



New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

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

2027 Programme Expression of Interest (EOI) Application Guidelines

July 2026

**Use with the 2027
Programme Expression
of Interest (EOI)
Application Form**



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PART 1: 2027 HRC PROGRAMME GRANT – KEY INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

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

- information about what is in scope for HRC funding and the HRC's health research 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 Description

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

Research programmes must have a clear strategic goal, 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 New Zealand's public investment in health research is strongly encouraged.

1.2 Health research priorities

New Zealand's investment in health research must contribute to achieving the goals of the health system and the innovation, technology and science system.¹ The HRC is the principal government funder of health research.

For the health system, the Government is committed to improving health outcomes by providing New Zealanders with timely access to high-quality health services.² A key focus for the science system is to harness the benefits of research and innovation to drive economic transformation. The Government wants to ensure that the research it funds is progressing its priorities, and that they have a clear pathway to translate new ideas into successful commercial enterprise.³ Therefore, it is important for researchers and research organisations to identify how research to be funded by the HRC will add value and contribute to these goals and wider system performance.

In this funding round, Council will **prioritise opportunities to invest** in research that:

- Priority 1: maximises benefit for healthcare delivery, such as:
 - new models of care and treatments
 - improved effectiveness and efficiency
 - innovation and technology in healthcare, and/or

¹ [Letters of expectations for health statutory entities | Ministry of Health NZ](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/32023-science-investment-plan-2026-2036); <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/32023-science-investment-plan-2026-2036>; <https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/hrc-research-investment-plan>

² [The Government Policy Statement on Health \(2024-2027\)](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/31887-report-to-the-prime-minister-prioritisation-in-new-zealands-science-innovation-and-technology-system).

³ [Going For Growth | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/31887-report-to-the-prime-minister-prioritisation-in-new-zealands-science-innovation-and-technology-system), <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/31887-report-to-the-prime-minister-prioritisation-in-new-zealands-science-innovation-and-technology-system>

- Priority 2: contributes to achievement of the health and/or mental health and addiction targets,⁴ and/or
- Priority 3: enhances the development of clinician-researchers,⁵ and/or
- Priority 4: demonstrates a pathway to commercialisation and/or
- Priority 5: supports high-quality clinical trials, including those with a particular focus on cancer and/or blood cancers.

Further information about the HRC's research priorities is available in the HRC's Research Investment Plan 2026/27 (pages 3-5).⁶

Applicants must clearly articulate in the most relevant sections of your application if your research aligns with one or more of the health research priorities outlined in this section. Council makes final decisions on funding, informed by the assessing committee recommendations, the balance of investments across our portfolios, and consideration of alignment with HRC priorities. Council funding decisions will align with current priorities to the greatest extent possible, subject to the proposals submitted in a particular funding round.

1.3 HRC requirements

All HRC investment must have a clear line of sight to improving health outcomes for all New Zealanders.

HRC-funded research must meet the following requirements:

1. Research must be focused on health and improving health outcomes and/or the health system, where health outcomes are defined as:
 - a) absence or reduction of disease, symptoms or morbidity, and/or
 - b) timely access to quality healthcare, for all New Zealanders, including strengthening prevention of disease and injury, earlier diagnosis, earlier patient-specific (precision) intervention, and new and improved models of care, or medicines, treatments and cures, and/or
 - c) longer life expectancy, and/or
 - d) improved quality of life.
2. Research into the causes of ill health, or the determinants of health (e.g. environmental, socio-economic, cultural, and behavioural factors) must demonstrate a pathway to improvements in health outcomes and/or the health system (as defined above).
3. The research proposal provides an evidence base when describing areas of high health need and population groups with high health need.⁷

Council makes final decisions on funding, informed by the assessing committee recommendations and taking into consideration HRC research priorities and the balance of investments across our portfolio.

Please carefully read the 'out of scope' guidance below before preparing your application.

⁴ The [five health targets](#) are: faster cancer treatment; improved immunisation for children; shorter stays in emergency departments; shorter wait times for first specialist assessment; and shorter wait times for elective treatment. The [five mental health and addiction targets](#) are: faster access to specialist mental health and addiction services; faster access to primary mental health and addiction services; shorter mental health and addiction-related stays in emergency departments; increased mental health and addiction workforce development; and strengthened focus on prevention and early intervention.

⁵ A clinician-researcher conducts research and provides clinical services in any setting, under formal work arrangement and is eligible to undertake clinical practice in New Zealand either under the Health Practitioners Competence Act 2003, through registration with the relevant responsible authority, or as a member of Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand.

⁶ <https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/hrc-research-investment-plan>

⁷ [CO \(24\) 5: Needs-based Service Provision | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(DPMC\)](#)

Out of scope for the 2027 Programme Grants

This round, the HRC is **NOT** intending to invest in:

- evaluations with a sole focus on audits, surveys, and needs assessments undertaken as part of routine operational practice or as part of a government organisation's performance, accountability, or monitoring activities
- research that describes a health need or community with high health need without providing a clear evidence-base for that need⁸
- research that duplicates research already undertaken overseas (without articulating the additional value of undertaking it in New Zealand)
- social science research that focuses exclusively on determinants of health (e.g. environmental, socio-economic, cultural or behavioural factors) except where it demonstrates a pathway to improvements in health outcomes and/or the health system (see HRC requirements)
- basic research that focuses exclusively on mechanistic pathways except where it demonstrates a pathway to improvements in health outcomes and/or the health system (see HRC requirements).

1.4 Changes this year

The HRC has made changes to the application and assessment processes for the 2027 Programme Grant funding round. Please carefully read these guidelines to ensure your application meets the requirements for this round.

The changes include:

- 2027 Programme Grant applications will be processed through two stages: an EOI application (new in 2027) and a Full application. The EOI stage involves a short application addressing the key expectations for Programme grants.
- The 2027 Programme Grants funding round opens earlier than usual to allow time for EOI applications. You must submit your application on HRC Gateway by the 'Application deadline' (1 pm, 6 August 2026). Please read Section 3 and/or Appendix 1 carefully to ensure you submit a complete application.
- External peer review and applicant rebuttal have been reintroduced and will be part of the assessment of Full Programme applications in addition to assessing committee review and discussion.

The rest of the assessment process for Full applications remains the same as in previous years and includes a shortlist of applications invited to interviews to be assessed by the Programme Assessing Committee (PAC), after assessment has been carried out by external peer review and Assessing Committees (ACs).

Please ensure the latest version of the CV template is used for submission.

For details of the 2027 Programme EOI assessment process, please see Appendix 1.

1.5 Research programme essential components

You should therefore ensure that your proposal demonstrates the following:

- **Strategic intent of the proposed research programme:** clear potential for improving health outcomes and contributing to wider health and science system goals; and a

⁸ [CO \(24\) 5: Needs-based Service Provision | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(DPMC\)](#)

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. Programme outcomes should be greater than the sum of three individual Project outcomes.
- **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 be a high-performing team with 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).
- **Health research priorities:** Council will look to invest in research that demonstrates strong alignment with the HRC's research priorities (see Section 1.2). Applicants must clearly articulate in the most relevant sections of your application if your research aligns with one or more of the health research priorities outlined in this section.

1.6 Value

HRC Programme Grants have a 5-year term and a budget of up to \$5,000,000. Your application will be withdrawn if it exceeds the budget limit.

The requested budget needs to be justified and reflect the activities being proposed.

1.7 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 aligns with the Health Delivery investment categories.

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.

Please note: an individual researcher can only submit one application to the 2027 Programme Grant funding round as first named investigator. In addition, the same application cannot be submitted to both categories even if there are different first named investigators. The HRC does not provide advice on which programme category you should choose. You cannot change categories once your application has been created.

1.8 Eligibility

Please take note of the following eligibility criteria, which apply to the director and co-director (if applicable) on a Programme Grant application, defined as the first named investigator and co-first named investigator.

The first named investigator (director) is the individual with overall responsibility of the programme.

The first named investigator will be considered the first point of contact during the application and assessment process and will be understood to be acting for, and in concurrence with, the other named investigators. All correspondence for the application will be addressed to this person and the host organisation.

The co-first named investigator (co-director) is an individual with joint overall responsibility for the programme.

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.

To be eligible for a Programme Grant, the first-named investigator (director) and co-first named investigator (co-director):

- must have New Zealand as their principal domicile and their principal place of employment (refer to the [HRC Rules](#) for definitions)
- must be able to assign at least 20% FTE to the Programme
- can only submit one Programme application in the 2027 funding round
- must complete all progress or end of contract reports that are due from previous contracts in HRC Gateway. (HRC Gateway does not allow a new application to be submitted if the first named investigator or co-first named investigator has any outstanding reports).

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.

Programme director and co-director(s) requirements

In addition to the eligibility criteria above, the programme director and co-director(s) must also have a proven record of managing projects of a sizeable and complex nature. Programme director and co-director eligibility will be checked at EOI stage by the HRC – directors cannot change between EOI application and Full stage application.

An individual is eligible to be the sole director of an HRC Programme in this round if their experience includes one or more of the following:

1. They are a director of a current HRC-funded Programme contract which expires within a year (i.e. before 29 October 2027).⁹
2. They were a director of an HRC-funded Programme contract which expired within the past five years (i.e. after 29 October 2021).
3. They are a first named investigator on at least two HRC Project contracts that are either current or expired within the last 24 months (i.e. after 29 October 2024).¹⁰ Contracts awarded through a contestable process with a comparable national/international agency may be considered.¹¹

⁹ Specific dates have been given to clarify the requirements and are based on the application due date of 29 October 2026.

¹⁰ Includes HRC Project grants (i.e. \$1,200,000 for 3 years) awarded in the annually run funding rounds. Not included: Feasibility Study Grants, Emerging Researcher First Grants, HRC Fellowships.

¹¹ 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. Grants valued at \$800,000 due to lower overhead may be considered at HRC's discretion. Examples: Marsden Fund, MBIE Endeavour Fund, National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia), National Institutes of Health (US), and Medical Research Council (UK).

4. They were a director on a Programme application that was shortlisted for and assessed by the Programme Assessing Committee in the 2026 funding round.

In addition, two individuals are eligible to be co-directors of an HRC Programme in this round if their combined experience meets the following requirements:

1. One individual is a first named investigator on an HRC Project contract that is current or has expired within the last 12 months (i.e. after 29 October 2025) and is proposing to be co-director of a Programme team with at least one other co-director.
2. The other co-director must be the first-named investigator on at least one HRC Project contract that is either current or has expired within the last 24 months (i.e. after 29 October 2024).
3. Contracts awarded through a contestable process with a comparable national/international agency may be considered.
4. Additional co-directors can be added to the grant as long as they comply with the same requirements. Please contact the HRC if you wish to submit an application with more than two co-directors.
5. A researcher qualified to be a sole director of a programme could also co-direct with another researcher qualified to be sole director of a programme to strengthen the team.

A programme director can only lead one Programme contract at a time, except for the overlap allowed in the first bullet point. No changes of director/co-director would be allowed between stages unless approved by the HRC.

The HRC will review the programme director requirements periodically. If you have questions on eligibility, please contact your organisation's research office. If your organisation does not have a research office, please contact the HRC.

Programme team 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.
- Members of the research team are available to attend an interview in early April 2027 if your application is shortlisted for the Programme Assessing Committee.

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

1.9 Key dates

Event	Description	Date (1 pm)
Applications open	Applicants start their Programme EOI application via HRC Gateway	9 July 2026
Applications close	You must complete your application on HRC Gateway by this date	6 August 2026
Assessment	Applications reviewed by a multidisciplinary expert assessment committee	August 2026
Outcomes	Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full Programme grant application	3 September 2026

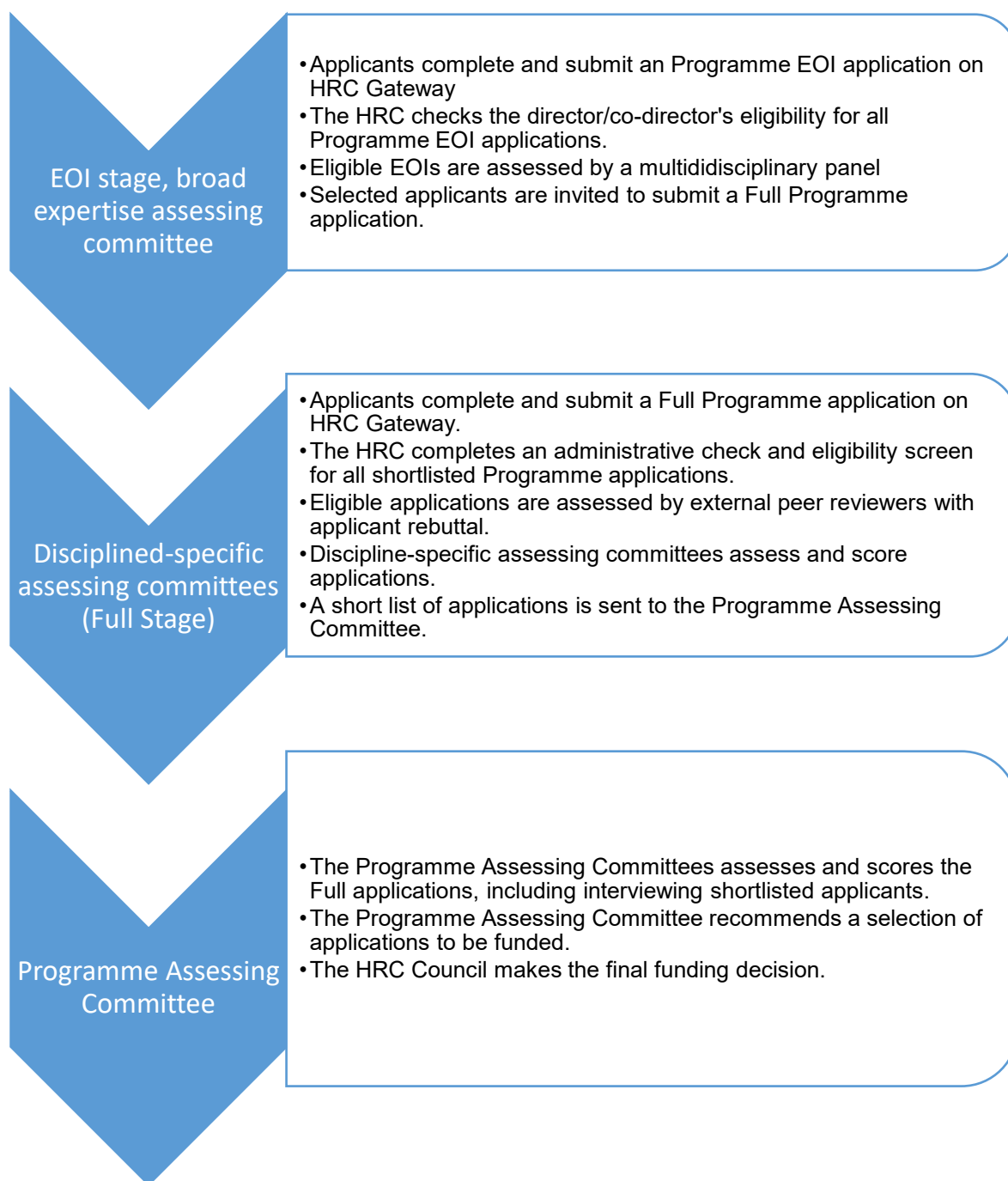
Submission deadline

Please submit your application to HRC Gateway by **1pm, 6 August 2026**. 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.

1.10 Application process overview

Refer to Appendix 1-4 of this document for further information on the assessment process and scoring criteria.



Part 2: General rules for 2027 Programme Expression of Interest (EOI) Grant applications

2.1 Preparation

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.

Before submitting an application

Before submitting an application, please read the following resources:

- 2027 Programme EOI Expression of Interest (EOI) 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](#)
- [Rangahau Hauora Māori Research Investment Stream Signal](#)
- [HRC Research Impact Assessment slideshow](#)
- [ARRIVE guidelines for animal research](#) (if applicable)
- [HRC Research Investment Plan](#)
- HRC Peer Review Manual (accessed via the 2026 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.

Application forms

You will need to download and complete the EOI form when submitting a Programme Grant application:

- 2027 Programme Expression of Interest (EOI) Grant Application Form (Microsoft Word template)

You can download the form from the 2027 Programmes Expression of Interest information page on HRC Gateway. Do not use any other templates; otherwise, your application will be withdrawn.

Complete the application form in Microsoft Word. Once completed, upload the application form as a PDF file to HRC Gateway.

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.

Consents necessary to carry out research (will be required at full submission)

All Programme applications approved by the HRC must identify and obtain all consents necessary to carry out the research (including but not limited to all biosafety, regulatory, human and animal ethical consents) at or prior to the time the consent is necessary.

For contract monitoring and HRC accountability reporting, if your research requires biosafety, regulatory, human or animal ethical consents, or clinical trial registration, these must be identified as separate Year 1 milestones, even if you expect to gain these consents before starting the proposed research.

Please refer to your institution's policies or the [website of the Health and Disability Ethics Committees](#) for further guidance.

2.2 Writing your application

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.

Application formatting 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 will be withdrawn.

Scope compliance

Please review **Section 1.3** carefully, as applications involving out-of-scope research types will be withdrawn.

Please avoid these common pitfalls:

1. Use the correct application form and the stated font sizes and styles.
2. Keep within the stated page limits.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Do not send digital files directly to the HRC.

If you are new to the HRC application process and need assistance with using HRC Gateway, please contact the HRC. There are also helpful [user guides](#) available.

2.3 Privacy provisions

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.

Personal information

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

Public announcements

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. This may include publishing details on research activities you provide to the HRC in media releases, on the HRC website, in newsletters, and in publications and reporting.

Official Information Act

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

2.4 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 status.

2.5 Additional eligibility requirements

Eligibility restrictions on publicly funded research

The HRC cannot accept applications made by a public service department, 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, an additional 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 government funding does not support scientific research collaborations that could further Russia's ability to continue its aggression in Ukraine. As a Crown entity, 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.

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,¹² and may require funded projects to identify, mitigate, and monitor risks as part of the contractual conditions of the Programme.

¹² 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.

2.6 False or misleading information

Once submitted to the HRC, a funding application is considered final and no changes will be permitted, although it may be withdrawn. The application is the primary source of information available for assessment. As such, it must contain all the information necessary for assessment without the need for further written explanation or reference to additional documentation at the assessing committee meeting. All details in the application, particularly concerning any awarded grants, must be current and accurate at the time of application.

If an application contains false or misleading information, it may be excluded from any further consideration for funding.

If the HRC believes that omission or inclusion of misleading information is intentional, it may refer the matter to the host organisation for the situation to be addressed under the provisions of the organisational code of conduct. The HRC also reserves the right not to accept future applications from the relevant investigators and/or to pursue legal action if appropriate.

Examples of false or misleading information in an application include:

- violating the standard codes of scholarly conduct and ethical behaviour
- providing fictitious CVs or biographical sketches, including roles in previous research
- omitting advice of publications which have been retracted or are to be considered for retraction
- falsifying claims in publication records (such as describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted).

Part 3. Instructions on completing and submitting a 2027 Programme EOI 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 2027 Programme EOI Grant application consists of five modules. Refer to **Sections 3.2 to 3.7** for detailed guidance on how to complete each module.

Module 1 'General information' must be completed on HRC Gateway. You need to click on the 'Create application' button to start your application. Update the required areas as indicated on HRC Gateway.

Complete Module 2 'Research', Module 3 'References', in the **2027 Programme EOI Application Form** (Microsoft Word template).

A NZ standard CV is required for the first named investigator and co-first named investigators (if applicable). Upload these to HRC Gateway; they will be compiled in Module 5. Refer to **Section 3.5** for detailed requirements.

Module 5 'Research classification' must be 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 checklist in the application form to ensure all requirements have been met.

Incomplete applications will be withdrawn.

3.1 The Programme Expression of Interest (EOI) application form

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 they contain 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

Note: All named investigators must have an HRC Gateway account to be included in your application. If not, please add them as collaborators at this stage. They must have an active account to be included in the Full application (if the programme is shortlisted).

Step 1

Start the application process by clicking the 'Create application' button on the 2027 Programme Expression of Interest Grant information page on HRC Gateway. This button will only appear when the application submission period is open. Clicking the 'Create application' button will open a dialog form where the following information is required.

Application type/stream

Select the programme category for the application (General or Rangahau Hauora Māori). Please refer to Section 1.5 for details.

The HRC cannot re-assign applications that are entered into the wrong category. If you wish to change categories while applying, please create 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. The title must not exceed 80 characters, including spaces and punctuation (e.g. 'growth factors' contains 14 characters). Please use sentence case. The HRC reserves the right to amend the title of funded applications.

Host organisation

The host organisation is the institution or organisation that will be responsible for administering any contract awarded.

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

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

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

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

Step 2

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

Lay summary

The lay summary must be 150 words or fewer and clearly state: 1) the purpose of the research and why it is needed; 2) how the research will be completed including the research activities; and 3) anticipated contribution to improvements in health outcomes and/or the health system and value for money (being specific about the anticipated outcomes where possible).

If your proposal receives funding, your lay summary will be published on the HRC website to communicate to the public the aims, activities, impact and value of your research.

Please use plain language that can be easily understood by members of the public and avoid using technical terms, with any acronyms fully written out in the first instance. The HRC reserves the right to amend the lay summary of any HRC-funded research in terms of its readability for a lay audience.

Research location

This is the specific department(s) and organisation where most research or data analysis will be completed.

Discipline

Choose from the drop-down box.

Duration

Enter the proposed term of the research (months).

Type of research

Choose from the drop-down list what you consider the most appropriate term for broadly describing the research proposal for assessment purposes. The HRC reserves the right to reassign applications to the most appropriate assessing committee.

Commencement date

Enter the proposed commencement date. Please note that the research activity must start by **1 August 2027**.

Support personnel

Examples of support personnel include individuals who will help you with the Programme application process (i.e. upload your application to HRC Gateway). Do not list named investigators, collaborators or your host organisation's research office staff. All support personnel need to have an HRC Gateway account to view and edit your application.

Step 3

First named investigator (director)

The first named investigator for the application is the director of the Programme. Their details 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.

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

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 the host organisation.

In the case of co-directors, applicants need to add 'named investigators' and choose the role of 'co-first named investigators' in the dropdown list. The role of the co-first named investigator should be described in the appropriate section of the form.

Information on ethnicity, gender and whether the researcher is a clinician (and is practising) is used for HRC information purposes only. Please note that ethnicity, iwi, clinician, or practising clinician are not required to be entered as these details will automatically populate from the individual's profile.

The first named investigator's CV (and co-first named investigators) must be uploaded into this section using the 'Upload CV' button.

Named investigators

All named investigators must have an HRC Gateway account before they can be added to the application. **All members named on the research team must be added to the application on HRC Gateway and will be included in Module 1.** Each named investigator will need to sign in to HRC Gateway and update their details before Programme applications are submitted. Click the 'Update' button to enter additional information as requested. If this step cannot be completed for all the named investigators, they can be added as collaborators (only for this stage, if shortlisted, they will need to complete the proper steps)

Click the 'Add investigator' button to add an individual to the application. You can search for an individual using their email or first and last name.

Under 'role type', you can assign a role to each individual as follows:

- Co-first named investigator: the co-director with joint overall responsibility for the Programme.
- Named investigator: a named investigator listed on the application, whose expertise and involvement are critical to the Programme's success.
- Student: a master's or PhD student named in the Programme application.
- Technician: an individual who will complete specific tasks that require technical knowledge and experience (e.g. those collecting participant data, processing and analysing samples, managing datasets, operating equipment, or providing biostatistical or cultural expertise).

Upload a maximum of two CVs in this section using the 'Upload CV' button. The two CVs must be the first named investigator (director) and a co-first named investigator (if applicable) or another relevant team member if there is no co-first named investigator.

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. 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 named investigator will undertake in the Programme (1-2 sentences maximum). If the Programme has a co-director, state their role in this section.

Collaborators

Collaborators are individuals who are not named investigators (i.e. not listed as members of the research team) but who contribute in-kind or paid support to assist in conducting the research. Their involvement may include providing expertise, resources, or services to support research activities.

Collaborators do not need to be registered Gateway users. When adding collaborators, please update the person's title, name, organisation, country and support level. You will also need to provide brief details on the purpose of the collaboration.

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.

Objectives

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 three 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.

Milestones

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

Note: For contract monitoring and HRC accountability reporting, if your research requires biosafety, regulatory, human or animal ethical consents, or clinical trial registration, these must be identified as **separate Year 1 milestones**, even if you expect to gain these consents before starting the proposed research.

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

Note: Programmes submitted to the Rangahau Hauora Māori category are required to address all [six investment signal goals](#). While applicants to this category are encouraged to consider alignment with these goals in development of their planned research, they are not expected to address the goals in their EOI application. At the Full stage, applicants will be required to outline their plans to address the goals in their application. Please refer to section 2.1 for further guidance

Section 2A: Proposed research (four-page limit)

This section should clearly summarise the research proposal. Reviewers use this section to get an overview of your application. Include all the important points of your application but keep this section to **four pages**. Use the suggested headings and add subheadings if required. This section includes Rationale for research, Aims, Potential for outcomes, Vision of the programme, Māori Health Advancement and Collaboration and integration (for details on assessment criteria see Appendix 1 and Programme EOI Application form).

Rationale for research

All HRC-funded research must focus on health and improving health outcomes and be aligned with the priorities (Section 1.2) and meet the requirements (Section 1.3) outlined in this document. You will need to clearly describe the health and health system issues that your research aims to address.

Demonstrate that you have adequately reviewed what is already known in the area and that there is a clear case for further research. For example, refer to systematic reviews or an otherwise robust demonstration of a research gap. If similar research has already been conducted overseas, clearly explain the additional value of conducting this research in New Zealand.

Include information that is essential for the reader to better appreciate or understand why your proposed research should be supported by government funding.

For example:

- What is the significance of the health issue for New Zealand?
- What is the justification for taxpayer investment, i.e., will it deliver meaningful outcomes for New Zealand's health, social and/or economic benefit?
- Does the proposed research provide a clear evidence-base when describing areas of high health need and population groups with high health need?
- What is the significant/important gap in knowledge, policy, practice, or service delivery that your research will address?
- How does your proposed research build on existing knowledge and evidence, and how will it contribute to, extend, or align with, research currently being undertaken either nationally or internationally?

Applicants are not required to provide details on design and methods at Programme EOI stage.

Aims

This section should briefly articulate the key aims of the programme, including indicating potential timelines, to demonstrate the programme's ambition and feasibility.

Potential for Outcomes

Describe how the research has the potential to realise health knowledge, research-related benefits, influence policy, practice or service delivery and contribute to improvement of health outcomes or health services. Include a clear focus on areas of high health need and populations with high health need. Note the development opportunities and support for early career researchers, next programme leaders and research engagement opportunities for health professionals and opportunities to strengthen the research workforce capacity for Māori investigators.

Vision of the programme

Describe how the research is innovative, original and contains visionary scientific thinking. Indicate the planning by the programme director(s) to deliver superior research activity. Describe how the research is at the forefront of health research (nationally and internationally). Note the clear strategic direction for the research programme with potential for impact and contribution to wider health and science system goals.

Māori health advancement

Describe how the proposed research is likely to advance Māori health and how the research could lead to improved Māori health or reductions in health inequity over time. Include information on how the research team is undertaking activities to address Māori health advancement, as appropriate to the nature and scope of the research. This may include 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).

Research team collaboration and integration

Describe the research team's qualifications to undertake the research, detailing their experience and knowledge in the proposed research area. Note the track record of the team with respect to disseminating research results. Clearly describe the team's record of collaboration. Indicate how the team is high-performing and integrated with a synergy of research skills and experience.

Section 2B: List of proposed research objectives or projects

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

3.4 Module 3: References

This section should start on a new page. There is a one-page limit for this section.

Include a **full list of all authors**, the title, journal, year, volume and page numbers. Place an asterisk beside applicants' publications.

A reference to Māori terms in the application with a brief translation can be included in this section.

3.5 Module 4: NZ Standard CV

Note: The NZ Standard CV template has been updated, and the new version is available to download on HRC Gateway.

Upload a CV for the first-named investigator (director) and the co-first-named investigator (if applicable). If there are no co-first-named investigators, an additional CV from a relevant team member can be uploaded instead. HRC Gateway will automatically compile CVs under Module 5 of your application.

CVs must be prepared using the [NZ Standard CV template](#). 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.

3.6 Module 5: Research classification

Click the 'Update' button on HRC Gateway next to each of the classifications required:

This information is for HRC data collection purposes only.

Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC)

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%.

Keywords

Enter keywords that categorise the research.

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.

Appendix 1: Programme application assessment process

1. Overview (NEW)

The HRC has made changes to the assessment processes for Programme Grant applications, including:

- **(NEW)** The 2027 Programme applications will be processed through two stages, an Expression of Interest (EOI) application and a Full application. From the pool of EOI applicants, a smaller group will be invited to submit the longer, more detailed Full application. We are opening the 2027 Programme Grant funding round earlier than usual, to allow time for Programme EOI assessment.
- **(REINTRODUCTION)** External peer review and rebuttal will be part of the assessment of Full stage applications in addition to assessing committee review and discussion.
- **Please note:** Details of the assessment processes for Full stage applications will be available in the 2027 Full Programme Application Guidelines

Two-stage process

2027 Programme applications will be assessed through a two-stage process comprised of an Expression of interest (EOI) application followed by a Full application.

Programme Grant application numbers have increased substantially in the past two years, and adding an EOI stage enables us to support the current number of applicants to apply in the EOI stage. From the pool of EOI applicants, a smaller group will be invited to submit the longer, more detailed Full application.

Peer review of EOI applications is provided by assessing committees convened by the HRC whose members are experts in relevant areas of research.

Full applications undergo the same assessment process as in previous years with the addition of peer review by external experts and applicant rebuttals which have been reinstated after being paused for the 2026 round.

Each application is discussed at a discipline-specific assessing committee meeting and allocated an overall score and ranking. The highly ranked applications are shortlisted to the Programme Assessing Committee (PAC) who interview applicants and score applications (see Appendix 3).

In the final stages of the process, the Programme Assessing Committee provides a list of recommendations for fundable applications to the HRC Council who makes final funding decisions informed by the assessing committee recommendations, the balance of investments across our portfolios, and consideration of alignment with HRC priorities.

Stage One: EOI application

The purpose of the EOI application stage is to identify which applicants will be invited to submit full applications in the second stage of the process.

EOI applications undergo eligibility checks, and all eligible EOI applications are assessed by a multidisciplinary panel.

Each application is discussed and scored by the members of the panel, using assessment criteria (for details see Section 2 of this appendix). This scoring generates a ranked list of EOI applications, and the highly ranked applications are invited to submit Full applications.

Stage Two: Full application

The purpose of the Full application is to demonstrate in greater depth the quality and scientific rigour of the research project, including the research rationale, design and methods, impact, Māori health advancement, the expertise and track record of the research team, and how the research aligns with HRC funding priorities for the round.

The Full application assessment process will be available in the Full Programme Applications guidelines.

2. Assessment of Programme Expression of Interest (EOI) applications

Assessing EOI committee membership

The HRC will seek to form a multidisciplinary expert assessing committee. The number of members on an assessing committee and their expertise will depend on the scope of the applications, taking into account conflicts of interest (see Section 4 of this appendix).

Assessing committee EOI meeting procedure

Programme applications will be reviewed by members of the Programme EOI assessing committee ahead of the discussion of each application at the assessing committee meeting.

If it is necessary to limit the number at this stage to ensure the meeting has sufficient time to discuss the most competitive applications, pre-scoring using the same Programme EOI score criteria may be applied to identify the lowest quality applications before the assessing committee. Triaged applications will not receive feedback.

In this case, the assessing committee members will independently allocate pre-scores on the same 1-7 scale used at the upcoming meeting to all applications assigned to the meeting (see Appendix 2). The average pre-scores will be collated to identify a preliminary ranking, and some of the lower-ranked applications may not be discussed at the meeting. Where there is a marked scoring discrepancy for an application, it may also be taken through to the meeting for full discussion.

Programme applications will be discussed by the assessing committee. Each application will have an assigned committee reviewer whose role is to summarise how the application aligns with each score criterion. They will also use the committee's discussion to inform the application's review summary (written feedback to the applicants).

The assessing committee chairs are responsible for ensuring the committee's discussion is fair and balanced. General discussion by all assessing committee members is essential for a balanced committee opinion, not unduly influenced by one committee member and should not be cut short nor unduly extended.

3. Programme EOI scoring criteria

In the PAC meeting, applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using equally weighted criteria. These are listed below with a full description.

Score	Criteria Descriptor	Criteria	Points	% score
7	Exceptional	Potential for outcomes	7	25
6	Excellent	Vision of programme	7	25
5	Very good	Māori health advancement	7	25
4	Good	Research team collaboration and integration	7	25
3	Adequate			
2	Unsatisfactory			
1	Poor			
Total			28	100

A. Potential for outcomes

The proposed research has the potential for realising:

- health knowledge (including a clear focus on areas of high health need)
- 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, practice, or service delivery
- contribution to improvement in health outcomes or health services, and/or contribution to harnessing the benefits of research and innovation for economic gain (revenue generating or cost saving).

B. 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.

C. 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 is 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).

D. Research team collaboration and integration

The research team:

- has the qualifications to undertake the research
- has experience and knowledge in the proposed research area
- has a track record of disseminating research results
- has a record of collaboration
- are integrated with a synergy of research skills and experience
- For Rangahau Hauora Māori Programmes: The proposed research team represents an appropriate mix of expertise and experience to align with the Rangahau Hauora Māori investment stream goals to enable Māori-led research.

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

3.1 Recommendation to Full stage

After scoring, HRC staff generate a ranked list of applications according to the total score. The programme EOI assessing committee, noting conflicts of interest then identify the applications assessed as recommended to full.

The recommendation of applications to be invited to the full stage is a quality decision that is made without consideration of or reference to the likely number of applications to be invited to the full stage.

In making this recommendation, the assessing committee draws a line on the ranked EOI list so that those below the line should not proceed to the full stage (NF) and all others should proceed to the full stage (F).

3.2 Feedback to applicants

At the conclusion of the EOI stage, applicants can access their application outcome via HRC Gateway. For applications that were discussed at an assessing committee meeting, the committee reviewer writes a brief review summary of the committee discussion (Appendix 3). Applications that were shortlisted to the Programme Assessing Committee will receive an additional review summary.

The intent of the review summary is to provide the applicant with a brief, balanced, objective statement of the committee's response to the research application.

Review summaries should be constructive and may include:

- key strengths of the application
- key areas for improvement and/or further consideration

Review summaries will not include details of specific scores or the identity of assessing committee members. Individual outcomes will be available on HRC Gateway and will also be forwarded to the research office/host organisation of the applicant.

Please note: applications not discussed at an assessing committee meeting do not receive written feedback.

4. Conflict of interest

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.

All assessing committee members are required to declare all potential conflicts of interest on HRC Gateway before they can access any application-related information. These declarations are then reviewed by HRC staff in accordance with the HRC Conflict of Interest Management Policy.

Appendix 2: Māori health advancement criteria

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

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

All applicants for HRC funding are required to address these two components in their applications. Applicants should consider how their research is informed by the four domains of Māori health advancement (see the [Māori Health Advancement Guidelines](#) for more details). Researchers are encouraged to consider the domains when developing their research, as this may identify aspects of the research not previously considered. It is not a requirement that all four domains are specifically addressed in the application, but researchers are advised to consider each in formulating the strongest rationale for the application.

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

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.

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

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 Programme) to maximise the likelihood that this research will contribute to Māori health advancement. Outline actions taken to ensure that the next users or beneficiaries of the research can 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 Programme 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).

