Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

hrc nz Health Research Council of New Zealand
Te Kaunihera Rangahau Hauora o Aotearoa

2025 Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Guidelines

August 2024

To use with the following forms:

2025 General Emerging Research First Grant Application Form

2025 Health Delivery Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Form

2025 Rangahau Hauora Māori Emerging Research First Grant Application Form

2025 Pacific Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Form

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part 1. HRC Emerging Research First Grant – key information and requirements

1.1 Introduction

These grants provide research funds to develop the research skills and capability needed in areas of importance and priority for New Zealand – both now and for the future. They support emerging researchers who are seeking to establish independent careers in health research.

Each award is limited to a maximum of $400,000 for a maximum of three years and is available to those who have NOT previously held any individual competitive research grant for research expenses of ≥$105,000 from any source (including institutional or internal funding).

An emerging researcher is:

"Someone who is at the beginning of their research career in health with a clear development path and is working in a strongly supportive research environment".

Overarching requirements for emerging researchers in any discipline are demonstrated research capability and a desire to establish an independent health research career. When applying, you should detail the extent to which this grant will support you as independent researchers and how it will enable a step change in your career. You will need to describe how the grant will support the development of a new research programme in an area of importance to New Zealand, with clear potential to improve health outcomes.

Note: The Emerging Researcher First Grant can be seen as 'seeding' funding for your future research. Your application should represent an independent research project, and you should be able to undertake overall responsibility for the work to be completed. These contracts include working expenses, as well as salary for the first named investigator. Salary can also be claimed for individuals involved in conducting the research (research assistants, research managers, research fellows, etc) and for named investigators, only where they are supporting you or your research in a capacity beyond what would be expected of them in their employed position. All other academics, professional supervisors or senior researchers should be included as named investigators on a **time-only** basis.

You will be assessed on specific score criteria that are relevant to your chosen Emerging Research First Grant category (General, Health Delivery, Rangahau Hauora Māori, Pacific). Information on the score criteria is provided in Appendix 1.

1.2 HRC Priorities

All HRC investment must have a clear line of sight to improving health outcomes for all New Zealanders, with a focus on areas of highest health need and communities with the highest health needs[1].

New Zealand's investment in health research must contribute to achieving the goals of the health system and the Science, Innovation and Technology (SI&T) sector. It is important to consider and identify how your research will add value and contribute to these goals and wider system performance. The vision for the health system is timely access to quality healthcare.[2] A key focus for the science system is to harness the benefits of research and innovation to drive economic transformation.

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[1] Areas of highest health need and communities with the highest health needs are identified in the Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027.

[2] The Government Policy Statement on Health (2024-2027) outlines 5 priority areas; 5 non-communicable diseases; 5 modifiable behaviours; 5 health targets; and 5 mental health targets.

1.3   Value

- Each award is limited to a maximum of $400,000 for up to three years.
- Contracts include working expenses, as well as salary for the first named investigator.
- Salary can also be claimed for research assistants, research managers, research fellows etc. Salary can be claimed for other named investigators, but only where they are supporting the applicant or research in a capacity beyond what is expected of them in their employed position. All other academics, professional supervisors, or senior researchers should be included as named investigators on a **time-only** basis.

1.4   Eligibility criteria

If you are a first named investigator applying for a Rangahau Hauora Māori Emerging Researcher First Grant, you will need to be of **Māori descent**. If you are a first named investigator applying for a Pacific Emerging Researcher First Grant, you will need to be of **indigenous Pacific descent**.

You are eligible to apply if you meet the following:

- Have New Zealand as your principal domicile (see definition in the HRC Rules) and your principal place of employment.[3]
- Have not previously held any individual competitive research grant as a first named investigator for research expenses of greater than $105,000 from any source at the time of assessment (including institutional or internal funding). Scholarship and fellowship stipends are not included, provided the expenses component of such awards does not exceed $105,000. Please list the amount of research expenses of your previous awards in this application.
- Are within 6 years of attaining a postgraduate degree by the application deadline, although this period could be greater considering parental leave, caring responsibilities, career breaks, ill health, or other justified reasons. Time spent working in a career other than research is not considered a justified reason. Eligibility will be counted from the date of degree conferment, which should be confirmed in the application.
- Are developing an independent research stream with a clear line of sight to improving health outcomes.
- Are not studying for a PhD degree.

There is a clear distinction between eligibility, defined above, and suitability. You will need to clearly state your suitability in Section 2B: Description of proposed research – Suitability of applicant. The committee's assessment that you are not suitable because, for example, you are already established in an independent research pathway, will be accepted by the HRC as final.

1.5   Emerging Researcher First Grant categories

When applying, you need to choose one of the following categories

- **General:** Supporting excellent ideas and innovations proposed by researchers, designed to improve health outcomes for New Zealanders.
- **Health Delivery**: Having the potential to directly inform changes to health delivery policy, practice or systems; and demonstrating a clear connection to a healthcare need[4].

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[3] Note: Host organisations are responsible for ensuring that New Zealand is the principal domicile and principal place of employment for the First Named Investigator. By submitting an application, the host is satisfied that this condition has been met.

[4] For the Health Delivery Emerging Researcher First Grant, healthcare needs are expected to be identified with involvement of health delivery sector leadership or meaningful end-user involvement, and substantiated by evidence of a gap in knowledge. As such, end-user engagement is expected, comprising consumer, clinical, health provider, support worker, community or population collaboration and/or partnership from the outset of the research proposal and throughout the research process.

- **Rangahau Hauora Māori**: Supporting Māori health research that contributes to Māori health gains, upholds rangatiratanga and uses and advances Māori knowledge, resources, and people.
- **Pacific**: Making significant improvements in, or developing knowledge contributing to, improved Pacific health outcomes.

Applications can only be submitted to one category. The HRC does not provide advice on which category you should choose. You may change your final choice of category by creating duplicate applications and deciding on the most appropriate category before the closing date for registration.

1.6 Key dates

Event	Description	Date
Registration and applications open	Applicants are invited to submit their full application	8 August 2024
Applications close	Complete full application via HRC Gateway	Closes 3 October 2024
	Review by HRC Assessing Committee	February 2025
	HRC Council approval	Mid-April 2025
Results	Outcomes confirmed	Late April 2025
	Deadline for commencing research	1 August 2025

1.6.1 Registration

There is no separate closing date to register your application. However, this step is still required and must be signed off by your host Research Office (for organisations with Research Offices) to issue an HRC Reference ID# so that the full application can be completed. The HRC recommends you complete the registration as soon as possible after applications open.

1.6.2 Submission deadline

Please submit your application to HRC Gateway by **1pm, Thursday 3 October 2024**. Applications will not be accepted **after 1pm** on the closing date unless you have **written** authorisation from the HRC.

> **Important**: Your application will be released to the HRC only after it has been approved by your host organisation's Research Office or equivalent. **You should submit your application before your host organisation's internal submission deadline**, which is usually several working days before the HRC closing date. If your host organisation does not have a Research Office, your application will be forwarded directly to the HRC.

Part 2. General rules for submitting an Emerging Researcher First Grant application

2.1 Preparation

2.1.1 HRC Gateway account

You will need an HRC Gateway account to apply for an Emerging Research First Grant. Use your existing account or create a new one if you do not have one, via the following URL: https://gateway.hrc.govt.nz. If you have issues logging into your HRC Gateway account, contact info@hrc.govt.nz.

Note: All members of your research team must have an HRC Gateway user account so that their details can be included in the online form. Individual HRC Gateway accounts should be updated annually.

2.1.2 Forms

Please use the application form based on the category that you have chosen:

- The 2025 General Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Form
- The 2025 Health Delivery Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Form
- The 2025 Rangahau Hauora Māori Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Form
- The 2025 Pacific Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Form

2.1.3 Before submitting an application

Before submitting an application, please read the following resources:

- 2025 Emerging Research First Grant Application Guidelines (this document)
- Government Policy Statement on Health (2024-2027)
- New Zealand Health Research Strategy (2017-2027)
- New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework
- HRC Research Ethics Guidelines
- Guidelines for Researchers on Health Research Involving Māori
- HRC Māori Health Advancement Guidelines and supporting resources
- Guidelines for Pacific Health Research
- HRC Research Impact Slideshow
- Rangahau Hauora Māori Investment Stream details[5]
- Health Delivery Research Investment Signal[6]
- ARRIVE guidelines for animal research (if applicable)

Click the document name to access the file. Most of these documents can also be found on HRC Gateway.

2.1.4 Host organisation

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

If your organisation has not been previously funded as the host organisation by the HRC and your application is successful, your organisation will need to provide due diligence information before a contract can be offered. The HRC will provide information and the relevant forms for your organisation to complete.

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[5] Only if applying to the Rangahau Hauora Māori category.

[6] Only if applying to the Health Delivery category.

2.2   Format

2.2.1   General formatting

Please write your application in a clear, concise manner with sufficient detail. The assessing committee reviewing your application includes a broad range of expertise. It is important that they can understand the scope and implications of your application.

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).

Please

- use Arial 10-point type font or larger
- use default margins
- use single line spacing
- keep to the page limits

2.2.2   Compliance

The HRC will not process any application if you do not use the correct HRC application forms or follow the stated page limit and font sizes/styles. Your application may be withdrawn.

Please avoid these common pitfalls:

1. Only submit your application using HRC Gateway. Do not send applications or supporting documents to the HRC via email or any other means.

2. If your host organisation has a Research Office (or equivalent), your application must be approved by the Research Office first. The application will then be released to the HRC. Please allow enough time for this approval process before the HRC's closing deadline. All queries regarding applications should be directed to the host's Research Office rather than to the HRC directly.

3. Ensure you complete all modules, including Module 1 which must be completed in HRC Gateway. Incomplete applications after the closing date will be considered withdrawn and deleted from HRC Gateway.

4. Do not include any additional material (e.g. slides, protocols) as 'supporting documents' on HRC Gateway, and avoid using hyperlinks in the application form. All additional material and hyperlinks will be removed from your application.

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

2.3   Privacy provisions

2.3.1   Statistical and reporting purposes

The information you provide will be used to assess your application. In a non-identifiable form, some information will be used for HRC's statistical and reporting purposes. The HRC stores 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 (MBIE) with details provided by funders of the science sector.

2.3.2   Personal information

Personal information in your application will be made available to the HRC assessing committees reviewing your application.

2.3.3   Media release

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

2.3.4 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 organisation and programme director before responding to the request. Where appropriate, the request may be transferred to the host organisation.

2.4 Additional eligibility requirements

2.4.1 Eligibility restrictions on publicly funded research

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

For applications 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.

2.4.2 Trusted Research Guidance

Researchers should familiarise themselves with the Trusted Research Guidance for Institutions and Researchers. New Zealand has an open and collaborative research and innovation system and values academic freedom and research conducted independently by individuals and organisations. As part of preserving trust, the HRC screens applications for risk related to sensitive technologies[7], and may require funded applications to identify, mitigate, and monitor risks as part of the contractual conditions of the grant.

2.5 Enquiries

If you have any questions about HRC applications, please contact your host organisation's Research Office. You can contact the HRC at info@hrc.govt.nz if:
- your organisation does not have a Research Office
- your organisations' Research Office cannot assist you
- you have any technical difficulties (i.e. with HRC Gateway)

HRC Gateway will show the status of any application. Please do not contact the HRC for an update on your application.

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[7] Technologies become sensitive when they: are or could become dual use i.e., have both a civil and military/security application; or, underpin, or have the potential to underpin, significant economic value for New Zealand.

Part 3. Submitting an application – Completing the 2025 Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Forms

This section contains instructions for completing and submitting your application. It includes prompts for providing certain information that will be used to score your application.

A full application for a 2025 Emerging Research First Grant consists of six modules. Module 1 'General information' must be completed in HRC Gateway. You need to register your application to receive an HRC Reference ID#. This registration step must be approved by your host organisation's research office (if it has one) to complete and submit the full application.

Complete Module 2 'Research', Module 3 'References', and Module 4A-C 'Contract information and budget' in the **2025 Emerging Research First Grant Application Form** (Microsoft Word template). Refer to **Sections 3.2-3.5** for detailed guidance on how to complete each module.

Please upload all letters of collaboration/supporting documents/memorandums of understanding to HRC Gateway. HRC Gateway will automatically generate a list of uploaded documents under Module 4D.

Complete Modules 4E-H 'Research proposal budget, 'Subcontract budget', 'FTE summary', and 'List of collaborators' in the **2025 Emerging Researcher First Grant Budget Form** (Microsoft Excel template). Refer to **Section 3.4** for detailed guidance on how to complete the budget form. Please complete all sections and upload the budget form in both **.xlsx and PDF formats** to HRC Gateway. Please make sure all budget tabs are included in the PDF.

A NZ standard CV is required for all named investigators. Upload these to HRC Gateway; they will be compiled in Module 5.

Module 6 Research classification is for HRC evaluation purposes only and is completed on HRC Gateway.

The completed application form should be uploaded to HRC Gateway as a PDF file. Before submitting your application, refer to the application checklist at the end of Part 3.

3.1 The Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Forms

Ensure you use the correct form for your chosen category.

The form is compatible with most Windows PC and MAC computers. The form has default formatting that conforms to HRC requirements. Figures and tables are best pasted in from a draft document instead of created directly in the form.

Please:

- Use the original HRC document templates as it contains special features.
- Complete all sections following the instructions on the form and described in these guidelines.
- Enter the HRC reference ID# and first named investigator surname on the coversheet (HRC Gateway will remove the coversheet from the final system-generated PDF).
- Enter information only in the indicated form fields.
- Do not reformat Module and Section headings.
- Do not delete spreadsheet columns/shaded rows; you may insert more unshaded rows.

3.2 Module 1: General information

This Module must be completed in HRC Gateway. Start the application process by clicking the 'Apply now' button on the 2025 Emerging Researcher First Grant information page. The button will only appear when the application submission period is open. Clicking the 'Apply now' button will open a dialog form where the following information will be required.

First step

Emerging Researcher First Grant category

Select a category for your Emerging Researcher First Grant application (General, Health Delivery, Rangahau Hauora Māori, Pacific).

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

Research title

The research title should be succinct, written in plain language, and clearly describe the proposed research without use of metaphorical terms. The title must not exceed 80 characters, including spaces and punctuation (e.g. 'growth factors' contains 14 characters). Please use sentence case. The HRC reserves the right to amend the title of funded proposals.

Host organisation

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

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

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

If your host organisation has more than one Research Office, please select the office that will handle the application.

Second step

First named investigator

Some information will be automatically populated from the first named investigator's profile in HRC Gateway (e.g. organisation and department). If your profile is not current, update your details in your Gateway profile rather than the application form. The details listed on the application will be automatically refreshed after your profile is updated. Click the 'Update' button to enter and update the information requested.

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. Once an application is created, the first named investigator cannot be changed.

Third step

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

Named investigators

All named investigators must have an HRC Gateway account before they can be added to the application. Each named investigator needs to sign in to HRC Gateway and update their details before you submit your application. Certain information (i.e. ethnicity, gender, and whether the researcher is a clinician) is used for HRC information purposes only and will automatically populate from the individual's profile.

You may wish to designate a hapū, iwi or Māori organisation conducting the research to be acknowledged as investigators on the application. It is still essential to list supporting named investigators.

Click the 'Update' button to enter additional information as requested. All named investigators on successful applications may be cited by the HRC in its various communication channels.

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

The FTE for each named investigator is required, as the assessing committee needs to know each team member's commitment or responsibility level. It is particularly important to identify more junior investigators who may undertake key components for the proposed research. The FTE value should be for the first year of that investigator's involvement (from the budget spreadsheet).

Support personnel: Can be added if applicable. Examples of support personnel include individuals who will help you upload your application to HRC Gateway. Do not list named investigators or your host institution's research office staff (or equivalent) to this section. All support personnel need to have an HRC Gateway account to view and edit your application.

Research location(s)

This is a specific <u>department(s)</u> and <u>organisation</u> where most of the research or data analysis will be undertaken.

Discipline

Select from the drop-down box.

Duration

Enter the proposed term of the research (months).

Type of research

Select from the drop-down list the most appropriate term for broadly describing the research proposal for assessment purposes.

Commencement date

Intended start date for contract if successful. This should between 1 June 2025 and 1 August 2025. If your application is funded, you need to start research activities within three months of the contract offer, unless a different start date is approved by the HRC.

Lay summary

Needs to include a clear statement covering the following key elements: 1) purpose of the research, why it is needed and how it contributes to priorities; 2) how the research will be undertaken including the methodological approach; and 3) anticipated health benefits, expected outcomes; and value for money. 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 easily understood by members of the public (150-word limit). The HRC reserves the right to amend the lay summary.

Research costs

Enter in the relevant totals for staff costs, overhead, working expenses, and total cost of research (from the Excel budget spreadsheet).

Unacceptable peer reviewers

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

Objectives and milestones

Objectives and milestones are assessed, included in a resulting research contract, and used for contract monitoring in progress and end of contract reports. Objectives and milestones must be measurable and achievable within the term of a contract. This section is inserted immediately after the list of named investigators in the final system-generated PDF.

<u>Objectives</u>

Briefly describe the intended objectives of this research application. Objectives should relate to the overall goal or aim of the research. The HRC suggests a minimum of 3 objectives, with sufficient standalone operational detail and scientific information to assess your performance in subsequent years.

All objectives must be added before milestones can be added. There is no limit to the number of objectives and milestones.

<u>Milestones</u>

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 your research requires ethics and/or regulatory approval (human, animal, or biological safety) and/or clinical trial registration, these should be identified as separate Year 1 milestones, even if you expect to gain these approvals before starting 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	Submit manuscript to NZMJ	All objectives

3.3   Module 2: Research

3.3.1   Section 2A: Summary of proposed research (1-page limit)

This section should clearly summarise your suitability for the grant, goals and objectives, research plan (including outline of methods), and significance and relevance of the research proposal to HRC's priorities and improving health outcomes. A clear and succinct summary including all important points of the application provides a good overview and is useful as a quick reference for assessing committee members. Use the headings and add subheadings if required.

3.3.2   Section 2B: Description of proposed research (7-page limit, excluding references)

Give an overall description of your research programme. Your audience includes discipline-specific peer reviewers and a more broadly experienced assessing committee. Therefore, not all members will have specialist knowledge of your research topic. It is in your best interest to structure your writing clearly and logically. Using graphics and tables is an efficient use of space (please ensure font type and size are easily legible). Ideally, seek feedback from a colleague outside your immediate research area.

Ensure that the format of non-text content is compatible with PDF conversion software. In the application form, please do not delete the headings; enter your text under each heading.

Suitability of applicant

Emerging researcher

An emerging researcher is: "Someone who is at the beginning of their career in health research, has a clear development path, and is working in a strongly supportive research environment". Justify how

you fit this definition, outlining your postgraduate qualifications and why you are a suitable recipient for this funding support. Please specify the date of your most recent postgraduate degree conferment. Describe the direction of your research career to date, note any highlights, and outline your career aspirations. Please specify the date of your most recent postgraduate degree conferment. If you are more than 6 years from your most recent postgraduate qualification, clearly explain why you still feel you are eligible for this grant (e.g. if you have taken parental leave or other justified leave).

Research capabilities

Include information that you feel is essential for the HRC assessing committee to better appreciate and understand your research skills and capabilities. Describe how your current or previous research outcomes are relevant to the proposed research, any new research skills this project will help you to develop and why this research capability is important for New Zealand, both now and for the future. Highlight the number of publications for which you have been lead, senior, or corresponding author. Describe how your research interests align with those of the department/division in which you work and outline your contribution to the department/division to date. Ensure that end of contract reports on previous HRC contracts have been submitted, as assessing committees may incorporate this information in their scoring of track record.

Attach a letter of support from your programme leader/head of department/research mentor. The letter should confirm that you will be working independently and specifically outline your contribution to the research. Include confirmation that you will have access to necessary resources and support. The letter of support must be uploaded to HRC Gateway as a supporting document with the application and state the relevant HRC reference number.

Plan for independence

Include your vision of how your research career would develop over the duration of this contract, should it be funded. How will this project enable you to develop your research leadership skills? For example, you could comment on opportunities to train and manage research staff and supervise students. How will this project enable you to establish your independence? Some projects by necessity are carried out in a team environment, so it is helpful to identify new and existing collaborations. It is also important to define which parts of the project are your responsibility, especially when continuing to work with previous mentors/colleagues. Overall, this section ought to clearly articulate how this project will help you become established as an independent researcher and how this will deliver benefit and value for New Zealand.

Rationale for research

Include information that you feel is essential for the assessor to appreciate or understand why this research is important and why it needs to be done in New Zealand. For example, is it unique to New Zealand? Does the proposed research focus on a priority health issue for New Zealand or community with high health needs? Does the proposed research build on and advance existing knowledge, address and important knowledge gap, and demonstrate clear potential to improve health outcomes?

Where does the contribution of this research fit relative to the worldwide perspective? For example, does it support or contribute to research being conducted elsewhere, or is it part of an international collaborative research project? Does it have potential to advance international science, achieve unique competitive advantage, and/or contribute to economic gain?

Research design and methods

Include your specific research hypothesis (if relevant), and a detailed design that describes, for example, subject recruitment and characteristics (including number, recruitment rate, gender, and ethnicity, where relevant), study methodology, technical development and proposed methods of data analysis. Indication of timelines for the research should be included. Consult specialists such as methodologists, statisticians, and health economists before finalising your research design. Clinical trial applications must include a description of data and safety monitoring processes.

Research impact

Each category of the Emerging Researcher First Grant has different requirements for assessing research impact. Please refer to the relevant section below.

In addressing research impact, focus on describing the potential benefits arising from the proposed research, the likely pathway to impact and steps taken to maximise and capture the benefit for New

Zealand. This description of research impact should be considered relative to the scope and context of an Emerging Researcher First Grant.

General Emerging Researcher First Grant

Note: Applicants for the General Emerging Researcher First Grant do not need to link their impact section to the Goals of the previous investment streams. This is to encourage applicants to consider all potential ways in which their proposal can add value for New Zealand, and what actions within their influence can help achieve this potential. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider how their research will contribute to HRC's priorities and how it will help achieve the strategic goals outlined in the New Zealand Health Research Strategy (2017-2024), the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework and the Government Policy Statement on Health (2024-2027).

Assessment of Impact for this category has been restructured to include two components: 1) a **description** of how your research might be used and the anticipated benefits for New Zealand, and 2) the **action plan** to maximise the use and capture the benefits of the research. See the HRC's impact assessment slideshow for additional guidance on completing this section.

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

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

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

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

Describe what targeted actions have been, or will be, taken[8] to improve the likelihood of research uptake and impact, and to ensure that the next users or end users (identified in the previous section) can meaningfully contribute to, and/or benefit from, the research. Describe other planned dissemination activities that are designed to reach broader audiences. Who can enable the uptake of your research, and how have they been involved in your research? Identify uncertainties to uptake, or systematic/institutional barriers, and your mitigation strategies (where relevant).

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

Health Delivery Emerging Researcher First Grant

Note: applications to the Health Delivery category must be in scope of the Health Delivery Research Investment Signal, having the potential to directly inform decisions or changes to policy, practice or systems in the New Zealand health and disability sector. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consider how their proposed research will contribute to achieving the goals of the health system and addressing the key priorities outlined in the Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027).

Assessment of this category includes two components: 1) a **description** of how your research might be used and the anticipated benefits for New Zealand, and 2) the **action plan** to maximise the use and capture the benefits of the research. See the HRC's impact assessment slideshow for additional guidance on completing this section.

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

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

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

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

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

Describe what targeted actions have been, or will be, taken[9] to improve the likelihood of research uptake and impact, and to ensure that the next-users or end-users (identified in the previous section) can meaningfully contribute to, and/or benefit from, the research. Describe other planned dissemination activities that are designed to reach broader audiences. Who can enable the uptake of your research, and how have they been involved in your research? Identify uncertainties to uptake, or systematic/institutional barriers, and your mitigation strategies (where relevant).

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

Rangahau Hauora Māori (RHM) Emerging Researcher First Grant

Note: Research impact for RHM applications has been restructured to encourage applicants to consider all potential ways in which their proposal can benefit Māori and add value for New Zealand, and what actions within their influence can help achieve this potential. Assessment of this category includes two components: 1) a **description** of how your research might be used and the anticipated benefits for Māori and New Zealand, and 2) the **action plan** to **address all 6 goals of the RHM investment stream** to maximise the use and benefits of the research. See the HRC's impact assessment slideshow for additional guidance on completing this section.

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

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

What specific activities have been, or will be, undertaken, throughout the life of the research project, to **address all 6 goals of the RHM investment stream** to maximise the use and benefits of your research?

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

Note: You **must** address all six investment signal goals. Please cross-reference sections written under other headings to avoid repetition. Use the following subheadings in section 2 to describe activities that have contributed, or will contribute to, each of the investment signal goals:

[i] Contribute to the Creation of Māori Health Knowledge

[ii] Contribute to the Translation of Findings into Māori Health Gains

[iii] Incorporate Māori Health Research Processes

[iv] Incorporate Māori Ethics Processes

[v] Contribute to Building a Highly Skilled Māori Health Research Workforce

[vi] Respond to the Needs of, and Work in Partnership with, Māori Stakeholders and Communities

Describe what targeted actions have been, or will be, taken[10] to improve the likelihood of research uptake and impact, and to ensure that the next-users or end-users (identified in the previous section) can meaningfully contribute to, and/or benefit from, the research. Information must be provided about the contribution of the proposed research to: Māori health knowledge and the translation of knowledge into health gains; the use of Māori health research and ethics processes; the contribution to Māori health research workforce development and leadership; and, responsiveness to, and partnership with, Māori stakeholders and communities. Describe other planned dissemination activities that are designed to reach broader audiences. Who can enable the uptake of your research, and how have they been involved in your research? Identify uncertainties to uptake, or systematic/institutional barriers, and your mitigation strategies (where relevant).

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

Pacific Emerging Researcher First Grant

Note: Assessment of impact for Pacific health research includes two components: 1) a **description** of how your research might be used and the anticipated benefits for Pacific peoples and New Zealand, and 2) the **action plan** to **address all 4 Pacific research priorities** to maximise the use and benefits of the research. See the HRC's impact assessment slideshow for additional guidance on completing this section.

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

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

What specific activities have been, or will be, undertaken, throughout the life of the research project, to **address the 4 Pacific health research priorities** to maximise the use and benefits of your research?

Note: Applicants **must** address all four Pacific health research priorities in this section:

[i] Enhance health and wellbeing for Pacific peoples

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

[ii] Contribute to the creation of Pacific health knowledge

[iii] Contribute to the translation of research findings into Pacific health gains

[iv] Build the capacity and capability of the Pacific health research workforce

Describe what targeted actions have been, or will be, taken[11] to improve the likelihood of research uptake and impact, and to ensure that the next-users or end-users (identified in the previous section) can meaningfully contribute to, and/or benefit from, the research. Describe other planned dissemination activities that are designed to reach broader audiences. Who can enable the uptake of your research, and how they have been involved in your research? Identify uncertainties to uptake, or systematic/institutional barriers, and your mitigation strategies (where relevant).

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

Māori health advancement (General and Health Delivery categories only)

The HRC encourages you to consider all potential ways in which your proposal will advance Māori health and outline what actions you will undertake to help achieve this potential.

To meet the requirements for this criterion, you will need to address two questions in your application:
1. How will the outcomes of your research contribute to Māori health advancement?
2. What activities have you already undertaken (that are relevant to this project), and what will you undertake during this project, that will realise your research contribution to Māori health advancement?

When responding to these questions, think about how your research is informed by the four domains of Māori health advancement (see the *Māori Health Advancement Guidelines* for more details). You are not expected to specifically address all four domains of Māori health advancement in your application; however, doing so could help create the strongest rationale for your application. **Consideration of Māori health advancement is context-specific, as determined by the nature and scope of the research**.

Consider the following when responding to this section:
- Give a realistic description of how your research could contribute to improved Māori health outcomes or reductions in inequity over time. Consider potential short-term and/or longer-term Māori health gains, within the specific context of your research and where it is positioned along the research pathway. In addition, identify more immediate users and beneficiaries of the research who can utilise the research findings for Māori health gain.
- Identify elements of the team's track record that give 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; examples of knowledge translation and uptake; or changes to practice or policy that have enhanced equity and advanced Māori health.
- Describe specific actions that have been, and will be, undertaken (from the development of the research idea through to the completion of the project) to maximise the likelihood that this research will contribute to Māori health advancement. Outline actions taken to ensure that the next users or beneficiaries of the research can utilise the findings for Māori health gain.
- If your 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).

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

This component is considered relative to opportunity (i.e. stage of career progression, nature of research, and institutional capacity and capability).

3.4   Module 3: References

Start this section on a new page. There is no page limit for this section. Provide the references cited in Module 2 with a full list of all authors, article title, journal, year, volume, and page numbers. Place an asterisk beside all named investigators' publications. Endnote lists must be copied into a plain text editor before pasting it here.

You can also include a reference to Māori terms used in your application with a brief translation in this section.

3.5   Module 4: Contract information and budget

Complete Sections 4A – 4C in the Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Form (Microsoft Word template).

Section 4D is automatically generated by HRC Gateway.

Complete Section 4E-4H in the Emerging Researcher First Grant Budget Form (Microsoft Excel template)

3.5.1   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 listed in Section 4E. Please include the following (if applicable):

- An explanation of each person's role (named or un-named, funded or not funded by the proposal), who will be actively associated with the research. These may be research assistants, technicians, medical staff, interviewers, and support staff, 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.
- A justification for un-named postdoctoral fellows. Named postdoctoral fellows should be included as named investigators and provide their CVs.
- 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.
- Roles in mentoring junior team members

Note: Salary can now be claimed for the first named investigator. For full details on other salary costs that can be claimed, please see Section 4E: Research proposal budget.

Funding requests may be declined for roles that are not fully justified or are only described as a 'training opportunity'. It is your responsibility to ensure that no personnel 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 next 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 should be justified. Provide costs per item unit and full costs per item for the number of units requested. Costs associated with knowledge transfer activities can be included. Quotes must be provided to support discretionary costs, where available.

The assessing committees will consider the appropriateness of the budget and working expenses. If there are exceptional requests for working expenses, ensure they can clearly understand why the requested materials, travel, research tools, or significant one-line items are necessary.

Justify the roles of students and casual staff so that the assessing committees can appreciate how these individuals are necessary for the proposed research. For students, stipends must be included at the per annum values approved by the HRC: $30,000 for PhD students, $20,000 for Masters students and up to $7,500 for summer students, or pro-rata for part-time students.

Students should be named if they have been identified at the time of application, along with a description of how their expertise relates to their role. Unnamed students can be included in the application budget, e.g. "PhD student (not yet appointed)". Once you have appointed an unnamed student, please advise the HRC of the student's name and relevant expertise. If you include an unnamed student, you cannot include any information about your intention to recruit and appoint a student with any particular expertise or other characteristic, such as ethnicity or gender. Any such detail on unnamed students is considered unjustified and will be disregarded in the assessment process.

It is your responsibility to ensure that students do not exceed 100% FTE on their combined commitments with the host organisation during the term of the contract.

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

3.5.2 Section 4B: Previous/current contracts and awards

List contracts awarded to the first named investigator 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 as principal investigator**. Copy the table and repeat for each received grant as required.

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.

If applicable, please detail how this previous/current contract relates to and/or overlaps with the application.

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.

3.5.3 Section 4C: Other support

Other research applications awaiting decision and co-funding

List any relevant research applications pending with other funders that might alter the budget. If applicable, indicate any overlap (research, resources, and personnel) that the listed application might have with this application. By providing this information, you agree that the HRC may seek clarification details from the other funders if required.

Co-funding

Provide details if you have approached other funders to co-fund this research. If applicable, detail the joint funding arrangements.

Please disclose and provide details of any significant relationship to third parties (e.g. commercial sector entities contributing to project costs, equipment, staff joint appointments). Describe how the current application relates to those relationships. Assessing commercial links is NOT part of the HRC peer review process.

Financial and other interest(s)

For HRC funding applications, a financial or other interest is anything of economic value or a political/philosophical perspective, including relationships with entities outside of the research host institution. 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 worldview 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. If you can identify any financial or other interests in a funding application, please outline the specific details of your proposed conflict management strategy.

3.5.4 Section 4D: Letters of collaboration/support documents

Any additional documentation (including subcontracts/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), letters of collaboration/support, appendices, and other supporting documents) should be uploaded as separate PDF files under 'Letters of collaboration/supporting documents' on HRC Gateway.

HRC Gateway will automatically generate a list in the order that the documents are uploaded.

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

3.5.5 Section 4E: Research proposal budget

The budget spreadsheet in Section 4E can be used for different types of applications. Select 'Emerging Researcher First Grant' from the dropdown list. Further instructions are contained in the Notes tab of the file.

The guidelines below should be considered only as 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 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 of the figures in this box.

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

Salary

For the Emerging Researcher First Grant, salary can only be claimed for the first named investigator and individuals conducting the research (e.g. research assistants, research managers, research fellows etc). Salary can be claimed for other named investigators, only where they are supporting you and/or your research in a capacity beyond what would be expected of them as part of any mentoring responsibilities in their employed position (this should be clearly justified). All other academics, professional supervisors or senior researchers should be included as named investigators on a time-only basis.

Any salary request should specify grade and level, FTE and salary; 'time only' or part-funding of salary is permissible.

The budget form does not accept FTE less than 3%.

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, Master's 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/Memorandum of Understanding (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 does not cover overheads for overseas-based organisations. Enter the subcontract/MOU total under 'Working expenses - subcontracts' for each year.

b) If you request funding to provide a stipend for a PhD student ($30,000 per year) or Master's student ($20,000 per year), and/or student fees, 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 are 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. They may include the following:

- Research consumables (these should be itemised at the current cost per unit and full cost for the 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 (upload any budgetary supportive documents separately on HRC Gateway as supporting documents).
- Depreciation on specialised equipment if your host organisation's auditors have certified that it will be excluded from your organisation's overhead rate. This cost must be justified in your application and supporting documentation should be uploaded to HRC Gateway. For all other equipment, depreciation and capital costs are included in your organisation's overhead rate.
- 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 assist 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 your 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 where 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 Department and host organisation's rules.
- Disseminating research results. Contract funds can be used to pay fair and reasonable charges to publish HRC-sponsored research in journals, reports, monographs or books. 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. Fares and allowances should be calculated following the host organisation's regulations and scales.
- **Note**: If you intend to ask the HRC's Data Monitoring Core Committee (DMCC) to monitor this study, there is no cost involved. However, your application must include adequate provision for statistical support to provide the DMCC with all data and analysis they request to carry out their monitoring including the 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 DMCC secretary at dmcc@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. An MOU should also include overhead calculations for salaries (**note:** the HRC does not cover overheads for overseas-based organisations). A *pro forma* MOU is available upon request from the HRC. If a subcontract/MOU is more than $50,000, all expenses requested should be broken down into the appropriate categories in Section 4G (MOU budget).

Please provide MOUs for time-only subcontracted staff who are not employed by the host organisation. If MOUs cannot be provided, you can include a support letter that describes the individual's role and level of involvement. If your application is successful, copies of MOUs that were not provided for any time-only individuals may be required at the contracting stage.

Please upload all MOUs and letters of support as separate PDF files on HRC Gateway. Refer to section 3.5.4 'Section 4D: Letters of collaboration/support documents' for further details.

Salary associated costs

Amounts requested for the employer's contribution to approved superannuation schemes and accident compensation levies for research staff should be entered in the 'working expenses' section. Enter the amounts for each year separately in the budget form and the percentage rates for both ACC and superannuation 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 overseas investigators. The total proportion of the contract budget allocated to overseas investigators must not exceed 20%.

Total cost of research

Enter the appropriate overhead rate (OHR) in the budget. Seek advice from your host organisation's Research Office on the costing of your application 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 the overhead and total cost of research from the budget form into the HRC Gateway section named 'Research costs'.

3.5.6 Section 4F: MOU budget

If a substantial proportion of the total budget 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. Use the overhead rate of the subcontracted staff's host organisation, not your host organisation.

The total dollar amount for each year should be entered under 'Working expenses – subcontracts' and a copy of the subcontract/MOU should be uploaded to HRC Gateway.

A CV must be provided in Module 5 for all named investigators on MOUs to help the Assessing Committees determine whether the investigator's expertise is appropriate and necessary. Without this information, the Assessing Committees may not support the budget for the MOU. CVs are not required for employees of commercial enterprises providing services for a fee.

If there are no subcontracts/MOUs for this application, or none requesting more than $50,000, you can ignore Section 4F.

3.5.7 Section 4G: FTE summary

List the time involvement of **all** personnel (including those on a subcontract/MOU) in full-time equivalents, e.g. 10% FTE. Half percentages (e.g. 4.5%) are not allowed. Ensure the FTE figures match the budget, MOU budget sections (Sections 4F and 4G), and Module 1.

Give all names (for un-named positions, indicate as 'technician', 'research nurse' and 'postdoctoral fellow', etc.). Indicate when named investigators are 'time-only' (i.e. **not** receiving salary for their involvement in the research project). Identify all postgraduate students by 'Masters or 'PhD' as well as by their names. Heads of department will be required to provide workload relief for research staff working on HRC contracts (principles of full cost funding).

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

Please complete the 'collaborators' section (not named investigators) by providing their full name, organisation, and country (where the organisation is based and where the collaborators will 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 New Zealand dollars or list any in-kind support.

3.6   Module 5: NZ standard CV

Upload a CV for all named investigators (including those on a Memorandum of Understanding). HRC Gateway will automatically compile CVs under Module 5 of your application.
CVs must be completed using the NZ Standard CV template, which you can download from HRC Gateway. Please use the default font and stay within the page limits. The HRC will not accept any other forms of CV.

The information provided in your CV **must match** the information provided elsewhere in the application and in your HRC Gateway profile. Your CV may indicate when career breaks (including pandemic-related disruptions) have taken place as your track record will be assessed relative to opportunity.

3.7   Module 6: Research classification

Click the 'Update' button next to each of the classifications required. Classification of research is for HRC evaluation purposes only. The information is not used in allocating funding. The required details must be entered in HRC Gateway.

3.7.1 Section 6A: 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.

3.7.2 Section 6B: Economic benefits

Please 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.

3.7.3 Section 6C: Health issues and mapping category

Health issues

Enter the requested information on HRC Gateway. Please select the health issue that best describes their research and, if required, one secondary health issue.

Mapping category

Enter the requested information on HRC Gateway (select one). Select the category that best describes the starting point for their research. The following table describes 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.
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.

3.7.4 New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework Domains (General and Health Delivery categories only)

This section is only required if you are applying for a General or Health Delivery Emerging Researcher First Grant. This information is for HRC data collection purposes only.

Information for this section is entered at the end of the application form.

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 up to one additional secondary domain.

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 cannot advise you on which domain to choose.

3.8   Application checklist

Before submitting your application, please check that you have completed all tasks outlined in this checklist.

- You meet all eligibility criteria outlined in Section 1.4 of the 2025 Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Guidelines (this document).
- The application is written in Arial 10-point type font or larger, using default margins and single-line spacing.
- Module 1 has been completed in HRC Gateway.
- Module 2, Module 3, and Module 4 sections 4A-4C have been completed in the HRC 2025 Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Microsoft Word template.
- Module 2 Section 2A fits within 1 page and Section 2C fits within 7 pages.
- Once the 2025 Emerging Researcher First Grant Application form has been converted to a PDF format, check all figures, tables and text have been converted intact.
- The 2025 Emerging Researcher First Grant Application form has been uploaded to HRC Gateway in the 'Uploads' section of the application.
- Module 4 sections 4E-4H have been completed in the HRC 2025 Emerging Researcher First Grant Budget Microsoft Excel template.
- The 2025 Emerging Researcher First Grant Budget form has been converted to a PDF format and all relevant spreadsheet tabs are included.
- Both the .xlsx format and PDF format of the 2025 Emerging Researcher First Grant Budget form have been uploaded to HRC Gateway in the 'Uploads' section of the application.
- All named investigators' CVs use the HRC template and have been uploaded to HRC Gateway.
- All letters of collaboration/support documents have been uploaded to HRC Gateway as separate PDF files in the 'Uploads' section of the application (maximum of 15 documents).

Appendix 1: Criteria for assessing and scoring Emerging Researcher First Grant applications

Score criteria: General Emerging Researcher First Grant

A 7-point word ladder with criteria descriptors is used to assess the scoring categories outlined below (listed A-F). The assessing committee scores according to the descriptors rather than other considerations, such as applications' success rates. In your application, you do not have to address all of the points outlined below; they are included to help guide assessment under each of the scoring categories.

The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale using the following five criteria, such that the total maximum score is 35 points which is weighted to 28 points (for consistency across years and to compare across streams). Assessing committee members may only allocate whole scores.

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

Criteria	Points	% score
Suitability of the applicant	7	36
Rationale for research	7	16
Design and methods	7	16
Research impact	7	16
Māori health advancement	7	16
Total (weighted total)	**35 (28)**	**100**

A.   Suitability of the applicant

The applicant assessment, relative to opportunity, includes:

- the applicant's justification of how they fit the definition of emerging researcher as defined by the HRC
- evidence of the applicant's commitment to establish an independent research career
- the extent to which the research proposal represents an independent research stream
- evidence of why investing in this particular research skillset and capability is important for New Zealand, both now and for the future
- the applicant's ability to take overall responsibility for the work to be completed
- the applicant's plan for developing an independent research programme, stemming from the research proposal
- the quality of the applicant's track record, based not only on quantity of publications but on the applicant's PhD, prizes and scholarships, and other academic achievements. Track record is assessed **relative to opportunity**
- the nature and level of support provided by the applicant's mentors and colleagues.

B.   Rationale for research

The research is important and needs to be done in New Zealand because it addresses some or all of the following:

- focuses on a significant, priority health issue or community with high health needs, where the health issue is important to New Zealand
- the aims, research questions and hypotheses build on and advance existing knowledge address an important knowledge gap, and demonstrates clear potential to improve health outcomes
- the research is original and innovative with potential to advance international science, achieve unique competitive advantage and/or contribute to economic gain

C.	Design and methods

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

- 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
- patient safety issues well managed.

D.	Research impact

In addressing research impact for Emerging Researcher First Grants, applicants should focus on describing the potential benefits arising from the proposed research and the likely pathway to impact. The description of research impact should be considered relative to the scope and context of an Emerging Researcher First Grant.

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

- Applicants have described a credible pathway for how their research will:
  - o result in benefits or opportunities for future research in New Zealand, or
  - o influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in New Zealand, 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.

E.	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 (as appropriate to the nature and scope of an Emerging Researcher First Grant).
- 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:
  - o establishing meaningful, collaborative, and reciprocal relationships with Māori
  - o undertaking research that addresses Māori health need and inequity
  - o forming appropriate research teams
  - o developing current and future workforce capacity and capability, including upskilling of research team members, and
  - o adhering to culturally appropriate research practices and principles (as appropriate to the context of the research).

Score criteria: Health Delivery Emerging Researcher First Grant

A 7-point word ladder with criteria descriptors is used to assess the scoring categories outlined below (listed A-F). The assessing committee scores according to the descriptors rather than other considerations, such as applications' success rates. In your application, you do not have to address all of the points outlined below; they are included to help guide assessment under each of the scoring categories.

The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale using the following six criteria, such that the total maximum score is 42 points which is weighted to 28 points (for consistency across years and to compare across streams). Assessing committee members may only allocate whole scores.

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

Criteria	Points	% score
Suitability of the applicant	7	32
Rationale for research	7	15
Design and methods	7	15
Research impact	7	15
Māori health advancement	7	15
Research uptake	7	8
Total (weighted total)	**42 (28)**	**100**

A.   Suitability of the applicant

The applicant assessment, relative to opportunity, includes:

- the applicant's justification of how they fit the definition of emerging researcher as defined by the HRC
- evidence of the applicant's commitment to establish an independent research career
- the extent to which the research proposal represents an independent research stream
- evidence of why investing in this particular research skillset and capability is important for New Zealand, both now and for the future
- the applicant's ability to take overall responsibility for the work to be completed
- the applicant's plan for developing an independent research programme, stemming from the research proposal
- the quality of the applicant's track record, based not only on quantity of publications but on the applicant's PhD, prizes and scholarships, and other academic achievements. Track record is assessed **relative to opportunity**
- the nature and level of support provided by the applicant's mentors and colleagues.

B.   Rationale for research

The research is important, and needs to be done in New Zealand because it addresses some or all of the following:

- it focuses on a significant, priority health issue or community with high health needs, where the health issue is important to New Zealand
- the aims, research questions and hypotheses build on and advance existing knowledge, address an important knowledge gap, and demonstrates clear potential to improve health outcomes
- the research is be original and innovative with potential to advance international science, achieve unique competitive advantage, and/or contribute to economic gain

C.	Design and methods

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

- 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
- patient safety issues well managed.

D.	Research impact

In addressing research impact for Emerging Researcher First Grants, applicants should focus on describing the potential benefits arising from the proposed research and the likely pathway to impact. The description of research impact should be considered relative to the scope and context of an Emerging Researcher First Grant.

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 New Zealand, or
    - influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in New Zealand, 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.

E.	Māori health advancement

The proposed research is likely to advance Māori health because:

- Applicants have described how their research could lead to improved Māori health or reductions in health inequity over time (as appropriate to the nature and scope of an Emerging Researcher First Grant).
- 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).

F.	Track record: research uptake

The research is expected to contribute to a primary outcome of improved health service delivery over the short to medium term.

The applicant or team should have:

- expertise, a dissemination plan, networks for knowledge transfer and uptake,
- service-user, clinical, health provider, support worker, or community involvement.

Score criteria: Rangahau Hauora Māori Emerging Researcher First Grant

A 7-point word ladder with criteria descriptors is used to assess the scoring categories outlined below (listed A-D). The assessing committee scores according to the descriptors rather than other considerations, such as applications' success rates. In your application, you do not have to address all of the points outlined below; they are included to help guide assessment under each of the scoring categories.

The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale using the following four criteria, such that the total maximum score is 28. Assessing committee members may only allocate whole scores.

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

Criteria	Points	% score
Suitability of the applicant	7	40
Rationale for research	7	20
Design and methods	7	20
Research impact	7	20
Total	**28**	**100**

A.   Suitability of the applicant

The applicant assessment, **relative to opportunity**, includes:

- the applicant's justification of how they fit the definition of emerging researcher as defined by the HRC
- evidence of the applicant's commitment to establish an independent research career
- the extent to which the research proposal represents an independent research stream
- evidence of why investing in this particular research skillset and capability is important for New Zealand, both now and for the future
- the applicant's ability to take overall responsibility for the work to be completed
- the applicant's plan for developing an independent research programme, stemming from the research proposal
- the quality of the applicant's track record, based not only on quantity of publications but on the applicant's PhD, prizes and scholarships, and other academic achievements. Track record is assessed **relative to opportunity**
- the nature and level of support provided by the applicant's mentors and colleagues.

B.   Rationale for research

The research is important, and needs to be done in New Zealand because it addresses some or all of 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.

C.	Design and methods

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

- 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
- patient safety issues well managed.

D.	Research impact

In addressing research impact for Emerging Researcher First Grants, applicants should focus on describing the potential benefits arising from the proposed research and the likely pathway to impact. The description of research impact should be considered relative to the scope and context of an Emerging Researcher First Grant.

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 New Zealand, or
  - influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in New Zealand, 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).

Score criteria: Pacific Emerging Researcher First Grant

A 7-point word ladder with criteria descriptors is used to assess the scoring categories outlined below (listed A-D). The assessing committee scores according to the descriptors rather than other considerations, such as applications' success rates. In your application, you do not have to address all of the points outlined below; they are included to help guide assessment under each of the scoring categories.

The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale using the following four criteria, such that the total maximum score is 28. Assessing committee members may only allocate whole scores.

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

Criteria	Points	% score
Suitability of the applicant	7	40
Rationale for research	7	20
Design and methods	7	20
Research impact	7	20
Total	**28**	**100**

A.	**Suitability of the applicant**

The applicant assessment, **relative to opportunity**, includes:

- the applicant's justification of how they fit the definition of emerging researcher as defined by the HRC
- evidence of the applicant's commitment to establish an independent research career
- the extent to which the research proposal represents an independent research stream
- evidence of why investing in this particular research skillset and capability is important for New Zealand, both now and for the future
- the applicant's ability to take overall responsibility for the work to be completed
- the applicant's plan for developing an independent research programme, stemming from the research proposal
- the quality of the applicant's track record, based not only on quantity of publications but on the applicant's PhD, prizes and scholarships, and other academic achievements. Track record is assessed **relative to opportunity**
- the nature and level of support provided by the applicant's mentors and colleagues.

B.	**Rationale for research**

The research is important, and needs to be done in New Zealand because it addresses some or all of the following:

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

C.	Design and methods

The study has been well-designed to answer the research questions, because it demonstrates some or all of 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
- Pacific health research protocols
- partnership with, and responsiveness to the needs of, Pacific stakeholders and communities
- plan for dissemination of results
- patient safety issues well managed.

D.	Research impact

In addressing research impact for Emerging Researcher First Grants, applicants should focus on describing the potential benefits arising from the proposed research and the likely pathway to impact. The description of research impact should be considered relative to the scope and context of an Emerging Researcher First Grant.

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

- Applicants have described a credible pathway for how their research will:
    - result in benefits or opportunities for future research in New Zealand, or
    - influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in New Zealand, leading to improved health or other social/economic impacts.
- The research team are undertaking steps to maximise the likelihood of impact by:
    - enhancing the health and wellbeing of Pacific communities (Priority 1)
    - contributing to the creation of Pacific health knowledge (Priority 2)
    - contributing to the translation of findings into Pacific health gains (Priority 3)
    - building the capacity and capability of the Pacific health research workforce (Priority 4), and
    - incorporating Pacific health research protocols; responding to the needs of, and working in partnership with, Pacific stakeholders and communities.

Appendix 2: Assessment process for Emerging Researcher First Grant applications

1. Overview

Emerging First Researcher Grant applications are assessed in several steps:

1. The application is assigned to an assessing committee
2. The assessing committee individually reads and pre-scores applications
3. Lower-ranked proposals are triaged
4. The applications are discussed and scored during the assessing committee meeting
5. The assessing committee makes funding recommendations
6. The HRC Council makes the final funding decision

Note: Applications received in the Emerging Researcher First Grant round will not receive external peer review. Therefore, there is no opportunity to provide a rebuttal. Committee members consider each application on its own merit and score it on the relevant criteria for each category (refer to Appendix 1 for details).

2. HRC Assessing Committees

Applications submitted to the Health Delivery Emerging Researcher First Grant and the General Emerging Researcher First Grant will be assessed by a multidisciplinary First Grant Assessing Committee (FGAC). Depending on the number of applications received, two committees may be convened to assess the Health Delivery and General applications.

Pacific Emerging Researcher First Grant applications will be assessed by the Pacific Health Assessing Committee (PacificAC).

Rangahau Hauora Māori Emerging Researcher First Grant applications will be assessed by the Rangahau Hauora Māori Assessing Committee (RHAC).

Assessing committees consist of a chair or two co-chairs and 9-12 members. The chair is a member (or designee) of one of the Statutory Research Committees (i.e. Māori Health Committee, Public Health Research Committee, Biomedical Research Committee) and is appointed by their Research Committee. Members represent a mix of New Zealand (and can include international) experienced health researchers, who have the appropriate expertise relative to the breadth/scope of the research applications received.

Members are expected to have:

- postgraduate qualifications in a discipline relevant to health research,
- a track record as a health researcher and be a named investigator on a funded research proposal from a relevant funding agency (e.g., the HRC, Cancer Society),
- a track record in policy analysis/advice in an agency/department relevant to health research (e.g., Ministry of Health),
- expertise in assessing Māori health advancement and an understanding of the wider Tiriti context and its application to research,
- expertise in assessing the impact of health research.

In some circumstances, committees could have some members whose expertise and experience are less than that described above, however, all members must be able to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a committee reviewer (CR).

3. Responsibilities of committee members

3.1 General

Assessing committee members are required to declare at the outset any potential conflicts of interest so that the impact of any such conflicts on the assessment process is managed appropriately.

To minimise potential conflicts of interest, the HRC has specific guidance for assessing committee membership.

> Anyone who is a **first named investigator** or a **named investigator** on an application should not sit on the committee that is reviewing their application. However, they may sit on or chair a different committee.

Assessing committee members are required to keep all information about assessing applications confidential.

3.2 Committee reviewer (CR) role

In addition to reading the applications and contributing to the discussion of all applications assigned to a committee, each committee member is assigned CR responsibilities for some applications.

The CR of an application is required to:

- present an overview of the proposed research to the committee, focusing on strengths and weaknesses regarding each score criterion
- write the review summary which outlines the committee's discussion.

The CR member must be able to contribute to the discussion of other applications reviewed by the committee they are sitting on.

4. Scoring of Emerging Researcher First Grant applications

Committee members are asked to score the research application on a 7-point scale at pre-scoring and during the assessing committee meeting. The scoring criterion is outlined in Appendix 1.

5. Committee pre-scoring assessment

Committee members (based on their own reading of the applications) may be required to undertake pre-scoring of applications assigned to their committee and allocate scores using the 7-point scale score criteria used at the assessing committee meeting.

The HRC collates the average scores to identify a preliminary ranking. Based on the pre-scores, applications may be triaged, i.e. not progress to full discussion at the committee meeting, but the committee may rescue some of them prior to the meeting. The remaining applications will be randomised for discussion at the committee meeting.

6. Assessing committee meeting

Assessing committee members are provided with a briefing at the start of the meeting. The briefing confirms the procedure for identifying and dealing with conflicts of interest, the meeting process, and the scoring criteria. This provides committee members with the information and guidance they need to be consistent in their approach and to follow the HRC process.

7. Schedule

The chair(s) 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 between 15-20 minutes:

- declaration of conflicts of interest – 1 minutes
- CR – 4-5 minutes
- general discussion of the proposal –10 minutes
- scoring – 1-2 minutes
- note key points for review summary – 1-2 minutes.

8. Assessment criteria, scoring and recommendation

In the assessing committee meeting, applications are assessed in random order and scored on a 7-point scale for the following criteria. Please see Appendix 1 for details of the scoring criteria for each category.

The committee also takes into consideration:

- the appropriateness of the timeline for the proposed research and likelihood of meeting objectives within the budget
- the appropriateness of the requested % FTE involvement of the applicant and other investigators.

The HRC Investment Process Coordinator will inform the assessing committee on whether the application's budget aligns with HRC policy. However, it is the committee's responsibility to determine whether the budget is appropriate for the application.

At the end of the discussion, the application is confidentially scored by each committee member.

8.1 Re-ranking procedure

After all applications have been scored, the assessing committee reviews the ranked applications. Re-ranking is possible on a case-by-case basis to address significant inconsistencies that can affect the overall funding outcome. Any assessing committee member may put forward an application for re-ranking. If the whole committee agrees, the application's scores can be changed by adding up to 0.5 points to one or two scoring criteria. This will move the application up one place. The new ranking and adjusted total scores are then presented for consideration at the next stage. Scores cannot be added to an application's score without re-ranking the application.

The re-ranking procedure is managed carefully by the committee chair(s) and the HRC Investment Process Coordinator to avoid re-litigating applications and to prevent bias. Conflicts of interest are notified and managed appropriately. Any changes are recorded in the meeting score sheet and notes.

8.2 Fundable and not fundable line

After scoring, and possibly re-ranking, the applications are ranked according to total scores.

The committee, noting conflicts of interest, then:
- identifies the applications assessed as not fundable (NF), by starting at the bottom of the ranked list and going up the list based on quality
- identifies the applications assessed as fundable (F).

Applications above the fundable/not fundable line are considered of sufficient quality and are suitable for funding. Applications below the fundable/not fundable line are of insufficient quality and should not be funded, irrespective of the available budget.

Note: Once the proposals have been scored and re-ranked, scores cannot be further reviewed or adjusted. Any concerns about the process are identified by the committee and are taken by the assessing committee chair(s) to the chair of the relevant research committee.

8.3 Funding approval

The First Grant Assessing Committee(s), Pacific Assessing Committee and Rangahau Hauora Māori Assessing Committee results and recommendations are provided to the HRC Council for funding approval.

9. Feedback to applicants

At the end of the funding round, you can access your application outcome via the HRC Gateway. You will receive a review summary from the assessing committee, which is designed to give you a brief, balanced and objective statement of the committee's response to your application.

Review summaries should be constructive and include:
- key strengths of the application
- key areas for improvement and/or further consideration
- other comments (e.g. budgets, FTE, objectives).

Review summaries should not mention scores or reveal who the assessing committee members were. The assessing committee chairs are responsible for approving the content of all review summaries. The HRC will forward these to your research office/host institution. Refer to Appendix 3 for a review summary template.

Appendix 3: Emerging Researcher First Grant Review Summary

HRC reference #		Applicant surname	
Title of research			
Host			

Note to committee reviewers (CR): Please give careful consideration to the information and wording provided below as it will be useful for both successful applicants (in helping to shape their research) and for unsuccessful applicants (in preparing future research applications). Comments should be clearly worded, reflect the committee's discussion, and ideally be no more than one-page or 4-6 bullet points total. Please delete this text before you submit the completed form to the HRC.

With regard to the criteria for assessing and scoring research applications:

1. **The assessing committee noted the following key strengths of the application (brief bullet points)**

2. **The assessing committee noted the following aspects that could be improved and/or considered further (brief bullet points)**

3. **Other Comments/suggestions (brief bullet points)**