Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

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

2025 Programme Grant Application Guidelines

August 2024

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Part 1: 2025 HRC Programmes Grant – key information and requirements

Part 1 sets out the requirements for the HRC Programme Grant, including:

- information about HRC's priorities
- information about the grant, including the maximum value and duration
- eligibility criteria that applicants must meet
- an overview of the application process and requirements, including key dates
- an overview of the assessment process and assessment criteria.

Parts 2 and 3 contain instructions for applicants on submitting an application, including administrative requirements and how to demonstrate that the requirements for funding are met.

1.1   Introduction

The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) offer Programme Grants to support high-performing teams to undertake a Programme of health research in an area of importance and priority for New Zealand.

Research programmes are required to have clear strategic goals with specific research objectives that can tangibly contribute to improved health outcomes in New Zealand and/or demonstrate the potential to make a significant breakthrough within a field of research. Meaningful collaboration with others to collectively achieve health gains and deliver maximum value for the New Zealand public's investment in health research is strongly encouraged.

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 programme 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   Research programme essential components

Grants are awarded depending on available funds. Programmes are funded according to their potential for excellence, innovation and impact. You should therefore ensure that your proposal demonstrates the following:

- **Strategic intent of the proposed research programme:** Priority will be given to research programmes that demonstrate strong alignment with HRC priorities; clear potential for improving health outcomes and contributing to wider health and science system goals; and a collaborative approach to achieving health gains and maximum value for public investment in health research.
- **Qualifying research:** Programmes should represent a substantive and cohesive body of research, encompassed in a minimum of three distinct objectives addressing a common theme.
- **International competitiveness of the research:** It is important to demonstrate how your research is at the forefront of international research efforts, i.e. research areas in which New Zealand has a particular advantage or are at the 'leading edge' within their respective discipline.
- **Māori health advancement:** Your research group's policies, general activities and research proposal with respect to Māori health advancement should be evident.
- **Research team:** Named investigators should have an extensive track record of achievement (including peer-reviewed research contracts and publications). The HRC reviewers will consider the strength of each team member.
- **Collaboration:** Engagement, collaboration and connection with others, where this will result in strengthening the impact, translation and uptake of your research is highly desirable.
- **Training:** Opportunities to develop early career researchers and next programme leaders, provide research engagement opportunities for health professionals and develop the critical health research skills New Zealand needs should be developed and included within the programme.
- **Host organisation:** Your research group should have strong support from your respective host organisation(s).

1.4   Value

- HRC Programme Grants have a 5-year term and a budget of up to $5,000,000.
- The requested budget needs to be justified and reflect the activities being proposed

1.5   Programme Requirements

When applying for a Programme Grant, please ensure the following criteria are all met:

- There are at least three established researchers named on the application who will be responsible for the scientific direction and quality of the research.
- The named investigators have a successful funding history of peer-reviewed contracts.
- The named investigators have a successful history of knowledge translation.
- The named investigators have an outstanding track record of achievement in health research.
- Support will be provided to those seeking training in health research.
- Each named investigator devotes a substantial and specified portion of time to the research programme.

If you do not meet any of the above criteria, you will need written approval from the HRC before submitting your application.

If the HRC already has a significant investment in a research area, particularly if it already has a programme in the area, consideration will be given to whether increased capacity and additional

long-term commitment of funds to this research area is warranted. The appropriateness of programme investment in any research area shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

1.6   Programme categories

When applying for a Programme Grant, you need to select one of the following programme categories:

- **General Programme:** Supporting excellent ideas and innovations proposed by researchers, designed to improve health outcomes for New Zealanders. This includes research that might be submitted through Pacific or Health Delivery investment categories that are separate in other HRC award types.
- **Rangahau Hauora Māori Programme**: Supporting Māori health research that contributes to Māori health gains, upholds rangatiratanga and utilises and advances Māori knowledge, resources, and people.

Programme Grants can only be submitted to one category. The HRC does not provide advice on which project category you should choose, and you may not change categories once your application has been submitted.

1.7   Programme director requirements

Programme directors need to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Have New Zealand as their principal domicile and their principal place of employment (refer to the HRC Rules for definitions).
- Can assign at least 20% FTE to the Programme.
- Only submit one Programme application in the 2025 funding round.
- Have no outstanding HRC progress or end of contract reports for previous contracts.

Note: Host organisations are responsible for ensuring that New Zealand is the director's principal domicile and place of employment. By submitting an application, the host is satisfied that this condition has been met.

Resourcing a team with $5,000,000 of taxpayers' investment requires a significant degree of accountability to be demonstrated regarding managing the size and complexity of an HRC programme. A proven record of managing projects of a sizeable nature is therefore required.

To be a programme director, you need to meet one of the following requirements based on the application due date of 9 October 2024 (specific dates have been given to clarify the requirements):

- You are the director of a current HRC-funded programme contract with less than one year to run (i.e. the programme contract will expire before 9 October 2025).
- You are the director of a current HRC-funded programme contract which had an original end date before 9 October 2025, and:
    a) The programme contract was extended due to the impacts of COVID-19 with a new expiration date before 9 October 2026.
    b) AND Your programme has a significantly reduced body of work to be completed during the extension. The HRC will assess each case and will have the final say on whether the extension meets our judgement of 'significantly reduced'. This will include limited milestones to be completed and a significant reduction in the overall team FTE, including that of the director.
- You were the director of an HRC-funded programme contract in the past five years (i.e. the programme contract expired after 9 October 2019).

- You were the first named investigator on at least two HRC Project contracts[3] (or contracts with a comparable national/international agency[4]) that are current or have expired in the last 24 months (i.e. expired after 9 October 2022).
- You are the first named investigator on one HRC Project contract (or contract with a comparable national/international agency) that is current or expired in the last 12 months (i.e. expired after 9 October 2023). You are proposing to lead a programme team which includes at least two other first named investigators on Project contracts from the HRC (or a comparable national/international agency) that are current or expired in the last 24 months (i.e. expired after 9 October 2022).
- You were the director on an application that was shortlisted for and assessed by the Programme Assessing Committee in the 2024 funding round.

A programme director can only lead one programme, except for the overlap allowed in the first two bullet points.

The HRC welcomes proposals with programme co-directors under circumstances that would result in a research team of exceptional strength, such as interdisciplinary work. Adding a co-director provides a broader range of skills, expertise, and representation, and develops leaders.

When a proposal is submitted with a co-director, the above requirements apply to both the director and co-director as individuals or in combination. For example, eligibility criteria 4 could be met by the director and co-director as first named investigator on one project each (in which case at least one of the projects must be current at the time of application). The sum of FTE for director and co-director must be at least 30% FTE. Residency conditions apply to both.

The HRC will review the programme director requirements periodically.

1.8   Negotiation of contract details

After the HRC Council approves a research programme, the HRC will negotiate with the programme director and the host organisation to confirm:

- the research objectives to be supported
- the final programme budget
- FTE commitments to the contract
- any funding to be provided by other agencies in support of the programme research objectives
- any necessary ethics and/or regulatory approvals

1.9   Overview of the assessment process

Programme applications are assessed by a disciplined-based Assessing Committee (AC) and the Programme Assessing Committee (PAC). These assessments inform final decisions made by the HRC Council. Applications are assessed through several stages:

1.   External reviewers assess the applications. Applicants can respond to reviewer reports during the rebuttal period.

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[3] Includes HRC Projects awarded in the annually run funding rounds. Grants valued at around $800,000 due to a lower overhead may be considered. Not included: Feasibility Study Grants, Emerging Researcher First Grants, HRC Fellowships and awards less than $500,000.

[4] Any health research project of similar value and term to an HRC Project (i.e. $1,200,000 for 3 years) from an agency that allocates funds using internationally accepted contestable processes and peer review. Examples: Marsden fund, MBIE Endeavour fund, National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia), National Institutes of Health (US), and Medical Research Council (UK).

2. The applications, supported by reviewer reports and applicant rebuttals, will be assessed and scored by an AC.
3. Applications will be shortlisted for the PAC, informed by the AC outcomes. Applications that are not shortlisted for the PAC will be declined at this point.
4. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview with the PAC. Applications are assessed and scored by the PAC on these equally weighted criteria: quality of health research (20%); potential for outcomes (20%); vision of programme (20%); Māori health advancement (20%); research team collaboration and integration (20%).
5. Application outcomes will be communicated in June 2025.

For further information about the assessment process and scoring criteria, please refer to Appendices 1-4.

1.10 Key dates

Event	Description	Date
Full-stage Applications open	Applicants to submit their full application	07 August 2024
Full-stage Applications close	Complete Programme full application via HRC Gateway	Closes 09 October 2024
Assessment	Peer review	Dec 2024 to Feb 2025
	Applicant rebuttal	Early March 2025
	Review by HRC Assessing Committee	April 2025
	Council approval	Late May 2025
Results	Outcomes confirmed	03 June 2025
	Deadline for commencing research	01 September 2025

1.10.1 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# and so that the full application can be completed. The HRC recommends that you complete the registration as soon as possible after applications open.

1.10.2 Submission deadline

Please submit your application to HRC Gateway by **1pm on 9 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 2025 Programme Grant applications

2.1   Preparation

2.1.1 HRC Gateway account

You will need an HRC Gateway account to apply for a Programme 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 Before submitting an application

Before submitting an application, please read the following resources:
- 2025 Programme 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
- ARRIVE guidelines for animal research (if applicable)
- HRC Peer Review Manual (accessed via the 2025 Programmes information page on HRC Gateway)

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

2.1.3 Forms

You will need to download and complete two different forms when submitting a Programme Grant application:
- 2025 Programme Grant Application Form (Microsoft Word template)
- 2025 Programme Grant Budget Form (Microsoft Excel template)

The HRC templates for these forms must be downloaded from the 2025 Programmes information page on HRC Gateway. Do not use any other templates; these documents have special features required for HRC to process them. The application form should be completed in Microsoft Word, and the budget form should be completed in Microsoft Excel. Once completed, upload these documents to your application in HRC Gateway.

Note: The application form must be uploaded as a PDF, and the budget form must be uploaded in both Excel (.xlsx) and PDF formats. When converting your budget form into a PDF format, make sure all Excel spreadsheet tabs are included.

2.1.4 Host organisations

The host organisation is the organisation, institution or company that will be offered a contract with the HRC to deliver the activities described in 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.

2.2   Formatting your application

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 your 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 available to the HRC assessing committees and to external reviewers reviewing your application.

2.3.3 Media release

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

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.

2.3.5 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 organisation's 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.

2.4 Additional eligibility requirements

2.4.1 Eligibility restrictions on publicly funded research

The HRC cannot accept applications made by a department of the public service, as listed in Schedule 2 of the Public Service Act 2020. Named investigators from these departments may not claim salary support.

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 proposals to be eligible, they must not benefit a Russian state institution (including but not limited to support for Russian military or security activity) or an organisation outside the 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 New Zealand 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 funding application that will benefit a state institution or other organisation identified for exclusion by the New Zealand Government.

2.4.2 Trusted Research Guidance

Please familiarise yourself 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 proposals for risk related to sensitive technologies[5] and may
require funded projects to identify, mitigate, and monitor risks as part of the contractual conditions of
the project.

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[5] 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. Registering, completing and submitting a 2025 Programme Grant application

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 Programme 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 Programme 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 Programme 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 Programme application forms

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: Application details, investigators, objectives and milestones

This Module must be completed in HRC Gateway.

3.2.1 First step: Create application

Start the application process by clicking the 'Apply now' button on the 2025 Programme Grant information page. The 'Apply now' button will only appear when the application submission period is open. Clicking on the 'Apply now' button will open a dialog form where the following information will be required.

First named investigator

The first named investigator for the application will be automatically populated as the individual logged into HRC Gateway who is creating the application. This cannot be changed. Therefore, the application must be created by the director of the programme application, who will be the first named investigator.

The first named investigator will be 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 your host organisation's key contacts.

Programme category

Select the programme category for the application (General or Rangahau Hauora Māori).

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 the funded proposals.

Host organisation

The host organisation is the organisation responsible for administering any contract awarded. For example, for applicants at the University of Otago's Wellington campus, the host organisation is the University of Otago. Select the relevant 'Host organisation' from the drop-down list (this shows host organisations currently recognised by the HRC). A specific Research Office and Research Office contact can be selected, if applicable.

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

3.2.2 Second step: Registration

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

- **Research location:** The specific <u>department</u>(s) and <u>organisation</u> where most of the research activity (including data analysis) will be undertaken.
- **Discipline:** Select from the options in the drop-down box.
- **Type of research:** Choose from the options in the drop-down box the most appropriate term for broadly describing the research proposal for assessment purposes. This is so the HRC can assign applications to the most appropriate Assessing Committee.
- **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 of funded proposals.
- First named investigator gender and ethnicity (automatically populated from Gateway profile – edit in profile if required).

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

3.2.3 Third step: Full application

Application details

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

- **Duration:** Intended duration in months, commonly 60 months (5 years) for a programme
- **Commencement date:** Intended start date for contract if successful. This should between 1 July 2025 and 1 September 2025. If your programme 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.

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) in this section. All support personnel need to have an HRC Gateway account to view and edit your application.

First named investigator (director)

Some of this information will be automatically populated from the first named investigator's profile on HRC Gateway. If the details pulled from the investigator's HRC Gateway profile are incorrect, update these in the Gateway profile rather than the application form. The details listed on the application will be automatically refreshed after the profile is updated.

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

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

Named investigators

Click the 'Add investigator' button to add an individual to the application. You can search for an individual using their email, first and last name, or HRC ID. If you are adding a co-director, add a 'Named Investigator' and choose the role of 'co-first named investigator' in the dropdown list.

Upload named investigators' CVs in this section using the 'Upload CV' button.

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.

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

Role in programme should include brief information on what the investigator will undertake in the programme (1-2 sentences max). <u>If the programme has a co-director, state who they are and their role in this section.</u>

Research costs

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

Unacceptable peer reviewers

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.

<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 the research proposal. Reviewers use this section to get an overview of your application and as a quick reference. Include all the important points of your application but keep this section to only **one page** long. Use the suggested headings and add subheadings if required.

3.3.2 Section 2B: List of proposed research objectives

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

3.3.3 Section 2C: Description of proposed research programme (16-page limit)

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. Refer to Appendices 2-4 for details on the application scoring criteria.

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

When completing your application, consider the following points:

Research objectives or projects
- Clearly demonstrate how your research programme aligns with and contributes to the HRC's research priorities.
- Describe how the research programme has been designed to deliver maximum value for public investment in health research.
- Ensure your research objectives or projects form a cohesive theme of research and use diagrams as appropriate

- For each objective, describe the rationale, design and methods, impact[6], Māori health advancement and research team track record, as these are the scoring criteria assessed by the assessing committee.
- In addition, the assessing committee considers 'cohesiveness of research programme' and the Programme Assessing Committee will score 'quality of health research' and 'potential for outcomes'.
- If your application includes randomised controlled trials, refer to Appendix 5 for additional guidance.

The long-term goals of the research group
- Outline your long-term research goals and how they benefit New Zealand.
- Describe how this programme will help the group achieve its goals.
- The Programme Assessing Committee will assess the 'Vision of Programme' scoring criterion.

The collaborative nature of the research
- Describe collaborations with others critical to the success of your research programme, including connections with the next-users and end-users of the research, such as health service providers and health policy advisors (where appropriate).

Staffing, management and organisation of the research programme
- Describe the research programme's staffing, management and organisation. Include details of leadership and communication, administrative mechanisms, resource and financial management.
- Describe the group's productivity and synergy of skills.
- Declare any relevant career disruptions.
- The Programme Assessing Committee will assess the 'Research team collaboration and integration' scoring criterion.

Workforce development
- Describe how your research programme will contribute to building the critical health research capability New Zealand needs to address priority health outcomes now and for the future.
- Outline the training opportunities to develop early career researchers and next programme leaders and/or health professionals that exist or will be developed within the programme.
- Describe the consideration of gender balance throughout the research team.

Host organisation support
- Describe the level of support and facilities that will be provided by the host organisation

Collective benefits
- Describe the collective benefits of the programme and overall progress towards impact on improving health outcomes, including clearly articulated potential benefits for areas of high health need and population groups with the highest health needs.
- The Programme Assessing Criteria will assess the 'Potential for outcomes' scoring criterion.

The group's track record
- Describe the group's track record of, and policies and practices for, the dissemination and uptake of research results.

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[6] http://www.hrc.govt.nz/news-and-publications/publications/presentations

- Include plans for stakeholder engagement and maximising the potential use of research findings.

Māori health advancement
- Describe how the outcomes of your research will contribute to Māori health advancement
- Outline the activities you have already undertaken that are relevant to this programme, and what you will undertake during this programme that will realise your research contribution to Māori health advancement
- Potential benefits for other population groups experiencing inequitable health outcomes in New Zealand (e.g. Pacific peoples) should not be conflated with contributions to Māori health advancement and will not be considered when assessing and scoring the MHA criterion.

Refer to Appendix 6 for further details on the Māori health advancement criterion. This scoring criterion (20% total) is assessed by the Assessing Committee (General Programmes) and by the Programme Assessing Committee (General and Rangahau Hauora Māori Programmes).

Note: Rangahau Hauora Māori Programmes should address all 6 investment signal goals. Please refer to Appendix 3 for further guidance.

3.4   Module 3: References

3.4.1 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.

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

3.4.2 New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework Domains

This information is for HRC data collection purposes and will not be used when assessing your application.

If you are applying in the General category, you need to answer this question.

There are four domains in the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework (NZHRPF). Please read the NZHRPF for more details and identify the primary domain that your proposed research is most aligned with, and one additional secondary domain.

Domain 1: Healthy people, whānau and communities
Domain 2: People-centred healthcare
Domain 3: Meeting our needs in a changing world
Domain 4: Connected government and systems.

The HRC does not provide advice on which domain to choose.

3.5   Module 4: Contract information and budget

Complete Sections 4A–4C in the Programme Application form (Microsoft Word template).

Section 4D is automatically generated by HRC Gateway.

Complete Sections 4E–4H in the Programme 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

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.

3.5.2 Section 4B: Previous/current contracts and awards

List contracts awarded within the past 5 years

Using the table provided, outline current and previous funding contracts from any agency that has been received in the last 5 years by:

- The director and co-director (if applicable).
- Any named investigator, if they were the first named investigator on an awarded grant and their FTE contribution for the current programme application is at least 10%

Copy the table and repeat for each received grant, as required. This section provides the HRC reviewers and assessing committees with an overall summary of your abilities to secure funding for research.

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

Note: You can replace the table with an Excel spreadsheet. If doing so, please use the same layout as the original table.

3.5.3 Section 4C: Other support

Project applications related to this Programme

State if any named investigators on this programme application are also named investigators on an HRC Project application. Please indicate if the project is a part of this programme application. If your programme application is successfully funded, the project application will be withdrawn.

Other research applications awaiting decisions

List any research applications involving the director, co-director and all senior named investigators that are pending with the HRC and other agencies. If applicable, indicate in the spaces provided any overlap (research, resources and personnel) that the listed application might have with this application. 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.

Financial or other interest(s)

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

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). Clearly describe how the current application relates to those relationships. Assessing commercial links is **not** part of the HRC peer-review process.

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 the 'Letters of collaboration/support documents' on HRC Gateway.

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

A letter of collaboration should outline how the interested party intends to implement the findings of the research upon its completion, or provide material or actual support for the research, **not simply**

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 'Programme' from the drop-down 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 the figures in this box.

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

Salary

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

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

The budget form does not accept FTEs less than 3%. The HRC Assessing Committees do not favour listing numerous investigators with a very low FTE, and salary requests should only be for significant input and involvement in the programme. Advisory groups of contributors, who have FTE commitments of less than 3%, may be considered.

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.

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

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

    a) Subcontracted staff are those who are **not** employees of the host organisation. The salary and all other expenses for these staff should be broken down into appropriate categories on a detailed subcontract/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 doesn't cover overheads for overseas-based organisations. The subcontract/MOU total should then be entered under 'Working expenses - subcontracts' for each year.

    b) If 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 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. A 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 3.4.4 '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 does not contribute to the overhead of overseas investigators**. The total proportion of the contract budget allocated to overseas investigators must not exceed 10%.

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 MOUs requesting more than $50,000; add a copy of Section 4F for each subcontractor. Use the overhead rate for the subcontracted staff member's host institution, not your main host institution. The total dollar amount for each year should then be entered under 'Working expenses – subcontracts' and a copy of the subcontract/MOU should be uploaded separately in HRC Gateway.

A CV must be provided in Module 5 for all named investigators on MOUs to 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

When completing this section, please:

- 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 unnamed positions, indicate as 'technician', 'research nurse', 'postdoctoral fellow', etc.). Indicate when named investigators are 'time only' (i.e. not receiving salary for their involvement in the programme).
- Identify all postgraduate students by 'Masters' or 'PhD'.

Note: Heads of department will need 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 (not named investigators) table 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 NZ 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 on 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: Classification

Click on 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.

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 area of health or health research your application is connected to.

Economic benefits

Briefly describe any potential economic benefits which may arise from your research. If you do not anticipate any direct economic benefits, please state this rather than leaving the field blank. The HRC's interpretation of economic benefits is broad and includes:

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

Health issues

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

Mapping category

Select the category that best describes the starting point for your research. The following table provides a description of each category.

Mapping category	Description
Biomedical	
Gene	Research into the genetic basis of disease or 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	All physiology and anatomy, including animal models of disease and studies on host-pathogen interactions.
Diagnostics	Innovations and the development/refinement of new or existing diagnostic tools.
Pharmaceuticals/treatments	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	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.

3.8 Application checklist

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

- The Programme director (and co-director) meet all eligibility criteria outlined in Section 1.5 of the 2025 Programme 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 Programme Application Microsoft Word template
- Module 2 Section 2A fits within 1 page and Section 2C fits within 16 pages
- The 2025 Programme Application form has been converted to a PDF format. All figures, tables and text have been converted intact.
- The 2025 Programme 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 Programme Budget Microsoft Excel template
- The 2025 Programme Budget form has been converted to a PDF format and all spreadsheet tabs are included
- Both the .xlsx format and PDF format of the 2025 Programme 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: Programme application assessment process

1. Overview

Programme applications are assessed in several steps:

1. The application is assigned to an Assessing Committee (AC).
2. The application is reviewed by external peer reviewers.
3. The applicant can respond to the external peer reviewers' comments during the rebuttal period.
4. The application, external peer reviewer comments and applicant's rebuttal are assessed by the AC against the AC scoring criteria.
5. Shortlisted applications are assessed by the Programme Assessing Committee (PAC) against PAC scoring criteria.
6. PAC makes funding recommendations.
7. The HRC Council makes the final funding decision.

2. Assessing applications

2.1 Assessing Committee membership

Applications will be assessed by an assessing committee who have extensive and relevant expertise. 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.

2.2 Before the assessing committee meeting: Reviewers

External peer reviewers and an assigned assessing committee member score applications on a 7-point scale, provide comments and ask questions for each of the following criteria:

- Rationale for research
- Design and methods
- Research Impact
- Potential for outcomes
- Expertise and track record of the research team
- Research team collaboration and integration

2.3 Assessing General Programme Grant Applications

In the assessing committee meeting, General Programme applications are scored on a 7-point scale for five equally weighted criteria:

- Rationale for research
- Design and methods
- Research impact
- Māori health advancement
- Expertise and track record of the research team

The 'Cohesiveness of the research programme' criterion score is not included in your application's total score.

The 7-point scale corresponds to a word ladder of descriptors and the weighting of the scores:

Score	Criteria Descriptor		Criteria	Points	% score
7	Exceptional		Rationale for research	7	20
6	Excellent		Design and methods	7	20
5	Very good		Research impact	7	20
4	Good		Māori health advancement	7	20
3	Adequate		Expertise and track record of the research team	7	20
2	Unsatisfactory		Cohesiveness of research programme (not included in total score)	7	0
1	Poor		**Total**	**35**	**100**

The scoring criteria are provided in Appendix 2.

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

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

The assessing committees for the General Programme Grants do not decide which programmes should proceed to the next stage (the Programme Assessing Committee). Shortlisting for the Programme Assessing Committee is based on normalised rank scores.

2.4 Assessing Rangahau Hauora Māori (RHM) Programme Grant applications

In the assessing committee meeting, RHM Programme applications are scored on a 7-point scale for four equally weighted criteria:

- Rationale for research
- Design and methods
- Research impact
- Expertise and track record of the research team

The 'Cohesiveness of the research programme' criterion score is not included in your application's total score.

The 7-point scale corresponds to a word ladder of descriptors and the weighting of the scores:

Score	Criteria Descriptor		Criteria	Points	% score
7	Exceptional		Rationale for research	7	25
6	Excellent		Design and methods	7	25
5	Very good		Research impact	7	25
4	Good		Expertise and track record of the research team	7	25
3	Adequate		Cohesiveness of research programme (not included in total score)	7	0

2	Unsatisfactory	**Total**	**28**	**100**
1	Poor			

The scoring criteria are provided in Appendix 3.

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

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

The assessing committee for Rangahau Hauora Māori (RHM) Programme Grants recommends which programmes should proceed to the next stage (the Programme Assessing Committee).

3. The Programme Assessing Committee (PAC)

3.1 PAC shortlist

Only shortlisted applications are discussed at the PAC meeting. Applications are shortlisted based on the ranked list of assessing committee scores (normalised across all committees for General Programme Grants) and the recommendations from the Rangahau Hauora Māori Assessing Committee. Applications that are not shortlisted will not be considered further.

If a Project application that is part of a proposed programme is deemed not fundable, the programme application may still be shortlisted.

3.2 PAC meeting procedure

Before the meeting

The PAC are provided with the following documents to inform their assessment:

- External reviewer reports and applicant's rebuttals
- The assessing committee's review summary

Applicant interview

The programme director (or co-directors) and the senior named investigators on the shortlisted programme applications will be invited to attend an interview with the PAC.

During the interview, you may:

- provide a brief overview of the programme
- address or clarify issues raised by the assessing committee or reviewers
- answer questions proposed by the PAC
- provide any further clarification

Your interview with the PAC can help determine the relationship between the senior named investigators and their arrangements for their collaboration; the role of each investigator; how they interact or manage the component projects; and the potential for workforce development and succession planning.

If you are invited to the PAC interview, please note that:

- PAC is multidisciplinary with New Zealand and Australian/international members who have experience in managing research involving teams of investigators.
- The assessing committee assessed your application according to the scoring criteria noted in these Guidelines, but the PAC may follow up on some questions/issues raised by the assessing committee and will score overall 'Quality of health research'.

- You may have a question-and-answer session with the PAC. The PAC may seek further information related to their score criteria and other elements of the application. The HRC guides acceptable interactions between applicants and the PAC, including protocols for culturally appropriate welcomes and any limitations to the scope of potential discussions.

3.3   PAC scoring criteria

In the PAC meeting, each research proposal is scored on a 7-point scale for the following criteria:

- Overall quality of health research
- Potential for outcomes
- Vision of programme
- Māori health advancement
- Research team collaboration and integration.

The 7-point scale corresponds to a word ladder of descriptors and the weighting of the scores:

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

Refer to Appendix 4 for a full description of the scoring criteria.

The committee also considers:

- the assessing committee's overall assessment of the application
- the appropriateness of the timeline for the proposed research
- the total cost of the research with respect to 'value for money'.

4. Review summaries for applicants

At the end of the funding round, you will receive two review summaries:

- The Assessing Committee's review summary
- The Programme Assessing Committee's review summary (if your programme application was shortlisted and assessed by PAC)

Appendix 2: Assessing Committee scoring criteria for General Programme Grant applications

A 7-point word ladder with criteria descriptors is used to assess the scoring categories outlined below (listed A-F). 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.

Score	Criteria Descriptor		Criteria	Points	% score
7	Exceptional		Rationale for research	7	20
6	Excellent		Design and methods	7	20
5	Very good		Research impact	7	20
4	Good		Māori health advancement	7	20
3	Adequate		Expertise and track record of the research team	7	20
2	Unsatisfactory		Cohesiveness of research programme (not in total)	7	0
1	Poor		**Total**	**35**	**100**

| **A.** | **Rationale for research** |

The research is important, needs to be done in New Zealand and therefore can be supported by public funds, with consideration of the international context, because it addresses some or all the following:

- it focuses on a significant priority health issue or community with high-health needs where the health issue is unique or important to New Zealand
- the aims, research questions and hypotheses build on and advance existing knowledge, address an important knowledge gap, and demonstrate 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.

| **B.** | **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
- culturally appropriate methodology
- sound data management and data monitoring arrangements
- well-managed patient safety issues

| **C.** | **Research impact** |

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

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

- The research team are undertaking steps to maximise the likelihood of impact beyond the production of knowledge (as appropriate to the context of the research) and has the necessary skills, networks and experience to achieve this.

D.	Māori health advancement

The proposed research is likely to advance Māori health because:

- Applicants have described how their research could lead to improved Māori health or reductions in health inequity over time.
- The research team are undertaking activities to address Māori health advancement, as appropriate to the nature and scope of the research. This may include, but is not limited to, activities such as:
  - o establishing meaningful, collaborative, and reciprocal relationships with Māori
  - o undertaking research that addresses Māori health needs 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).

E.	Expertise and track record of the research team

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

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

F.	Cohesiveness of research programme

Programme support is justified because:

- integration/combination of objectives will yield better outcomes as a programme than as individual projects
- there is planning and management for the term of the programme
- the collaboration of senior named investigators is well-established and well-managed

The Cohesiveness of research programme score is not part of the total score used for ranking applications but provides an opinion to the Programme Assessing Committee.

Appendix 3: Assessing Committee scoring criteria for Rangahau Hauora Māori Programme applications

A 7-point word ladder with criteria descriptors is used to assess the scoring categories outlined below (listed A-E). 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.

Score	Criteria Descriptor		Criteria	Points	% score
7	Exceptional		Rationale for research	7	25
6	Excellent		Design and methods	7	25
5	Very good		Research impact	7	25
4	Good		Expertise and track record of the research team	7	25
3	Adequate		Cohesiveness of research programme (not in total)	7	0
2	Unsatisfactory		**Total**	**28**	**100**
1	Poor				

A.	**Rationale for research**

The research is important, worthwhile, and justifiable to New Zealand, with consideration to the international context, because:

- it addresses 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 creating Māori health knowledge (Goal 1)
- the research findings will be original and innovative

B.	**Design and methods**

The study has been well-designed to answer the research questions because it demonstrates:

- a comprehensive and feasible study design that is achievable within the timeframe
- an 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)
- a plan for disseminating results
- sound data management and data monitoring arrangements
- well-managed patient safety issues

C.	**Research impact**

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

- Applicants have described a credible pathway for how their research will:
  - result in benefits or opportunities for future research in NZ, or
  - influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in NZ, leading to improved health or other social/economic impacts.
- The research team are undertaking steps to maximise the likelihood of impact by:

- contributing to the creation of Māori health knowledge (Goal 1)
- contributing to the translation of findings into Māori health gains (Goal 2)
- incorporating Māori health research processes (Goal 3)
- incorporating Māori ethics processes (Goal 4)
- contributing to building a highly skilled Māori health research workforce (Goal 5)
- responding to the needs of, and working in partnership with, Māori stakeholders and communities (Goal 6)

D. Expertise and track record of the research team

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

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

E. Cohesiveness of research programme

Programme support is justified because:

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

The Cohesiveness of research programme score is not part of the total score used for ranking applications but provides an opinion to the Programme Assessing Committee.

Appendix 4: Programme Assessing Committee scoring criteria for General and Rangahau Hauora Māori Programme applications

A 7-point word ladder with criteria descriptors is used to assess the scoring categories outlined below (listed A-E). 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.

Score	Criteria Descriptor		Criteria	Points	% score
7	Exceptional		Overall quality of health research	7	20
6	Excellent		Potential for outcomes	7	20
5	Very good		Vision of programme	7	20
4	Good		Māori health advancement	7	20
3	Adequate		Research team collaboration and integration	7	00
2	Unsatisfactory		**Total**	**35**	**100**
1	Poor				

The Programme Assessing Committee (PAC) also considers factors that may influence scoring, which include:

- the Assessing Committee's assessment of the application
- the appropriateness of the timeline for the proposed research, and
- the total cost of the research with respect to 'value for money'.

The assessment of these factors may affect any of the criteria to be scored by PAC. The HRC Investment Process Coordinator will provide the PAC with information on the consistency of the budget regarding HRC rules and policy. However, it is the assessing committee's responsibility to determine whether the budget is appropriate for the proposal.

A.	**Overall quality of health research**

The proposed research demonstrates quality through:

- Robust study design
- An appropriate approach to deliver valid results
- Suitable infrastructure and support

B.	**Potential for outcomes**

The proposed research has the potential for realising:

- health knowledge (including a clear focus on priority health issues and addressing health outcomes for communities with high health needs)
- research-related benefits, including training opportunities (to develop early career researchers and next programme leaders, provide research engagement opportunities for health professionals, and strengthen health research workforce capacity for Māori investigators)
- influence on policy or practice
- contribution to improvement in health outcomes or health services, and/or contribution to harnessing the benefits of research and innovation for economic gain
- economic outcomes (revenue generating or cost saving)

C.	**Vision of programme**

The application indicates:

- innovation, originality and visionary scientific thinking

- planning by the programme director that indicates superior research activity
- the research is at the forefront of health research (nationally and internationally)
- a clear direction for the research programme with potential for impact and contribution to wider health and science system goals

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

E.	Research team collaboration and integration

The research team:

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

Appendix 5: Applications including randomised controlled trials (RCTs)

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

Generic weaknesses that have been highlighted by CTAC include issues with methodological quality and poor knowledge of clinical trial conduct. To improve the rigour and completeness of clinical trial proposals, please refer to the SPIRIT 2013 Statement (Standard Protocol Items: Recommendations for Interventional Trials)[7] when developing your trial protocols and applications.

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

Consider the broad expertise of your audience (CTAC) when describing your trial protocol. For example, when describing sample size (SPIRIT item 14) in Section 2C of the HRC application form, justify all information in the calculation and clearly describe the minimum important difference and how this translates into meaningful clinical benefit.

A significant number of clinical trial research applications request funding for the New Zealand arm of an international study. Clear administrative information relating to funding (SPIRIT item 4) is required in Section 4C of the application form, including the status of all sources of funding and whether the proposal is dependent on international funding. Roles and responsibilities (SPIRIT item 5) should be stated explicitly in Section 2C, including the specific role of the New Zealand investigator (e.g. as distinct from the site co-ordinator role) and any New Zealand-led trial components. Additionally, address New Zealand-specific health significance and impact on clinical care in New Zealand (in Section 2C) rather than replicating generic information from the international protocol.

Clinical trial registration

As part of our commitment to supporting best practice in clinical trials, the HRC is a signatory to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Joint Statement on Public Disclosure of Results from Clinical Trials. This sets out policy and monitoring requirements for mandatory timeframes for prospective clinical trial registration and public disclosure of clinical trial results.

The Joint Statement reflects the ethical and quality standards that must be met by HRC-funded clinical trials. This will enhance health research in New Zealand and internationally while providing easily accessible information for the public, patients and their whānau.

The HRC's full policy statement on clinical trial transparency can be found here.

All RCTs funded by the HRC, either wholly or partly, must be registered on an established clinical trials registry (e.g. ANZCTR; Clinicaltrials.gov). Registrations should be prospective and added to the application as a Year 1 milestone, even if you expect registration to be achieved before starting a resulting contract.

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

Appendix 6: Māori Health Advancement criterion

The HRC encourages you to consider all potential ways in which your proposal will advance Māori health, and to 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).