



New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

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

July 2026

2026 ETHICS SUMMER STUDENTSHIPS APPLICATION GUIDELINES

To use with the form:

**2026 Ethics Summer Studentship
Application Form**



[New Zealand Government](#)

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Part A: Purpose of Ethics Summer Studentships

The purpose of Health Research Council (HRC) Ethics Summer Studentships is to enable a student to train with a researcher or research team during the summer break with a focus on ethical challenges within New Zealand. These guidelines are for the HRC's Ethics Summer Studentship and Dr Barry Poata Smith Ethics Summer Studentship.

[HRC Gateway](#) (the HRC's funding portal) allows access to the application form referred to in these guidelines.

Part B: Privacy provisions

1. Statistical and reporting purposes

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

2. Personal information

All personal information collected in the application form is regarded as confidential and will only be shared with the HRC Ethics Committee which is responsible for assessing your application and the HRC. Limited information may also be shared through the HRC's communication channels for promotional purposes if your application is successful. You have the right to ask for a copy of any personal information we hold about you, and to ask for it to be corrected if you think it is wrong.

3. Media release

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

4. Official Information Act

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

Part C: Application assessment process

Applications are assessed by the HRC Ethics Committee (HRC EC) or its sub-committee.

1. Pre-meeting triage process (if required)

Depending on the number of applications received, a triage process may be utilised prior to the committee meeting to determine which applications will be discussed in full at the committee meeting. If utilised, this process will involve the following:

- Committee members score applications before the meeting using the same scoring criteria described in in points 2 to 4.
- These scores will be used to produce a list of applications, ranked by total average score.
- As confirmed by the Chair(s), the lowest-ranked applications will be triaged and will not proceed to the next stages of the assessment process.
- Applicants will be advised of this outcome at the specified results date advertised on the 2026 Ethics Summer Studentship information page on HRC Gateway.
- Triaged applications will not receive any committee feedback.

2. Criteria for assessment of award applications

This section summarises the scoring criteria that are applied by the assessing committee. For each of the criteria, a 7-point scale is used with the descriptors listed in the table below.

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

3. 2026 Ethics Summer Studentship

Applications for this studentship are assessed on the following criteria:

- Potential of the student to succeed in the project.
- Quality of the intended supervision.
- How the research will be carried out and support Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations.
- Potential of intended research to contribute towards addressing one or more ethical challenges.
- Health research career aspirations and overall interest in health research.

4. 2026 Dr Barry Poata Smith Ethics Summer Studentship

Applications for this studentship will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Potential of the student to succeed in the project.
- Quality of the intended supervision.

- How the research will be carried out and support Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations.
- Potential of intended research to contribute towards addressing one or more ethical challenges.
- Health research career aspirations and overall interest in health research.
- Potential to enhance the voice of Māori, Pacific peoples, or underrepresented communities in relation to health research.

This studentship will only be awarded when the assessing committee considers that a suitable application has been received. One of the representatives of the HRC EC and the representative from Dr Poata Smith's whānau may meet with the recipient and their supervisor before the end of the year to whakawhanaungatanga, express support for the student, and share Dr Poata Smith's special legacy in research in Aotearoa New Zealand. The final research report will be provided to Dr Poata Smith's whānau in due course.

Part D: Guidelines for completion of the Application Form

All named investigators are required to have an HRC Gateway account (<https://gateway.hrc.govt.nz/>).

- Applications open on HRC Gateway – **1 pm, 14 July 2026**.
- Applications close on HRC Gateway – **1 pm, 31 August 2026**.

Every application must have an HRC Reference ID# issued when the application is first created on HRC Gateway.

1. Use of forms

- Input HRC Reference ID# and NI surname on the coversheet.
- Enter information only in the indicated form fields.
- Do not reformat section headings.
- Use the original HRC forms: do not create a new template.

2. General information

This section must be completed on HRC Gateway.

Create a new application by using the **Apply** button and providing the requested information. Use the **Save & Continue**, **Update** and **Save** buttons to move through the application or scroll down the page to see all sections. Use the **Submit** button at the top of the page to complete this part of the application. HRC Gateway will only accept the submission if all required details have been provided.

2.1 Host

This is the organisation that will administer the award contract for a successful application. 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'. The field 'Host organisation details' will appear in the next section and the name of the host organisation should be entered here. New organisations are required to provide due diligence information before acceptance as a research provider.

2.2 Research title

The research title should be succinct and clearly describe the proposed project. The title must not exceed 80 characters, including spaces and punctuation. Note that only the first letter of the title needs to be capitalised. If the study title is abbreviated, the full project name must be provided in the title.

2.3 Lay summary (150-word limit)

The summary should be a statement including applicant background, career and research objectives, an overview of methodologies, and potential health benefits or outcomes that could arise as a result of supporting this application. If the application is recommended for funding the lay summary will be used to brief the CEO who represents the HRC Council in the final approval process.

2.4. First named investigator and email address

This field is automatically populated from the first named investigator's Gateway profile. The first name investigator should be the student submitting for this grant, not the supervisor.

2.5 Organisation

This field is automatically populated from the first named investigator's Gateway profile.

2.6 Department

This field is automatically populated from the first named investigator's Gateway profile.

2.7 Other

Ethnicity, gender, clinical background, and practising status are required for government administration purposes. This field is automatically populated from the first named investigator's Gateway profile.

2.8 Named investigators

Provide details of other named investigators including supervisors of the applicant.

3. Applicant information

3.1 Education details

Provide name of institution, completed qualifications and current programme of study.

3.2 Supervisor details

Provide details of the research supervisor on this research.

4. Research information

4.1 Outline of proposed research

Provide an outline of your proposed research, including your research objective and how your proposed research contributes to research ethics and/or one or more of the suggested topics for the Ethics Summer Studentships 2026 (maximum 300 words). Please write in lay language, using as little discipline-specific jargon as possible.

4.2 Research plan

Explain how you will carry out your research (for example, your research design, methods, and supervision arrangements) (maximum 300 words). Please write in lay language, using as little discipline-specific jargon as possible, and ensure that you describe the practical steps of the research.

4.3 Principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Describe how your proposed research supports the principles (or obligations) of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. (For guidance, please refer to Te Ara Tika – Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics: A framework for researchers and ethics committee members (<https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/te-ara-tika-guidelines-maori-research-ethics>)).

4.4 Career aspirations

Tell us about your interest in health research and your career aspirations.

4.5 Voice of communities

Please note: this is only applicable to the Dr Barry Poata Smith Ethics Summer Studentship.

Tell us how this study will enhance the voice of Māori, Pacific peoples, minoritised or historically marginalised communities in relation to health research.

5. References

Ensure this section starts on a new page. Citations for key references in the text in Research information should be supplied. Details must include a **full list of all author(s)**, title of article, journal, year, volume, and page numbers. Asterisks are to be placed beside applicant's publications. If references are multi-authored, there is discretion to limit the author list to a more convenient number to fit any space limitations.

6. Supporting documents

Submit the following documents along with the completed application form:

- Applicant academic transcript.
- Applicant CV.
- Letter(s) of support from supervisor(s) of the applicant.
- Evidence of ethics approval (if available).

Part E: Explanatory notes for 2026 HRC Ethics Summer Studentships

1. Research topics

The HRC EC seeks applications for research on ethical issues associated with health, healthcare, or the conduct of health research. Applications might address ethical issues that arise in any area, including but not limited to:

- the Te Ara Tika principles and their application in research
- the conduct of health research
- the assessment or governance of health research
- the use of big data, data sharing, machine learning, or AI in health policy, healthcare, or health research
- infectious diseases
- Māori health
- genetics, neuroscience, or emerging technologies
- health strategy and/or health research strategy
- health disparities and resource allocation
- ethical perspectives on Asian and ethnic data visibility, reporting and monitoring
- equity in health and research in Aotearoa New Zealand.

2. Reporting

All award recipients are required to submit the end of studentship report to the HRC EC on HRC Gateway by 1 April 2027. (See the appendix for report requirements.)

The HRC EC reserves the right to request special reports at any time during the term of the award.

All reports will be reviewed by the HRC EC or its subcommittee.

3. Ethics approval

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to obtain necessary ethics approval prior to commencement of the research.

4. Publications and publicity

Publications and any other publicity that result from research undertaken during the tenure of the scholarship/fellowship should acknowledge the assistance of the HRC by stating that "The research was conducted during tenure of a(n) 'award title' from the Health Research Council of New Zealand".

5. Intellectual Property rights

The HRC has published guidelines on implementing research, including an intellectual property policy, on the HRC website.

Appendix: Report requirements

1. Report requirements for 2026 Ethics Summer Studentship

1. Please submit the report through HRC Gateway - <https://gateway.hrc.govt.nz/>.

2. Final Report

The final report should be of a high academic standard, including the following:

- a) Project details: the name of the student, the title of the project, the HRC reference number, and ethics approval reference number (if applicable).
- b) Project abstract: a short paragraph (300 words or less) summarising the background and aims of your intended research, written in terms understandable to a layperson or non-subject specialist.
- c) Project description: a brief review of the field of the proposed project, an outline of the student's research methods, and a description of the student's results and conclusions.
- d) Self-reflection: a description of what was learnt from the research process on a personal level, and how the research experience has shaped the student's career aspirations in health research or ethics.

3. Format of the report

- Number of pages: minimum 8 pages, maximum 10 pages.
- Font size: Arial 11.
- Line space: one and a half.
- Appendices: a maximum of three pages.

4. Presentation and publication

The HRC Ethics Committee encourages the recipients of summer studentships to present the report within the university environment and/or submit an article based on the report for publication with acknowledgement to the HRC.

2. Report requirements for 2026 Dr Barry Poata Smith Ethics Summer Studentship

- 1. Please submit the report through HRC Gateway - <https://gateway.hrc.govt.nz/>.**

- 2. Final Report**

The final report should be of a high academic standard, including the following:

- a) the name of the student, the title of the project, the HRC reference number and the ethics approval reference number
- b) abstract: a short paragraph (300 words or less) summarising the background and aims of your intended research, written in terms understandable to a layperson or non-subject specialist
- c) a brief review of the field of the project
- d) an outline of the research
- e) self-reflection on what is learnt from the research process on a personal level
- f) how this has shaped their view of their career aspirations in health research or ethics, and
- g) how this has enhanced the voice of Māori, Pacific peoples, or under-represented communities in relation to health research.

- 3. Format of the report**

- At the beginning of the report, include the name of the student, the title of the project and the HRC reference number.
- Number of pages: minimum 8 pages, maximum 10 pages.
- Font size: Arial 11.
- Line space: one and a half.
- Appendices: a maximum of three pages.

- 4. Presentation and publication**

The HRC Ethics Committee encourages the recipients of summer studentships to present the report within the university environment and/or submit the report for publication with acknowledgement to the HRC.