members is determined by the mix of expertise required for the applications in the round. Committee members are New Zealand, Australian and other international experts appointed to a PAC for their ability to assess comprehensive Programmes of research and the relevance of the proposed research to New Zealand.

PAC members are expected to have postgraduate qualifications in a discipline relevant to health research, experience as a principal investigator on a research Programme and experience in the peer review of research Programmes similar to those of the HRC.

The PAC membership will take into consideration the spread of disciplines in the applications to be assessed. However, the PAC primarily takes an overview of the qualities expected in an HRC Programme. Applications will have prior assessment by a SAC, matched to the applications and the Investment Signal requirements. PAC members will be provided with findings of the scientific assessment from the SAC (reviewer reports, applicant response, SAC review summary) including the outcome of assessment of Project applications that may be part of a proposed Programme. At the completion of the SAC part of the assessment, some of the original PAC members may no longer be required because applications assigned to them have not been shortlisted for consideration at the PAC meeting.

3.2 Before PAC meeting

Reviewers

Reviewer reports and applicant responses are obtained and used by SAC. These are sent to the PAC prior to the meeting.

SAC scores and findings

The SAC fully assesses applications and scores against the SAC criteria. The SAC findings are made available to PAC. If a Project application, that is part of a proposed Programme, is assessed as not fundable by SAC, that Programme application may still be considered by PAC. Questions raised by the SAC will be sent to PAC in the review summary.

PAC shortlist

A PAC shortlist of approximately 10 applications will be identified for full consideration at the PAC meeting based on the ranked list of SAC scores (normalised across all committees for General Programmes) and the recommendation from the RHM SAC. Applications that are not on the PAC shortlist will not be considered further.

3.3 PAC meeting procedure

Independent PAC chair

The chair and HRC staff are responsible for the effective running of PAC. This includes upholding the integrity of the process e.g. managing conflicts of interest, ensuring interactions between applicants and the PAC during the interview process follow correct process, and ensuring that all discussions are fair and equitable. It is the responsibility of the chair and HRC staff to resolve any concerns.

The chair ensures that the committee reviewers provide their input and that all members contribute to the discussion. During the applicant interview, the chair introduces the committee and ensures that questions from members are put to the applicants and that the timetable is maintained.

Since PAC assessment is preceded by SAC assessment, it is important that the PAC chair guides the discussion towards the PAC criteria, rather than allow excessive focus on issues that would have been considered by the SAC.

The PAC chair does not score and is not assigned Committee Reviewer (CR) roles for applications.

The chair is required to provide chair's feedback to the HRC and approve application review summaries after the meeting.

Committee reviewers

In addition to reading and being able to contribute to the discussion of all proposals reviewed by PAC, each committee member is assigned CR1, CR2 or Māori health reviewer (MHR) responsibilities for several proposals. Roles and responsibilities may overlap during committee discussion.

The CR1 of an application is required to:

- prior to the PAC meeting, identify key question(s) to be discussed with the PAC and that may be asked of the applicant during the interview
- present an overview of the proposed research including overall objectives and how the application meets PAC scoring criteria
- write the review summary to outline the committee discussion of the proposal for the applicant's information.

The CR2 of an application is required to:

- prior to the PAC meeting, identify key question(s) to be discussed with the PAC and that may be asked of the applicant during the interview
- present the reviewer reports and response, and potential SAC questions for PAC to ask the applicants
- present an overview how the application meets PAC scoring criteria.

The MHR of an application is required to:

- prior to the PAC meeting, identify key question(s) to be discussed with the PAC and that may be asked of the applicant during the interview
- indicate the relevance of the proposed Programme to Māori and its likely direct contribution to Māori health advancement
- comment on the capacity of the proposed Programme to address health inequities
- comment on the capability to build meaningful partnership relationships with Māori and facilitate Māori health research workforce capacity building.

Applicant interview

After the shortlist of applications has been identified (Section 3.2.3), shortlisted applicants required for the PAC meeting will be notified. The director or co-directors and the senior named investigators on the Programme applications selected for discussion at the PAC meeting will be invited to attend an interview with PAC.

The HRC provides guidance on acceptable interactions between applicants and the PAC, including protocols for culturally appropriate welcomes and any limitations to the scope of potential discussions.

The PAC interview may:

- address or clarify issues raised by the SAC or reviewers
- answer questions proposed by the PAC
- clarify any points that the applicants wish to raise.

The applicant meeting with PAC may also help to determine the relationship between the senior named investigators and their collaborative arrangements.

The following points should be noted by applicants invited to PAC:

- PAC chair is responsible for meeting processes and does not score or take part in discussion.
- PAC is multidisciplinary with New Zealand and Australian/international members with experience in managing research involving teams of investigators. The applicant must be prepared to address the broad expertise of the committee.
- SAC assesses health research criteria (as defined in the Peer Review Manual), but PAC may follow up some questions/issues raised by SAC and will score overall 'Quality of health research'.
- Applicants have a question-and-answer session with PAC, this is an opportunity for all members of the applicant's team to contribute to discussion and answer questions. PAC may seek further information related to the PAC score criteria and other issues, e.g. budget.

Meeting schedule

The PAC meeting is scheduled for three days to fully assess up to 10 applications.

The time allocated to each proposal is 90-120 minutes:

- declaration of conflicts of interest - 2 minutes
- CR1/CR2/MHR comments and general discussion (to identify questions for the applicants) - 30 minutes
- Mihi/welcome to the applicants – up to 20min
- applicants interview questions and answers - 30 minutes
- PAC final discussion and scoring - 30 minutes
- key points of PAC review summary - 2 min.

General discussion of proposals is undertaken by the whole committee. The chair is responsible for ensuring that all members contribute to discussion towards reaching a balanced committee opinion.

The meeting scores are submitted via HRC Gateway and collated by the HRC staff.

PAC scoring criteria

In the PAC meeting, each research proposal is scored on a 7-point scale for the criteria that the PAC use for assessing and scoring research proposals listed here with full description in Appendix 7:

1. Overall quality of health research
2. Potential for outcomes
3. Vision of Programme
4. Māori health advancement
5. Research team collaboration and integration

The 7-point word ladder assists PAC scoring according to the descriptors rather than other considerations such as success rates of applications. Reviewers may only allocate whole scores.

Score	Criteria descriptor
7	Exceptional
6	Excellent
5	Very good

4	Good
3	Adequate
2	Unsatisfactory
1	Poor

The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale of equal weighting, as listed in the table, and that the total maximum score is 35.

Criteria	Points	% score
Overall quality of health research	7	20
Potential for outcomes	7	20
Vision of Programme	7	20
Māori health advancement	7	20
Research team collaboration and integration	7	20
Total	35	100

The committee also takes into consideration factors that may influence scoring in any of the applicable scoring criteria:

- the assessment of the SAC
- the appropriateness of the timeline for the proposed research
- the total cost of the research with respect to 'value for money'.

The HRC research investment manager will provide the committee with information on the consistency of the budget with HRC rules and policy. However, it is the responsibility of the committee to determine whether the budget is appropriate for the proposal.

PAC scoring procedure

At the end of the discussion, the proposal is confidentially scored by individual committee members. After all applications have been scored, the applications are presented by PAC rank and considered for possible re-ranking of applications on a case-by-case basis to remedy significant perceived inconsistencies. This procedure will allow any application in the ranked table to move up or down by one position at a time:

- Any PAC member may bring forward an application for re-ranking.
- Conflicts of interest are notified and managed in the usual way.
- The application under consideration would have its scores modified, after appropriate discussion and consensus, by adding up to 0.5 points to one or two of the scoring criteria of choice to move the application up one place under consideration.
- Re-ranking of other applications can be done using an iterative process until a final ranked list is reached.

PAC fundable and not fundable line

At the end of the committee meeting, the PAC score is combined with the normalised SAC score to reach the total score for each application. The applications are ranked according to total score (maximum 70), which includes the SAC score plus the PAC. There are two ranked lists, one for General Programmes and one for RHM Programmes.

The committee then:

- identifies the proposals assessed as not fundable as a Programme (NF)
- identifies the proposals assessed as fundable as a Programme (F).

The fundable/not fundable line refers to the position in the ranked list of applications below which all applications are of insufficient quality to fund as a Programme, irrespective of available budget.

4. Review summaries for applicants

At the conclusion of the funding round, applicants are sent two review summaries:

- SAC review summary minus Section 3 (Appendix 8)
- PAC review summary (Appendix 9. Programme review summary).

The CR1 writes a review summary of the PAC discussion for each of their assigned proposals. The intent of the review summary is to provide the applicant with a brief, balanced, objective statement of the committee's response to the research proposal.

Review summaries should be constructive and may include:

- key strengths of the application
- key areas for improvement and/or further consideration
- comments relating to the applicant interview
- comments relating to Māori health advancement
- other comments (e.g. budget, FTE, objectives).

Review summaries should not include reference to scores or identity of reviewers.

The PAC chair is responsible for approving the content of all review summaries. The HRC research investment manager is responsible for ensuring they are forwarded to the host institution.

5. Additional eligibility requirements

5.1 Eligibility restrictions on publicly funded research

As part of the New Zealand Government's broader response to Russia's continued assault on Ukraine, a new eligibility criterion has been implemented for government research funding.

For proposals to be eligible, they must not benefit a Russian state institution (including but not limited to support for Russian military or security activity) or an organisation outside government that may be perceived as contributing to the war effort.

This is not a broad ban on collaborations with individual Russian researchers. The focus is on ensuring that government funding does not support scientific research collaborations that could further Russia's ability to continue its aggression in Ukraine.

As a Crown Agent, investing in health research for the public good with taxpayer funding, the HRC reserves the right to make ineligible any application for funding that will provide benefit to a state institution or other organisation identified for exclusion by the New Zealand Government.

Appendix 5: SAC scoring criteria for General Programme applications

The 7-point word ladder containing criteria descriptors is considered against each of the following assessment outlines below (listed A-F).

Note:

- The “Adequate” anchor point is 3 points.
- Applicants do not necessarily have to address all of the points in the outlines below; they are included to help guide assessment under each of the scoring categories.

Score	Criteria Descriptor	Criteria	Points	% score
7	Exceptional	Rationale for Research	7	20
6	Excellent	Design and Methods	7	20
5	Very good	Research Impact	7	20
4	Good	Māori Health Advancement	7	20
3	Adequate	Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team	7	20
2	Unsatisfactory	Cohesiveness of Research Programme (not in Total)	7	0
1	Poor	Total	35	100

A. Rationale for Research

The research is important, worthwhile, and justifiable to New Zealand, with consideration to the international context, because it addresses some or all the following:

- it addresses a significant health issue that is important for health/society
- the aims, research questions and hypotheses build on existing knowledge and address a knowledge gap
- the research findings should be original and innovative.

B. Design and Methods

The study has been well designed to answer the research questions, because it demonstrates some or all the following:

- comprehensive and feasible study design that is achievable within the timeframe
- appropriate study design to address the objectives of the research
- awareness of statistical considerations/technical or population issues/practicalities
- evidence of availability of materials/samples
- culturally appropriate methodology
- sound data management and data monitoring arrangements
- patient safety issues well managed.

C. Research Impact

The proposed research is likely to add value and benefit New Zealand because:

- Applicants have described a credible pathway for how their research will:
- result in benefits or opportunities for future research in NZ, or
- influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in NZ, leading to improved health or other social/economic impacts.
- The research team are undertaking steps to maximise the likelihood of impact beyond the productions of knowledge (as appropriate to the context of the research) and have the necessary skills, networks and experience to achieve this.

D. Māori Health Advancement

The proposed research is likely to advance Māori health because:

- Applicants have provided a description of how their research could lead to improved Māori health or reductions in health inequity over time.
- The research team are undertaking activities to address Māori health advancement, as appropriate to the nature and scope of the research. This may include, but is not limited to, activities such as:
 - the establishment of meaningful, collaborative, and reciprocal relationships with Māori
 - undertaking research that addresses Māori health need and inequity
 - the formation of appropriate research teams
 - the development of current and future workforce capacity and capability, including upskilling of research team members, and
 - adherence to culturally appropriate research practices and principles (as appropriate to the context of the research).

E. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

The team, relative to opportunity, have the ability to achieve the proposed outcomes and impacts because they have demonstrated:

- appropriate qualifications and experience
- right mix of expertise, experience and FTEs, including consideration of capacity building
- capability to perform research in current research environment
- networks/collaborations
- history of productivity and delivery on previous research funding.

F. Cohesiveness of Research Programme

Programme support is justified because:

- integration/combination of objectives will yield better outcomes as a Programme than as individual Projects
- there is planning and management for the term of the Programme
- the collaboration of senior NIs is well established and well managed.

The Cohesiveness of Research Programme Score is not part of the Total Score used for ranking applications but provides an opinion to the Programme Assessing Committee.

Appendix 6: SAC scoring criteria for RHM Programme applications

The same 7-point word ladder containing criteria descriptors is considered against each of the following assessment outlines below (listed A-E).

Note:

- The “Adequate” anchor point is 3 points.
- Applicants do not necessarily have to address all the points in the outlines below; these points are included to help the assessor in their assessment of each of the scoring categories.

Score	Criteria Descriptor	Criteria	Points	% score
7	Exceptional	Rationale for Research	7	25
6	Excellent	Design and Methods	7	25
5	Very good	Research Impact	7	25
4	Good	Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team	7	25
3	Adequate	Cohesiveness of Research Programme (not in Total)	7	0
2	Unsatisfactory	Total	28	100
1	Poor			

A. Rationale for Research

The research is important, worthwhile, and justifiable to New Zealand, with consideration to the international context, because it addresses some or all the following:

- it addresses a significant health issue that is important for Māori
- the aims, research question and hypotheses will build on existing knowledge, address a knowledge gap, and contribute to the creation of Māori health knowledge (Goal 1)
- The research findings will be original and innovative.

B. Design and Methods

The study has been well designed to answer the research questions, because it demonstrates some or all the following:

- comprehensive and feasible study design that is achievable within the timeframe
- appropriate study design to address the objectives of the research
- awareness of statistical considerations, technical or population issues/practicalities
- evidence of availability of materials/samples
- Māori health research processes (Goal 3)
- Māori ethics processes (Goal 4)
- partnership with, and responsiveness to the needs of, Māori stakeholders and communities (Goal 6)
- plan for dissemination of results
- sound data management and data monitoring arrangements
- patient safety issues well managed.

C. Research Impact

The proposed research is likely to benefit Māori and New Zealand because:

- Applicants have described a credible pathway for how their research will:
- result in benefits or opportunities for future research in NZ, or
- influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in NZ, leading to improved health or other social/economic impacts.

- The research team are undertaking steps to maximise the likelihood of impact by: contributing to the creation of Māori health knowledge (Goal 1); contributing to the translation of findings into Māori health gains (Goal 2); incorporating Māori health research processes (Goal 3); incorporating Māori ethics processes (Goal 4); contributing to building a highly skilled Māori health research workforce (Goal 5); and, responding to the needs of, and working in partnership with, Māori stakeholders and communities (Goal 6).

D. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

The team, relative to opportunity, have the ability to achieve the proposed outcomes and impacts because they have demonstrated some or all the following:

- appropriate qualifications and experience
- right mix of expertise, experience and FTEs, including consideration of capacity building
- capability to perform research in current research environment
- networks/collaborations
- history of productivity and delivery on previous research funding.

E. Cohesiveness of Research Programme

Programme support is justified because some or all the following have been demonstrated:

- integration/combination of objectives will yield better outcomes as a Programme than individual Projects
- there is planning and management for the term of the project
- the collaboration of senior NIs is well established and well managed.

The Cohesiveness of Research Programme Score is not part of the Total Score used for ranking applications but provides an opinion to the Programme Assessing Committee.

Appendix 7: PAC scoring criteria for General and RHM Programme applications

The same 7-point word ladder containing criteria descriptors is considered against each of the following assessment criteria outlined below (listed A-E).

Note:

- The “Adequate” anchor point is 3 points.
- Applicants do not necessarily have to address all of the points in the outlined in the descriptors below; they are included to help guide the assessor in their assessment of the scoring categories.

Applications are assessed initially by a discipline-based SAC as per the criteria described elsewhere in this appendix. Subsequently, PAC assessment scores against 5 criteria (A, B, C, D, E) detailed below. The maximum total score awardable by PAC is 35 so that the aggregate maximum score is 70 (General) or 63 (RHM).

Score	Criteria Descriptor	Criteria for PAC	Points	% score
7	Exceptional	Overall quality of health research	7	20
6	Excellent	Potential for outcomes	7	20
5	Very good	Vision of programme	7	20
4	Good	Māori Health Advancement	7	20
3	Adequate	Research team collaboration & integration	7	20
2	Unsatisfactory	Total	35	100
1	Poor			

The PAC also takes into consideration the following factors that may influence scoring in any of the applicable scoring criteria:

- the assessment of the SAC
- the appropriateness of the timeline for the proposed research, and
- the total cost of the research with respect to ‘value for money’.

Assessment of these factors may affect any of the criteria to be scored by PAC. The HRC Research Investment Manager will provide the PAC with information on the consistency of the budget regarding HRC rules and policy. However, it is the responsibility of the Committee to determine whether the budget is appropriate for the proposal.

A. Overall quality of health research

The proposed research demonstrates quality through:

- assessment of overall scientific quality of the proposed research, as evident from the design
- appropriateness of approach to deliver valid results
- presence of infrastructure and support.

B. Potential for Outcomes

The proposed research has potential for the realisation of:

- health knowledge (including a clear focus on addressing health inequities)
- research-related benefits, including training opportunities (to strengthen health research workforce capacity for Māori and young investigators)
- influence on policy or practice
- contribution to improvement in health or health services
- economic outcomes (revenue generating or cost saving).

C. Vision of Programme

The application indicates:

- innovation, originality and visionary scientific thinking
- planning by the Programme Director that is indicative of superior research activity
- the position of the research at the forefront of health research (nationally and internationally)
- a clear direction for the research Programme with potential for impact.

D. Māori Health Advancement

The proposed research is likely to advance Māori health because:

- Applicants have provided a description of how their research could lead to improved Māori health or reductions in health inequity over time.
- The research team are undertaking activities to address Māori health advancement, as appropriate to the nature and scope of the research. This may include, but is not limited to, activities such as:
 - the establishment of meaningful, collaborative, and reciprocal relationships with Māori
 - undertaking research that addresses Māori health need and inequity
 - the formation of appropriate research teams
 - the development of current and future workforce capacity and capability, including upskilling of research team members, and
 - adherence to culturally appropriate research practices and principles (as appropriate to the context of the research).

E. Research Team Collaboration and Integration

The research team:

- have the qualifications to undertake the research
- have experience and knowledge in the proposed research area
- have track record of dissemination of research results
- have a record of collaboration
- have sufficient FTE allocated to this research
- are integrated with a synergy of research skills and experience
- have overall management planning.

Applicant interview

The applicants' interview allows the PAC to gain a better understanding of why the research proposal and team should be funded as a Programme. The PAC discussion with the applicants may:

- address or clarify issues raised by SAC or reviewers
- answer questions proposed by PAC
- clarify any points that the applicants wish to raise.

The applicant meeting with PAC may be useful for determining the relationship between the senior Named Investigators and their arrangements for their collaboration, the role of each investigator, how they interact or manage the component projects, the potential for workforce development and succession planning.

