Peer Review Manual

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

July 2019

Peer Review Manual for Research Applications in the Annual Contestable Funding Round

New Zealand Government

www.hrc.govt.nz

Table of Contents

1. Purpose of the Peer Review Manual

1.1 Peer Review Manual Users and Layout

The purpose of the Peer Review Manual is to outline each stage of the review process for applicants, committee members and reviewers. The role of reviewers, committees and the HRC staff are detailed. The scoring system, with descriptors and weighting, are described for the HRC annual contestable funding round.

Refer to the CDA Peer Review Manual for assessment processes for career development awards.

The processes in this manual will be applied by the appropriate assessing committees. If committee members need clarification or assistance, the HRC will provide additional information.

Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the assessment processes described here. However, details on specific contracts, forms and other information are provided in the relevant Application Guidelines.

1.2 The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC)

The HRC, established under the Health Research Council Act 1990, is the Crown Entity responsible for the management of the Government's investment in public good health research. The Act provides for the appointment of statutory Research Committees (biomedical, BRC; public health, PHRC; Māori health, MHC) to advise the Council on the assignment of funds for health research. Science Assessing Committees (SAC) are appointed by the Research Committees to review health research proposals for funding through a variety of grant types.

The HRC funds a portfolio of health research relevant to Government goals and to the needs of the health sectors in New Zealand. The HRC funding of health research occurs primarily through an annual contestable funding round to identify and support high quality and relevant research in four identified Research Investment Streams. Significant funding is also provided through a Partnership Programme, which supports specific research initiatives with other agencies.

1.3 HRC Research Investment Streams

The HRC has established four Research Investment Streams to guide allocation of funding. The scope and goals of each Research Investment Stream have been defined in an Investment Signal developed by an advisory group representing researcher, policy and end-user perspectives.

1.3.1 Health and Wellbeing in New Zealand (HW)

All research for which there is a clear link between the knowledge generated and improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and populations is within scope of this Investment Signal.

All aspects of enhancing health and wellbeing are covered, from understanding normal human biological processes and development, to policy and interventions to reduce the impact of social and environmental determinants of disease. Research to understand the biological, behavioural, social, cultural, environmental and occupational processes that underpin health and wellbeing is included, as is research on fundamental biological processes underpinning the development of multiple diseases. Health promotion, health protection and the primary prevention of disease and injury through identification and mitigation of risk factors is within scope for this Investment Stream.

1.3.2 Improving Outcomes for Acute and Chronic Conditions in New Zealand (IOACC)

All research for which there is a clear link between the knowledge generated and a specific disease state, condition or impairment is within scope for this Investment Signal. Conditions may be

communicable or non-communicable. Biomedical research to understand an infectious agent or the pathology of a specific disease entity or organ system is included. All aspects of health improvement are covered; including diagnosis, development and optimisation of treatments, clinical management, prevention of complications and co-morbid conditions, patient self-management, rehabilitation, and palliative or end-of-life care.

1.3.3 New Zealand Health Delivery (NZHD)

Note: For the 2020 **Project** funding, the NZHD investment stream will be redesigned and run out of cycle to the other investment streams.

All research that can contribute to a primary outcome of improved health service delivery over the short-to-medium term is within scope for this Investment Stream.

The scope includes the full range of health care delivery (such as prevention, intervention, detection, diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, care and support), at all levels of care (i.e. primary through to tertiary), by all those who work in health and disability service settings. It includes improvements at a local, regional and/or national level.

A wide range of health care delivery improvements are within scope (such as advancements in productivity, performance, organisation, sustainability, cost-effectiveness, equity, quality, efficacy of care, and support). Research on innovations (such as technologies, tools, and devices) is included if likely to impact on clinical practice, health care, service provision or health systems in the short-to-medium term. Clinical trials of new or existing interventions (such as new treatment regimens, technologies, diagnostic aids, and information management systems) that meet the goal and research characteristics described in the Investment Signal are considered in scope.

1.3.4 Rangahau Hauora Māori (RHM)

All health research that values Māori worldviews and builds Māori research capacity and leadership are within the scope of this Investment Stream. Research funded through this stream is expected to demonstrate rangatiratanga (Māori leadership), a commitment to the core values of mana, tika, manaakitanga, and whakapapa and will recognise that Māori health research teams operate within the broader context of their communities.

The proposed research must meet the six Goals for the Rangahau Hauora Māori Investment Stream:

1. Contribute to the creation of Māori health knowledge.
2. Contribute to the translation of research findings into Māori health gains.
3. Incorporate Māori health research processes.
4. Incorporate Māori ethics processes.
5. Contribute to building a highly-skilled Māori health research workforce.
6. Respond to the needs of, and work in partnership with, Māori stakeholders and communities.

Research that contributes to improving Māori health outcomes can be funded through any HRC Research Investment Stream; the RHM Investment Signal outlines the distinctive features of research in scope of the Rangahau Hauora Māori Research Investment Stream.

1.3.5 HRC Investment Framework and the National Science Challenges (NSC)

In 2013, the government announced ten NSC, which represent a new strategic approach to mission-led science investment. Three of the NSC directly focus on health-related goals: Ageing Well, A Better Start, and Healthier Lives. There are overlaps between the objectives of the three NSC and the Goals of the HRC Investment Signals. The HRC will complement the NSC investment by continuing to support investigator-initiated research, which may address priorities within the scope of a NSC or other health priorities provided the research is within scope of the HRC Investment Signals. The HRC will continue to prioritise research of the highest quality and with the greatest potential for impact on the goals set out for each Research Investment Stream.

1.4 Acknowledgements

The HRC acknowledges the time, effort and valuable contribution committee members and external reviewers make to its assessment processes.

2 Integrity of Peer Review

2.1 Disclosures and Conflicts of Interest

A goal in the HRC mission of *"benefiting New Zealand through health research"* is to invest in research that meets New Zealand health needs and research that has international impact. Peer review by external reviewers and science assessing committees (SAC) are part of this process.

The HRC Management of Interest policy governs Council members, committee members, staff, contractors and consultants. The policy is further applicable to all SAC members and reviewers. A conflict of interest arises when an individual has an interest which conflicts (or might be perceived to conflict) with the interests of the HRC as a Crown Entity such as situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, professional judgement in objectively assessing research proposals. In managing a conflict of interest, it is important to consider actual conflicts and the appearance of conflict.

The HRC provides external reviewers and SAC members with guidelines regarding conflicts of interest management, to assist in the identification and declaration of potential conflicts of interest and to help evaluate the potential impact of the conflict on the peer review process. It is difficult to prescribe a comprehensive set of rules on interest as individuals are best able to judge their duties, links and potential interest in a particular circumstance. The key question to ask when considering whether an interest might create a conflict is whether or not "the interest creates an incentive to act in a way which may not be in the best interests of the HRC, the research, or the researcher(s)."

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

- anyone who is a **first NI** or a **NI** on an application under consideration in that round should not sit on the SAC that is assessing their application but they may sit on or Chair another SAC.
- A Programme NI cannot be a Committee Reviewer (CR) on a competing Programme application.
- HRC Council members, who chair the statutory research committees, cannot serve on a SAC.

2.2 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

SAC members and external reviewers must declare a potential conflict of interest if they:

- are an NI on any application in the funding round,
- are from the same immediate department, institution or company as the applicant(s),
- have direct involvement in the research proposal being discussed,
- have collaborated, published or been a co-applicant with the applicant(s), within the last five years,
- have been involved in any National Science Challenge funded studies or associated activities with the applicant (s),
- have been a student or supervisor of the applicant(s) within the last ten years,
- are a close personal friend or relative of the applicant(s),
- have had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the applicant(s),
- are in a position to gain or lose financially from the outcome of the application,
- have direct involvement in a competing application in the current funding round,
- for whatever reason, feel that they cannot provide an objective review of the application.

2.3 Evaluation of Interest

External reviewers may exclude themselves from the assessment process when they recognise a potential significant conflict of interest by opting out when initially contacted by an HRC team member, or on accessing preliminary details of the application on the HRC Gateway. When an

external reviewer does not recognise or declare a conflict of interest, but the potential conflict is later detected, the level of will be determined and managed according to the guidelines in this section.

Declarations of conflicts of interest for assessing committee members should be made as soon as possible to allow evaluation of the conflict and an appropriate outcome or resolution to be achieved. The HRC and the SAC Chair are responsible for raising any potential conflict of interest issues, resolving any areas of uncertainty, and working with the SAC in making final decisions in managing potential conflicts of interest. Potential conflicts of interest are discussed with the SAC as a whole; the member concerned may be asked to leave the room during this discussion. Following this discussion, one of the following agreed actions is taken:

Level 1	No action is necessary.
Level 2	The SAC member may be present due to their unique knowledge of the research area. They may be asked direct questions relating to scientific issues by other committee members, but they will not participate in general discussion and they will not score the application. Reviewer reports will be managed at the discretion of the research investment manager and SAC Chair.
Level 3	The reviewer report must not be considered, or the SAC member must not be present during discussion and scoring of the research proposal.

All declared conflicts should be recorded in the notes or minutes of the relevant meetings including action taken.

Where a potential conflict of interest, such as a recent co-authored publication, arises from a person's technical expertise, e.g., biostatistics or other limited involvement, this may be considered a minor conflict if the person was/is acting in a capacity similar to that of a consultant. If the association extends to the person being considered an integral member of the research team, then this is likely to be considered a strong conflict.

In determining conflicts of interest with collaborators, who are not Named Investigators but contribute in other ways to a proposal, the HRC will consider the declaration in line with our conflict of interest policy. In evaluating the conflict, and determining the appropriate action, the specific involvement of the collaborating individual or organisation will be considered.

An individual who is concerned about another member's potential or actual conflict of interest should raise the issue with the Chair or HRC, and measures to alleviate those concerns will be taken.

2.4 Levels of Peer Review

The HRC applies several levels of peer review to applications. There are slight modifications for each type of proposal, but the objective remains to minimise the influence of individual conflicts of interest by using several committees, of different membership, to decide the progress of each application. An individual is restricted in the number of roles that they could have during a funding round. For example, Council members do not serve on assessing committees. The HRC Research Committees provide representatives to chair assessing committees and advise in improving assessment processes.

Project applications, in a two-stage process, are assessed through several steps:

- SAC meeting to assess EOI applications and select top applicants to invite for Full Applications.
- Review of the Full Applications by external reviewers.
- SAC meeting to assess Full Applications.
- Grant Approval Committee (GAC) meeting to select applications to recommend to Council for funding.
- Funding decisions by Council.

Where the opportunity exists to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and/or quality of the HRC funding processes in support of quality improvement and/or adding to the evidence base for research funding, the HRC may choose to design and conduct a study to support this.

2.5 Financial Interest

For the purposes of HRC processes, a financial interest is anything of economic value, including relationships with entities outside the research host institution. 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.

A financial conflict of interest may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the individual's professional judgment in conducting, assessing or reporting research.

Applicants must disclose financial interests arising from the *sponsorship of the research Project* when any of the sponsors of the activity undertaken as part of the proposed research Project is a non-governmental entity.

2.6 Confidentiality and Retention of Applications

All participants in HRC peer review processes, **in agreeing to take part**, are required to keep specific details of each application assessment confidential.

The following guidance for committee members is to maintain confidentiality and protect the integrity of the peer review process:

- Applications and confidential meeting materials must not be shared with anyone who has not been invited by the HRC to participate in the assessing committee. Committee members may seek generic advice from those outside of the peer review process but the specific content of an application must never be revealed.
- Committee discussions, decisions and scoring for applications must remain confidential at all times. Any comments on applications are restricted to committee discussion and cannot continue during breaks.
- Electronic and paper materials must be destroyed at the conclusion of the assessing committee meeting.
- Committee members are encouraged to note their service on an HRC committee in CVs or other material but should not reveal the specific committee name. The HRC publishes a list of SAC members each year but members are not listed by committee. Members must not disclose the names of other members associated with a specific committee or the names of external reviewers associated with a specific application.

The following guidance for external reviewers is to maintain confidentiality and protect the integrity of the peer review process:

- Applications and confidential links to the HRC Gateway system must not be shared with anyone. External reviewers are expected to provide comments and questions on an application that are focused on the area of the proposal that is most directly aligned with their expertise.
- Reviewers may seek generic advice from those outside of the peer review process but the specific content of an application must never be revealed.
- External reviewer reports are anonymised for applicant response or rebuttal, but not for the SAC.
- Electronic and paper materials must be destroyed once external reviewers have completed their review.

Any suspected breaches in confidentiality should be immediately reported to the HRC. The HRC will take appropriate steps to investigate and manage any suspected breach.

A committee Chair may keep copies of research proposals and Committee meeting notes for a period of three months following the award of new HRC research contracts. This is to ensure that any queries regarding the outcome of funding results can be clarified. The CR1 of an application may retain notes to complete appropriate review summaries for applicant feedback. Due to the risk of

sensitive or confidential information being lost, it is preferred that applications are stored as electronic files in a secure system instead of paper copies that are easily mislaid.

2.7 Minimising Bias

The HRC is committed to creating a robust peer review process by ensuring a diverse range of perspectives are included in the assessment of applications. The HRC actively manages committee composition to minimise potential sources of bias. Highlighting the issue of unconscious bias is central to reducing its influence during assessing committee meetings. During the meeting, committee members are asked to reflect on their own comments, and the comments of other committee members, to try to mitigate the potential influence of unconscious bias.

2.8 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 SAC assessment without the need for further written explanation or reference to additional documentation at the 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 information that is false or misleading, 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 to the host institution for the situation to be addressed under the provisions of the organisational code of conduct. The HRC also reserves the right to not 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, but are not restricted to:

- violation of 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 publications records (such as describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted).

2.9 Complaints and Appeals Process

The HRC has a policy for considering and ruling on allegations of unfairness from an unsuccessful applicant for any HRC research funding. Complaints or requests for review of a funding decision must be submitted in writing through the applicant research office. An applicant may submit a complaint or request for review if they consider their application has been processed unfairly or differently from other like applications, setting out the way in which the applicant feels the application was processed differently, the alleged unfairness and the remedy sought.

3 Science Assessing Committee (SAC)

3.1 SAC Membership

There are a variety of needs that drive SAC member selection. Expertise is the main driver of membership, with additional considerations including location, institutional spread, international balance, member turnover, gender balance and cultural expertise. A SAC may consist of core members, who are experienced in HRC processes, and "expert" members, to provide expertise needed for a particular round. Expert members may be appointed to assess the Expressions of Interest and/or Full Applications, and provide the specific identified expertise required. If possible, committee members should represent a wide range of departments or institutions in New Zealand, Australia and on occasion from other countries. Nomination and selection of SAC members is undertaken by the Research Committees, the HRC and self-nomination via Gateway to achieve widespread representation. For example, more than two members from the same department would not be ideal. SAC members, other than the Chair(s), should not be involved in the process in other roles.

A SAC consists of a Chair or two Co-Chairs and 5-12 committee members, with the final membership dependent on the expertise requirements and the number of applications to be assessed. The Chair of each SAC is a member (or designee) of one of the Statutory Research Committees – the Public Health Research Committee (PHRC), the Biomedical Research Committee (BRC) and the Māori Health Committee (MHC). However, to avoid COIs, other members of the scientific community from New Zealand and Australia (who are familiar with HRC processes) may Chair SAC meetings. SAC members represent a mix of experts within their respective disciplines and are appointed on the basis of their research expertise and ability to effectively assess the applications received in that funding round.

Proposals may be grouped so that all related proposals are reviewed by the same SAC (e.g., all biomedical proposals within a sub-discipline) although the SAC may have expertise in several sub-disciplines (e.g., cardiology and renal disease). Clinical trials and randomised controlled trials for population interventions (i.e., public health) may be assessed by separate SACs with appropriate expertise. The HRC will consult with the SAC Chairs to ensure there is appropriate expertise available on each SAC to review the grouped proposals. If there are gaps in committee expertise for a particular application, then the HRC may seek expert comment to support assessment.

Māori health research proposals may be assessed by the Māori Health SAC or by another appropriate assessing committee.

Pacific Health research proposals may be assessed by a Biomedical SAC, Public Health SAC or a Pacific Health SAC, as appropriate.

3.2 SAC Expertise

SAC members are experienced researchers, who have the expertise relative to the breadth and scope of the research proposals assessed by the committee. Māori health and Pacific health experts are included as part of the review process.

SAC members are expected to have:

- postgraduate qualifications in a discipline relevant to health research,
- a track record as an active health researcher and may be a Named Investigator on a funded research proposal by a relevant funding agency (e.g. HRC, Marsden Fund, Cancer Society) in the past three years, and/or,
- a track record in policy analysis/advice in an agency/department relevant to health research (e.g. Ministry of Health), and/or,
- expertise in assessing the impact of health research.

In some circumstances, a SAC could have some members whose expertise and experience is less than that described above, however, all members must be able to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a Primary Committee Reviewer (CR1) and Secondary Committee Reviewer (CR2) as required for the stage of assessment.

SAC membership consists of experienced and inexperienced members, who are selected to provide the range of expertise needed for the applications to be assessed. In order to minimise scoring variation between committees, and from year to year, some of the members should have previous experience on a SAC (Section 3.3).

It is sometimes necessary to have specialised expertise on a SAC to assess one aspect of applications that require their review, e.g., a biostatistician or a health economist.

The number of committees involved in assessing Full Applications may be less than for Expressions of Interest, and fewer committee members may be required to provide expertise on the mix of proposals. It is desirable to have some continuity of committee membership between the two stages.

3.3 Responsibilities of SAC Members

3.3.1 General

SAC members are required to declare at the outset any potential conflicts of interest, specific to applications to be assessed by the committee, so that the impact of any such conflicts on the assessment process is managed appropriately (Section 2).

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

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

This means that anyone who is a **first NI** or a **NI** on an application under consideration in that round should not sit on the committee that is reviewing their application, but they may sit on or Chair a different committee. However, a NI in a programme application cannot be a CR1 or CR2 on a competing programme.

SAC members are required to keep all information about the assessment of research applications confidential, i.e. they may not discuss outside the SAC meeting specific details about applicants, applications or outcomes. However, they are allowed to talk about their SAC experience to colleagues in developing proposals.

3.3.2 Chair Responsibilities

The HRC supports the appointment of Co-Chairs where there is appropriate expertise, as this helps to spread workload, reduce potential bias and allow for succession planning. Consideration should also be given to limiting the term of an assessing committee Chair, e.g. in line with their Research Committee term. The main responsibilities of the SAC Chair, with the HRC manager, may include the following:

- approve the allocation of applications to be assessed by the SAC,
- approve and suggest potential committee members, taking into consideration: expertise, COI, location, gender balance, international balance, turnover of members and Māori and/or Pacific expertise (where appropriate),
- approve and suggest committee reviewer (CR) assignment of applications,
- manage potential conflicts of interest,
- attend the Chairs' teleconference (where available),

- ensure that a fair, balanced and **unbiased** assessment is reached,
- ensure that all committee members contribute to the discussion,
- ensure that committee discussion includes reference to all scoring criteria,
- provide a brief Chair Feedback report with a consensus view of the committee,
- approve Review Summaries after the meeting.

It is the responsibility of the Chair and HRC staff to resolve any concerns regarding the integrity of the process.

3.3.3 Committee Reviewer (CR) Roles

Assignment to CR roles, as defined in the following sections, is undertaken by the HRC in consultation with the SAC Chair. This is done taking into account potential conflicts of interest, expertise and workload.

Due to workload associated with the Chair responsibilities and to ensure that SAC processes are efficiently and consistently followed, the SAC Chair will be assigned few or no CR roles, unless there are special circumstances, such as last-minute withdrawals from the SAC or otherwise insufficient SAC expertise.

3.3.3.1 Expression of Interest (EOI)

Prior to the SAC meeting, each committee member will be assigned CR roles for a subset of the EOI to be assessed by the SAC (below).

At the start of the SAC meeting, the HRC provides a briefing that includes the procedure for identifying and dealing with conflicts of interest, the meeting process, and the criteria on which the research proposals are scored. This provides committee members with the information and guidance they need to be consistent in their approach and to follow process.

During the EOI SAC meeting, the CR is responsible for:

- providing comments with regard to each score criterion,
- commenting on any cultural issues relevant to the proposal (a glossary of Māori terms is available in Appendix 12),
- raising any other relevant issues as appropriate,
- writing the Review Summary to outline the committee discussion for the applicants.

3.3.3.2 Full Application

In addition to reading and being able to contribute to the discussion of all full proposals reviewed by the SAC, each committee member is assigned CR1 or CR2 responsibilities for a number of proposals. However, a biostatistician (or other technical expert) may not be assigned a CR1 or CR2 role for consistency of review of a technical nature across all applications assessed by that SAC. A biostatistician can act as a CR1 or CR2, if a key aspect of an application includes novel methodology or statistical design, or a health economist can act as a CR1 or CR2 if the application has a strong health economics component. Alternatively, if the member has some subject expertise, they can act as a CR1 or CR2 (i.e., their review should not be focused on their area of technical expertise). Conflicts of interest will be given due consideration when assigning and carrying out these responsibilities. The requirements for each of these roles are outlined below.

The CR1 of an application is required to:

- provide a reviewer report prior to the meeting,
- commenting with regard to each score criterion,
- write the Review Summary to outline the Committee discussion for the applicants.

The CR2 of an application is required to:

- select potential external reviewers (in liaison with the HRC Research Investment Manager),

with consultation with the CR1 and Chair if required,
- summarise the reviewer reports, including comments on the quality of the reports, and applicant rebuttal during Committee discussion.

3.3.3.3 External Reviewer Selection

The effectiveness of the peer review process is dependent on selecting the right reviewers for a specific research proposal. This stage of the process is extremely time sensitive and the CR2 must provide their potential reviewer selection as soon as possible.

The selection of potential reviewers is guided by several methods or resources:
- HRC Reviewer Directory searchable database,
- professional knowledge of relevant and appropriate experts in the research area,
- online literature databases (e.g. Medline, PubMed, Google Scholar),
- discussion with the CR1 and Chair,
- HRC assistance (e.g., suggestions from potential reviewers unable to help but asked to provide alternatives).

The CR2 identifies potential reviewers for each assigned proposal. If a proposal requires Māori and/or Pacific Health review, the CR2 indicates this and identifies appropriate reviewers. The CR2 should identify several alternative reviewers (initially at least six names) until an adequate number of reports have been received.

The HRC works to ensure 3-4 reviewer reports are obtained for each proposal. If this number is exceeded, additional reports will be cancelled on the following basis: where it is clear that a major COI exists, the report is of exceptionally poor quality or the report was the last received by the HRC. There may be scope for including a fifth reviewer report for an application, if that reviewer's expertise was explicitly needed for a specific component of the research application (and a peer review report covering that component had yet to be secured). It is the role of the HRC to coordinate and oversee all communications with the reviewers. Committee members and applicants should **not** contact reviewers.

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

The HRC may appoint an independent biostatistician to provide comment on this aspect of an application if deemed necessary.

3.4 SAC Administration

Detailed information is provided to members when they have been accepted into a committee and specific issues may be addressed with the committee administrator or HRC Research Investment Manager.

3.4.1 Time Commitment

Committee members are assigned CR roles for a set of applications to be assessed by the committee. In addition, all members must be able to discuss all other applications at the committee meeting. Pre-meeting preparation is an important part of the SAC process and members must allow sufficient time to read all proposals. The time needed is dependent on the number of applications. At the EOI stage, approximately 20-40 applications could be assigned to the committee, and 2-5 proposals could be assigned to a CR. This may require several days to review and pre-score all applications using the HRC online Gateway system. The bottom third of applications may be triaged based on the average SAC pre-scores, in consultation with the Chair, and these will not be considered further.

One to two days is required for the EOI SAC meeting. Members may need to arrive the evening before if they are not Auckland residents. The meeting may begin at 8.30 am and finish around 5 pm on both days, depending on workload. Travel and accommodation arrangements, according to the HRC

Travel policy, will be made by the HRC for members, who are not Auckland residents. These arrangements should ensure that members do not arrive late or leave before the end of the second day.

The first day starts with a briefing from HRC Research Investment Manager. The briefing includes a discussion of procedures for managing conflicts of interest, the SAC meeting process and a review of the assessment and scoring criteria for the research proposals. This gives the committee a solid base on which to proceed with the peer review process. The remainder of the meeting is dedicated to the discussion and scoring of research proposals. There may be a networking dinner at the end of the first day/end of the meeting.

Some EOI SAC members, depending on the expertise required, will be asked to join the SAC that will assess full applications with sufficient time to allow them to address other commitments. The Full Application SAC meeting will follow the same format as the EOI SAC meeting, except 10-30 applications may be assigned to a committee, with 2-4 assigned to individual CRs. This may require several days to review all applications and to submit reviewer reports using the HRC online Gateway system, when assigned the CR1 role, within a relatively short timeframe.

3.4.2 Expenses

Fees and claimable expenses payable to committee members are listed in Appendix 2. Assessing Committee Fees and Expenses

Fee Schedule

Expression of Interest SAC (for a 2-day meeting)			
	Committee Chair	Committee Member	Ad hoc Member*
Meeting fee (*per diem* x 2 days)	$540	$400	$400
Meeting preparation fee	$810	$600	$600
Review Summary preparation	$200**	$200**	$200**
Review of Review Summaries	$100		
Chair's report to HRC	$200		
TOTAL	$1850	$1200	$1200

Full Application SAC / Ngā Kanohi Kitea Full Stage (for a 2-day meeting)				
	Committee Chair	Committee Member	Ad hoc Member*	Technical reviewer
Meeting fee (*per diem* x 2 days)	$540	$400	$400	
Meeting preparation fee	$270	$200	$200	
CR1 Reviewer Report preparation	$300**	$300**	$300**	
Review Summary preparation	$200**	$200**	$200**	
Review of Review Summaries	$100			
Chair's report to HRC	$200			
Technical report preparation				$50 per application
TOTAL	$1610	$1100	$1100	

Programme Assessing Committee Member (for a 3-day meeting)				
	Committee Chair	Committee Member	MHR Member	Technical reviewer
Meeting fee (*per diem* x 3 days)	$810	$600	$600	
Meeting preparation fee	$270	$200	$200	
CR/MHR preparation		$400**	$600	
Review summary preparation		$200**	$200**	
Review of Review Summaries	$100			

Chair's report to HRC	$200			
Technical report preparation				$100 per application
TOTAL	$1380	$1400	$1600	

FGAC (for a 2-day meeting)			
	Committee Chair	Committee Member	Ad hoc Member*
Meeting fee (*per diem* x 2 days)	$540	$400	$400
Meeting preparation fee	$200	$200	$150
CR1 Reviewer Report preparation	$400**	$400**	$400**
Review Summary preparation	$200**	$200**	$200**
Presentation report preparation			$100
Review of Review Summaries	$100		
Chair's report to HRC	$200		
TOTAL	$1640	$1200	$1250

FSAC (for a 2-day meeting)			
	Committee Chair	Committee Member	Ad hoc member*
Meeting fee (*per diem* x 2days)	$540	$400	$400
Meeting preparation fee	$200	$200	$200
Review Summary preparation	$200**	$200**	$200**
Presentation report preparation			$100
Review of Review Summaries	$100		
Chair's report to HRC	$200		
TOTAL	$1240	$800	$900

EGAC (for a half day meeting)		
	Committee Chair	Committee Member
Meeting fee	$270	$100
Meeting preparation fee	$270	$200
Chair's report to HRC	$200	
TOTAL	$740	$300

*Includes biostatisticians, Māori consultants, Pacific consultants or other members providing input related only to their area of expertise. These members do not have CR roles as above and act in an advisory capacity. ** Only paid if assigned these roles.

.

3.4.3 Meeting Review

A review of the committee's effectiveness and functioning is a final responsibility at the end of any SAC meeting. All members are able to provide comments and suggest areas of improvement. The SAC Chair is asked to provide a short report noting issues that would be useful for future rounds (see Appendix 11. Science Assessing Committee Chair's Report Report). Feedback should be the consensus view of the committee or clearly identify where the view is that of an individual.

The feedback provided by committee members, either at the meeting or later, gives the HRC insight into any concerns or positive features that can be used to improve or maintain a high-quality peer review process.

4 Project Application Assessment Process

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Two-stage Process

Research Project applications are processed through a two-stage process. Stage One is an Expression of Interest (EOI), which identifies the area of research and gives an overview of the proposed study, methodology and a description of the research team. EOI applications are assessed and ranked with the intention that those invited to Stage Two Full Applications will have an overall success rate of up to forty per cent, although this may vary between Research Investment Streams.

4.1.1.1 Stage One: EOI

SAC members score the EOI prior to the SAC meeting to yield a ranked list. Lowest scoring applications are usually triaged, i.e. not discussed at the meeting. At the SAC meeting, the proposals are discussed and scored using the criteria described below and ranked by total score.

Only highly ranked applicants will be invited to submit full applications.

4.1.1.2 Stage Two: Full Application

Full applications are reviewed initially by external reviewers and the CR1. Applicants have the opportunity to comment on or rebut the reviewer reports. At the SAC meeting each application, with reviewer reports and applicant rebuttal, is considered and SAC members discuss and score the proposals using the criteria described below.

Ranked applications from the SAC are collated for consideration by the Grant Approval Committee (GAC), a sub-committee of the HRC Council.

4.2 Assessment of EOI

SAC members have two opportunities to score EOI. Prior to the EOI SAC meeting, committee members individually score all proposals assigned to the committee using the HRC online submission system; the details for this are provided to the members by the HRC Research Investment Manager. At the EOI SAC meeting committee members confidentially score the proposals.

4.2.1 Scoring Criteria: HW and IOACC

Applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using the following equally-weighted criteria (except for Global Score) for the HW and IOACC Research Investment Streams. These are listed below with full description in Appendix 1:

- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact
- Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team
- Global

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

Score	Criteria Descriptor
7	Exceptional
6	Excellent

5	Very good
4	Good
3	Adequate
2	Unsatisfactory
1	Poor

The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale of equal weighting (except Global score), as listed in the table, so that the total maximum score is 28:

Criteria	Points	% score
Rationale for Research	7	25
Design and Methods	7	25
Research Impact	7	25
Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team	7	25
Global (not in Total)	7	0
Total	28	100

4.2.2 Scoring Criteria: RHM

Applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using the following equally weighted criteria for the Rangahau Hauora Māori Research Investment Stream listed below with full description in Appendix 1:

- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact
- Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team
- Global

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

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

The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale of equal weighting (except Global score), as listed in the table, so that the total maximum score is 28:

Criteria	Points	% score
Rationale for Research	7	25
Design and Methods	7	25
Research Impact	7	25
Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team	7	25
Global (not in Total)	7	0
Total	28	100

4.2.3 Other Criteria and Global Score

In assessing EOI, the SAC awards a Global score, on a 7-point scale, that reflects:

- overall impression,
- the risk:benefit profile in the context of the state of knowledge in the area,
- the appropriateness of the request for Project support.

The Global Score is not part of the total score used for ranking applications, unless applications have the same total score, in which case the Global Score will be used to rank those applications.

4.2.4 EOI SAC Pre-Meeting Procedure

Prior to the meeting, SAC members will be required to provide preliminary scores (submitted via HRC Gateway), which are used to rank the applications. Based on these preliminary scores, the bottom 33% of applications in each assessing committee will be triaged and not discussed at the meeting (this does not apply to RHM applications). Assessing committee members are then provided with the list of applications for meeting discussion and are able to nominate any triaged application to be 'rescued' and discussed at the meeting. All applications will be randomised for order of discussion.

4.2.5 EOI SAC Meeting Procedure and Scoring

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

The discussion time allocated to each EOI is 20-25 minutes, for example:

- declaration of conflicts of interest - 2 minutes,
- CR comments - 5 minutes,
- general discussion of the proposal - 10 minutes
- scoring - 3 minutes,
- CR1 notes Review Summary points – 2 minutes.

The scores are collected and collated confidentially by the HRC staff.

The scoring criteria and descriptors used at the EOI SAC meeting are the same as those used for the preliminary scoring prior to the meeting (Appendix 1. Scoring Criteria and Anchor Point Descriptors).

4.2.1 Re-Ranking Procedure

After all applications have been scored, the ranked applications are considered by the SAC for possible re-ranking of applications on a case-by-case basis to remedy perceived inconsistencies. Applications cannot have points added to the score for the purpose of strengthening the score without re-ranking the application. This procedure will allow any application in the ranked table to move up or down by one position at a time. The re-ranking procedure is managed carefully by the committee Chair(s) and the HRC Research Investment Manager to avoid re-litigation of any applications and to mitigate against any bias affecting the process.

- Any SAC member may bring forward an application for re-ranking.
- Conflicts of Interest are notified and managed in the appropriate manner.
- The application under consideration would have its scores modified, after appropriate discussion and agreement, by adding up to 0.5 points to one or two of the scoring criteria of choice to move the application up one place under consideration.
- The new ranking and new adjusted total scores would then be put forward for consideration at the next stage.
- Re-ranking of other applications can be done using an iterative process until a final ranked list is reached.
- Any changes are recorded in the meeting scoresheet and notes.

4.2.2 Selection for the Full Applications List

At the EOI SAC meeting, the proposals are ranked according to the total score (excluding the Global Scores). The committee then considers the ranked EOI and recommends those that should submit full applications. This part of the process will require reference to the Global Scores to discriminate applications that otherwise have the same total score. 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 SAC 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).

Statistical normalisation may be applied to minimise the effect of scoring variation between committees. Statistical normalisation calculates the z-score of a number using the mean and standard deviation of a distribution (SAC total scores) corrected for the mean and standard deviation of the larger distribution (all SAC total scores). The HRC, after consideration of the results from all SAC meetings, will complete the process to prepare the final lists of Full Applications for the HW, IOACC, and RHM Research Investment Streams.

4.2.3 EOI Review Feedback

Applications that are triaged by pre-score will receive feedback providing this information. For example, the application was below the 33rd percentile of applications assessed by science assessing committee pre-score and it was not discussed at the committee meeting.

Applications that are discussed by a SAC will receive brief qualitative feedback in the review summary (Appendix 4. EOI Outcome and Feedback).

Outcomes will be published on HRC Gateway after the announcement of EOI results.

4.3 Assessment of Full Applications

4.3.1 SAC membership

The SAC membership required to assess full applications may differ from the EOI SAC. Full applications will be assessed by a committee that may have extended expertise, members from the EOI SAC, experts matched to the applications and the Investment Signal requirements. SAC members will be provided with documents relating to the work of each committee, e.g., forms, guidelines, Research Investment Stream definitions. The number and membership of SAC depends on the scope of the applications, taking into account conflicts of interest, in consultation with the Research Committees.

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

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

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

4.3.2 Before Full Application SAC Meeting

4.3.2.1 Reviewers

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

- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact
- Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

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

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

Reviewer reports, available for applicants' responses or rebuttals, are submitted on the HRC online submission system (HRC Gateway). Reviewer reports and applicant responses or rebuttals are sent to the SAC prior to the meeting. The HRC works to ensure 3-4 reviewer reports are obtained for each proposal. If this number is exceeded, additional reports will be cancelled on the following basis; where it is clear that a major COI exists, the report is of exceptionally poor quality or the report was the last received by the HRC. There may be scope for including a fifth reviewer report for an application, if that reviewer's expertise was explicitly needed for a specific component of the research application (and a peer review report covering that component had yet to be secured). It is the role of the HRC to coordinate and oversee all communications with the reviewers. Committee members and applicants should **not** contact reviewers.

Note that the applicant response or rebuttal (see Appendix 6) is an opportunity for the applicants to respond to the comments or questions raised by the external reviewers. The applicants are advised to address completely all the issues raised by the reviewers, remain objective in addressing difficult reviewers and avoid emotional rebuttals. The applicant rebuttal, together with the reviewer reports will be made available for the SAC at their meetings.

External reviewer reports are anonymised for applicant response or rebuttal, but not for the science assessing committee.

4.3.2.2 SAC preliminary score

An optional SAC preliminary score may be applied by the HRC to identify poor proposals when there is a need to limit the workload of the committee. SAC members, based on their own reading of the applications and informed by the reviewer reports and applicant rebuttals, allocate scores on the same 1-7 scale used at SAC meetings to all proposals assigned to the committee. The **CR1** of a proposal does **not** allocate a score to that application at this stage.

The HRC collates the average scores to identify a preliminary ranking and help inform the order of discussion. Some of the lower ranked applications will be considered by the Chair(s) and SAC for triage, i.e. not discussed at the SAC meeting. However, when there is a marked scoring discrepancy for an application it may be taken through to the meeting for full discussion.

The remaining applications will be randomised for order of discussion at the SAC meeting.

4.3.2.3 Applications not discussed at Meeting

The two-stage application and assessment process limits the number of full applications received by the HRC so that it is expected that most or all applications will be discussed at the SAC meeting.

However, it may be necessary to limit the number at this stage so that the SAC can focus on the most competitive proposals. Pre-scores provide an overview of the quality and ranks of the research proposals received and inform the decisions made regarding which applications will not be discussed.

Full applications **must not** be substantially different from the initial EOI in either research team or research plans/objectives, since these are the criteria that were scored and qualified the proposal for this stage. Concerns about this will be discussed with the EOI SAC Chair(s) and a decision made whether to accept the application for further assessment.

Reviewer reports and scores, applicant rebuttals and ranking based on pre-scores from committee members are considered by the SAC Chair(s) in determining whether all full applications will be assessed at the SAC meeting. Committee members may have input into this process.

4.3.3 SAC Meeting Procedure

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

Applications to be discussed by the committee will be in random order.

The discussion time allocated to each proposal is up to 30 minutes, e.g.:

- declaration of conflicts of interest - 2 minutes,
- CR1/CR2 comments - 10 minutes,
- general discussion of the proposal - 15 minutes,
- scoring - 2 minutes,
- notes for Review Summary - 1 minute.

The scores are collected and collated confidentially by the HRC staff.

4.3.4 SAC Scoring Criteria: HW, IOACC and RHM

In the SAC meeting, applications in these three Research Investment Streams are scored from 1 to 7 against the same criteria used for EOI (Appendix 1. Scoring Criteria and Anchor Point Descriptors) except there is no Global score. These are listed below; refer to Appendix 1 for a full description.

- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact
- Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

Scoring is considered as per the anchor point descriptors and the relevant Investment Stream goals. The scores for the criteria are equally weighted so the maximum total score is 28.

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

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

The HRC Research Investment Manager will provide the committee with information on the budget with regard to HRC policy. However, it is the responsibility of the committee to determine whether the budget is appropriate for the proposal.

4.3.5 Scoring Procedure

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

4.3.6 Re-Ranking Procedure

After all applications have been scored, the ranked applications are considered by the SAC for possible re-ranking of applications on a case-by-case basis to remedy perceived inconsistencies. Applications cannot have points added to the score for the purpose of strengthening the score without re-ranking the application. This procedure will allow any application in the ranked table to move up or down by one position at a time. The re-ranking procedure is managed carefully by the committee Chair(s) and the HRC Research Investment Manager to avoid re-litigation of any applications and to mitigate against any bias affecting the process.

- Any SAC member may bring forward an application for re-ranking.
- Conflicts of Interest are notified and managed in the appropriate manner.
- The application under consideration would have its scores modified, after appropriate discussion and agreement, by adding up to 0.5 points to one or two of the scoring criteria of choice to move the application up one place under consideration.
- The new ranking and new adjusted total scores would then be put forward for consideration at the next stage.
- Re-ranking of other applications can be done using an iterative process until a final ranked list is reached.
- Any changes are recorded in the meeting scoresheet and notes.

4.3.7 Fundable and Not Fundable Line

After scoring and re-ranking discussion, the applications are ranked according to total score.

The Committee, noting conflicts of interest, then:

- identifies the proposals assessed as not fundable (NF), by starting at the bottom of the ranked list and going up the list,
- identifies the proposals assessed as fundable (F).

The Fundable/Not Fundable line refers to the position in the ranked list of applications below which all applications are of insufficient quality that, irrespective of available budget, they should not be funded.

Note: Once the proposals have been scored and re-ranked following discussion by the committee, no scores are permitted to be further reviewed or adjusted at or after the conclusion of the meeting. Any concerns about the process are identified by the committee and are taken by the SAC Chair(s) to the Chair of the relevant Research Committee.

4.3.8 Score Normalisation

If there are two or more SAC appointed to assess applications within a Research Investment Stream, statistical normalisation will be applied to minimise the effect of scoring variation between committees. Statistical normalisation calculates the z-score of a number using the mean and standard deviation of a distribution (SAC total scores) corrected for the mean and standard deviation of the larger distribution (all SAC total scores). Projects and Programmes are included in the normalisation process. The applications will be ranked in order of normalised score for consideration by the GAC and Council.

4.4 Review Summary and Feedback for Applicants

4.4.1 Expression of Interest (EOI)

All applicants will receive feedback based on SAC outcome (Appendix 4. EOI Outcome and Feedback). For the applications that are discussed at the meeting, applicants will also receive qualitative feedback in the form of a Review Summary (see Appendix 4. EOI Outcome and Feedback). Review Summaries for EOI will be brief and may identify several weaknesses and strengths.

4.4.2 Full Application

At the conclusion of the funding round, applicants receive a SAC Review Summary and can access their application outcome via the HRC Gateway. The CR1 writes a brief Review Summary of the SAC discussion for each of their assigned proposals (see Appendix 10. SAC 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 proposal. Summary Reviews for Programme applications will be provided to the Programme Assessing Committee to inform their discussion.

Review Summaries should be constructive and may include:

- information that applicants would find useful and wish to know,
- issues considered important enough by the SAC to influence the scoring of the proposal,
- Other comments (e.g. budgets, FTE, objectives, Māori responsiveness).

Review Summaries should not include reference to scores or the identity of reviewers or committee members.

The SAC Chair(s) is responsible for approving the content of all Review Summaries. The HRC staff are responsible for ensuring they are forwarded to research offices/the host institution.

Outcomes will be published on the HRC Gateway after the funding round.

5 Programme Application Assessment Process

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 HRC Programmes

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

Programmes normally require a Director or two Co-Directors and other established investigators who are responsible for the scientific direction and quality of the research. A successful funding history of peer reviewed contracts by the proposed Named Investigators is required. Named Investigators will also be expected to have had an outstanding track record of achievement in health research and to provide support for those seeking training in health research. Salaries of investigators within a research Programme need not be funded by the HRC, but each Named Investigator is expected to devote a substantial and specified portion of time to the research Programme.

New Programmes may address goals of more than one Research Investment Stream but a primary Research Investment Stream should be specified. The New Zealand Health Delivery Research Investment Stream (NZHD) will not currently support Programmes.

5.1.2 One-stage Application Process – Multistep Assessment Process

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

- assignment to a Science Assessing Committee (SAC),
- review by external reviewers and applicant response or rebuttal,
- assessment by SAC against SAC scoring criteria (informed by reviewers),
- assessment of shortlisted applications by the Programme Assessing Committee (PAC) against PAC scoring criteria (informed by SAC and reviewers),
- consideration of fundable applications by GAC for fit to Research Investment Stream budgets,
- funding approval by the HRC Council.

5.2 Assessment by SAC

The process followed by SAC for Programmes is very similar to that used for Projects as described in the previous section of this Manual. The SAC does not decide whether Programme applications are Fundable or Not Fundable

5.2.1 SAC Membership

The SAC structure required to assess Full Project Applications may take into consideration requirements for Programme assessment. Applications will be assessed by a SAC that has extended expertise matched to the applications and the Investment Stream goals. SAC members will be provided with documents relating to the work of each committee, e.g. forms, guidelines and Investment Stream goals.

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

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

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

5.2.2 Before SAC Meeting

5.2.2.1 Reviewers

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2.3 SAC Meeting Procedure

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

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

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

The discussion time allocated to each proposal is up to 60 minutes:

- declaration of conflicts of interest - 1 minute,

- CR1/CR2 comments - 15 minutes,
- general discussion of the proposal - 40 minutes,
- scoring - 2 minutes,
- note key points for Review Summaries - 2 minutes.

5.2.4 SAC Scoring Criteria for Programme Applications

In the SAC meeting, Programme applications are scored on a 7-point scale for **six** criteria. These are listed below with full description in Appendix 1:

- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact
- Māori Health Advancement
- Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team
- Cohesiveness of the Research Programme.

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2.5 Scoring Procedure

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

5.2.6 Score Normalisation

If there are two or more SAC appointed to assess Programme applications within a Research Investment Stream, statistical normalisation will be applied to minimise the effect of scoring variation between committees. Statistical normalisation calculates the z-score of a number using the mean and standard deviation of the larger distribution (all SAC total scores). The normalised scores are used to rank and shortlist applications for consideration by PAC.

5.2.7 Review Summary

The CR1 writes the Review Summary, which is used by the PAC in its discussion of each application. The format is similar to a Project Review Summary with an additional paragraph on Programme cohesiveness (see Appendix 10. SAC Review Summary: Programme).

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

5.3 Assessment by the Programme Assessing Committee (PAC)

5.3.1 PAC membership

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

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

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

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

5.3.2 Before PAC Meeting

5.3.2.1 Reviewers

As described in Section 5.2.2, reviewer reports and applicant responses or rebuttals are obtained and used by SAC. These are sent to the PAC prior to the meeting.

5.3.2.2 SAC scores and findings

As described in Section 5.2.4, the SAC fully assesses applications and scores against the SAC criteria. The SAC score and other findings are forwarded to the PAC prior to the PAC meeting. If a Project application, that is part of a proposed Programme, is assessed as Not Fundable by SAC, that Programme application may still be considered by PAC. Questions raised by the SAC will be sent to PAC in the Review Summary.

5.3.2.3 PAC shortlist

A PAC shortlist of up to ten applications will be identified for full consideration at the PAC meeting based on the ranked list of SAC scores (normalised across all committees). Applications that are not

on the PAC shortlist will not be considered further. Shortlisting only required if there are more than ten applications.

5.3.3 PAC Meeting Procedure

5.3.3.1 Independent PAC Chair

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

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

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

The PAC Chair does not score and is not assigned CR roles for applications.

The Chair is required to provide Chair's feedback to the HRC and approve application Review Summaries after the meeting.

5.3.3.2 Committee Reviewers

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

The CR1 of an application is required to:

- Prior to the PAC meeting, identify key question(s) to be discussed with the PAC and that may be asked of the applicant during the interview,
- present an overview of the proposed research including overall objectives,
- write the Review Summary to outline the committee discussion of the proposal for the applicant's information.

The CR2 of an application is required to:

- Prior to the PAC meeting, identify key question(s) to be discussed with the PAC and that may be asked of the applicant during the interview,
- present the Review Summary from the SAC meeting including questions for PAC to ask the applicants,
- present an overview how the application meets PAC scoring criteria.

The MHR of an application is required to:

- indicate the relevance of the proposed Programme to Māori and its likely direct contribution to Māori Health Advancement,
- comment on the capacity of the proposed Programme to address inequalities,
- comment on the capability to build meaningful partnership relationships with Māori and facilitate Māori health research workforce capacity building.

5.3.3.3 Applicant Presentation and Interview

After the shortlist of applications has been identified (Section 5.3.2.3), shortlisted applicants required for the PAC meeting will be notified. The Director or Co-Directors and the senior Named

Investigators on the Programme applications selected for discussion at the PAC meeting will be invited to give a 30-minute presentation followed by a further 30-minute discussion of their plans with the committee.

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

The 30-minute presentation is expected to:

- provide a high-level review of the Programme, its strategic nature, research impact, rationale, focus, synergism and collaborative nature,
- give an overview of each objective/project,
- show how the objectives/projects contribute to, and form part of the overall Programme,
- address the assessment criteria used by PAC to score and rank applications,
- provide information on technical details and the research design, sufficient to understand the proposal,
- discuss the track record of the teams collaboration and organisation,
- note future strategic directions for the Programme over the 5 years,
- be appropriate to the multidisciplinary membership of the PAC (clinical, biomedical, public health, Māori health),
- ensure that the Programme content does not depart significantly from the proposal assessed by the SAC.

The 30-minute discussion may:

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

The applicant meeting with PAC is important for determining the relationship between the senior Named Investigators and their collaborative arrangements.

5.3.3.4 Meeting Schedule

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

The time allocated to each proposal:

- declaration of conflicts of interest - 2 minutes,
- CR1/CR2/MHR comments and general discussion (to identify questions for the applicants) - 30 minutes,
- applicants (Director or Co-Directors and senior Named Investigators) presentation - 30 minutes,
- interview Questions and Answers - 30 minutes,
- PAC final discussion and scoring - 28 minutes,
- key points of PAC Review Summary - 2 min.

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

The scores are collated by the HRC staff.

5.3.4 PAC Scoring Criteria

In the PAC meeting, each research proposal is scored on a 7-point scale for the criteria that the PAC use for assessing and scoring research proposals listed here with full description in Appendix 1:

- Overall Quality of Health Research

- Potential for Outcomes
- Vision of Programme
- Māori Health Advancement
- Research Team Collaboration and Integration

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

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

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

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

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

5.3.5 PAC Scoring Procedure

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

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

5.3.6 PAC Fundable and Not Fundable Line

At the end of the committee meeting, the PAC score is combined with the normalised SAC score to reach the total score for each application. The applications are ranked according to total score (maximum 56), which includes the SAC score (maximum 28) plus the PAC score (maximum 28).

The Committee then:

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

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

5.4 Review Summary for Applicants

At the conclusion of the funding round, applicants are sent two Review Summaries:

- Appendix 10. SAC Review Summary: Programmes minus Section 3,
- PAC Review Summary (Appendix 8. Programme Review Summary).

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

Review Summaries should be constructive and may include:

- information that applicants would find useful and wish to know,
- issues considered important enough by the committee to influence the scoring of the proposal,
- comments relating to the applicant presentation and meeting,
- comments relating to Māori Health Advancement
- other comments (e.g. budget, FTE, objectives).

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

The PAC Chair is responsible for approving the content of all Review Summaries. The HRC Research Investment Manager is responsible for ensuring they are forwarded to the host institution.

6 Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Assessment Process

6.1 Introduction

Specific guidelines for Emerging Researcher First Grants are published on the HRC website. Applicants should carefully note the eligibility criteria for this grant. The HRC will apply the criteria and exclude ineligible applications from the process.

6.2 Assessment Framework for Emerging Researcher First Grant Applications

Proposals assigned to the Biomedical or Public Health Research Committees on the basis of their research discipline will be assessed by a multidisciplinary First Grant Science Assessing Committee (FGAC) having a broad range of expertise.

Pacific Health Research proposals will be assessed by Pacific Health Assessing Committee.

Proposals assigned to the Māori Health Committee (MHC) will be assessed by the Rangahau Hauora Science Assessing Committee (RHAC) for the annual funding round.

6.2.1 Definition of Emerging Researcher

The definition of an emerging researcher is relative to that individual's research discipline:

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

Assessment will be based on a clear demonstration of commitment to establish a research career, the quality of the applicant's research capability, based not only on quantity of publications but on the applicant's PhD, prizes and scholarships, etc., and the quality of the proposed research. Track record is also assessed **relative to opportunity**.

Overarching requirements for emerging researchers in any discipline are demonstrated research capability and a desire to establish an independent health research career.

Applicants are eligible if they:

- have New Zealand residency,
- are emerging researchers as defined above,
- are normally no more than 6 years from attaining a most recent postgraduate degree, but this period could be greater for parental leave, caring responsibilities, career breaks, ill health or other justified reasons. Eligibility will be counted from the date of conferment. HRC may request evidence of this date to confirm eligibility, if required,
- have not previously held a competitive research grant as a first Named Investigator for research expenses of ≥$105,000 from any source (including institutional or internal funding) at the time of application assessment. Applicants are required to provide the total amount of research or working expenses on each grant they have received. Scholarship and fellowship stipends are not included. In cases where other grant applications are pending at the time of application, if outcomes are known by the time of the HRC Assessing Committee meeting, the HRC application may no longer be eligible if the expense threshold is passed,
- justify how they fit this category,
- are developing an independent research stream,
- are not studying for a PhD degree.

The HRC reserves the right to accept the Assessing Committee's assessment of applicant eligibility.

6.2.2 Review of Merit

Committee members consider each proposal on its own merit. Committee members also consider the reviewer reports of the research proposal and the applicant's response (rebuttals) to those reviews. Committee members then score the proposal on the following four or five (for NZHD applications) criteria: Suitability of the Applicant; Rationale for Research; Design and Methods; Research impact; and Research uptake (for NZHD applications).

6.3 HRC Research Proposal Assessment Overview

All research proposals are assessed by a system of peer review, which is briefly outlined in this section and further detailed in later sections:

- assignment of proposals to committee reviewers,
- written assessments and grading of the proposals by reviewers,
- applicant rebuttal of reviewer reports,
- triage of lower-ranking proposals based on pre-scores from the Assessing Committee,
- discussion and scoring of proposals by the Assessing Committee,
- the Council makes final funding decisions.

6.4 HRC First Grant Science Assessing Committees (FGAC)

FGAC consists of a Chair or two Co-Chairs and 10-12 members. The Chair is a member (or designee) of one of the Statutory Research Committees (i.e. BRC, PHRC or MHC) and appointed by that Research Committee. FGAC members represent a mix of New Zealand and Australian health researchers, who are appointed for their research expertise to assess the applications received.

Research proposals identified as Māori Health research are assessed by the RHAC.

Pacific Health research proposals are assessed by the Pacific Health Assessing Committee.

6.4.1 FGAC Membership

FGAC members are experienced researchers, who have the appropriate expertise relative to the breadth/scope of the research proposals received.

FGAC members are expected to have:

- postgraduate qualifications in a discipline relevant to health research,
- a track record as a health researcher and be a Named Investigator on a funded research proposal from a relevant funding agency (e.g. HRC, Cancer Society), and/or
- a track record in policy analysis/advice in an agency/department relevant to health research (e.g. Ministry of Health), and/or
- expertise in assessing the impact of health research.

In some circumstances, the Committee could have some members whose expertise and experience is less than that described above, however, all members of a FGAC must be able to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a Primary Committee Reviewer (CR1) and of a Secondary Committee Reviewer (CR2).

6.5 Responsibilities of FGAC Members

6.5.1 General

SAC members are required to declare at the outset any potential conflicts of interest so that the impact of any such conflicts on the assessment process is managed appropriately as described elsewhere in this Manual.

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

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

SAC members are required to keep all information pertaining to the assessment of research applications confidential.

6.5.2 Primary (CR1) and Secondary Reviewer (CR2) Roles

FGAC is responsible for reviewing 30-50 applications. In addition to reading and being able to contribute to the discussion of all of the proposals reviewed by FGAC, each member is assigned CR1 and CR2 responsibilities for some of the applications. The requirements for each of these roles are outlined below.

The CR1 of an application is required to:

- provide a reviewer report,
- present an overview of the proposed research to the committee, including comments on strengths and weaknesses regarding each score criterion,
- write the Review Summary which outlines the committee's discussion.

The CR2 of an application is required to:

- select potential external reviewers, with consultation with the CR1 or Chair (s) if required,
- summarise the reviewer reports, including comments on the quality of the reports and applicant response or rebuttal during committee discussion of the proposal.

The CR1/CR2 members must be able to contribute to the discussion of other proposals reviewed by FGAC.

6.5.3 External Reviewers

The effectiveness of the peer review process is dependent on selecting the right reviewers for a specific research proposal. On the application form, applicants are asked to provide various descriptors, such as the research discipline and field(s) of research, as well as identify keywords that best describe the nature and activities of the research Project. The information may be used by the CR2 to identify reviewers.

The selection of reviewers is guided by several methods or resources:

- HRC Reviewer Directory searchable database,
- professional knowledge of relevant and appropriate experts in the research area,
- discussion between the CR1, CR2 and/or other members of the Committee,
- online literature databases of skilled researchers working in the specific research area (e.g. Medline, PubMed, Google Scholar and clinical trials databases),
- HRC assistance (e.g., suggestions from potential reviewers unable to help but asked to provide alternatives).

The CR2 identifies at least six potential external reviewers for each of the Project proposals which they have been assigned. To ensure the adequate numbers of suitable reviewer reports are obtained the CR2 may be asked to identify more potential reviewers.

The HRC works to ensure that 3-4 reviewer reports are obtained for each proposal. It is the role of the HRC to coordinate and oversee all communications with the reviewers. Committee members and applicants should not contact reviewers.

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

6.6 Scoring of Emerging Researcher First Grant Applications

Each external reviewer is asked to score the research proposal on a 7-point scale, provide comments and ask questions for each of the following criteria:

- Suitability of the Applicant
- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact

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

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

6.7 FGAC Pre-scoring

A FGAC preliminary score may be applied by the HRC to identify poor proposals when there is a need to limit the workload of the committee. FGAC members, based on their own reading of the applications and informed by the reviewer reports and applicant response or rebuttals, allocate scores on the same 7-point scale used at the FGAC meeting. The CR1 of a proposal does not allocate a score to that application at this stage.

The HRC collates the average scores to identify a preliminary ranking. Based on the pre-scores, the bottom 33% of the applications may be triaged, i.e. not progress to full discussion at the FGAC meeting, but the committee may rescue some of them at the meeting. The remaining applications will be randomised for discussion at the FGAC meeting.

6.8 FGAC Meeting

FGAC members attend a briefing at the start of the two-day meeting. The briefing informs members as to the procedure for identifying and dealing with conflicts of interest, the meeting process, and the scoring criteria. This provides committee members with the information and guidance they need to be consistent in their approach and to follow process.

6.9 Time Allocated to the Discussion of Each Proposal

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

The discussion time allocated to each proposal is around 25 minutes:

- declaration of conflicts of interest - 2 minutes,
- CR1/CR2 comments - 10 minutes,
- general discussion of the proposal - 10 minutes,
- scoring - 2 minutes,
- note key points for Review Summary - 1 minute.

6.10 FGAC Criteria for Scoring

The policies and processes in the Peer Review Manual must be applied by FGAC. If, during the committee process, members need clarification or assistance with interpretation of the committee

guidelines, the matter is referred to the HRC Chief Executive or his/her nominated representative, who makes a decision.

In the FGAC meeting, research proposals (after triage) are evaluated in random order and scored on a 7-point scale for each of the following criteria.

6.10.1 Scoring Criteria: HW and IOACC

Applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using the following criteria for the two Research Investment Streams (HW and IOACC). These are listed below with full description in Appendix 1:

- Suitability of the Applicant
- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact

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

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

The objectives of this award include developing the health research workforce. Therefore, the emphasis in these applications is on the qualities of the applicant. Applicants are required to clearly demonstrate their suitability for the grant in the 'Suitability of Applicant' section of the Application Form. The Suitability of the Applicant score will be given a 40% weighting and the other three criteria will be worth 20% each for the HW and IOACC Research Investment Streams.

Criteria	Points	% score
Suitability of the Applicant	7	40
Rationale for Research	7	20
Design and Methods	7	20
Research Impact	7	20
Total Score	28	100

6.10.2 Scoring Criteria: NZHD

Applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using the scoring criteria for the New Zealand Health Delivery Research Investment Stream (NZHD). These are listed below with full description in Appendix 1:

- Suitability of the Applicant
- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact
- Research Uptake

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

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

New Zealand Health Delivery scoring, including the additional "Research Uptake" score, is weighted so that the Suitability of the Applicant is 35%, Research Uptake is 10%, Research Impact is 15% and the remaining criteria are 20% each.

Criteria	Points	% score
Suitability of the Applicant	7	35
Rationale for Research	7	20
Design and methods	7	20
Research Impact	7	15
Research Uptake	7	10
Total Score	28	100

6.10.3 Scoring Criteria: RHM

Applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using the criteria for the Rangahau Hauora Māori Research Investment Stream (RHM). These are listed with full description in Appendix 1:

- Suitability of the Applicant
- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact

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

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

The objectives of this award include developing the health research workforce. Therefore, the emphasis in these applications is on the qualities of the applicant. Applicants are required to clearly demonstrate their suitability for the grant in the 'Suitability of Applicant' section of the Application Form. The Suitability of the Applicant score will be given a 40% weighting and the other three criteria will be worth 20% each for the RHM Research Investment Stream.

Criteria	Points	% score
Suitability of the Applicant	7	40
Rationale for Research	7	20
Design and Methods	7	20
Research Impact	7	20
Total Score	28	100

6.10.4 Other Criteria

The Committee also takes into consideration:

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

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

6.10.5 Scoring

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

6.10.6 Re-Ranking Procedure

After all applications have been scored, the ranked applications are considered by the SAC for possible re-ranking of applications on a case-by-case basis to remedy perceived inconsistencies. Applications cannot have points added to the score for the purpose of strengthening the score without re-ranking the application. This procedure will allow any application in the ranked table to move up or down by one position at a time. The re-ranking procedure is managed carefully by the committee Chair(s) and the HRC Research Investment Manager to avoid re-litigation of any applications and to mitigate against any bias affecting the process.

- Any SAC member may bring forward an application for re-ranking.
- Conflicts of Interest are notified and managed in the appropriate manner.
- The application under consideration would have its scores modified, after appropriate discussion and agreement, by adding up to 0.5 points to one or two of the scoring criteria of choice to move the application up one place under consideration.
- The new ranking and new adjusted total scores would then be put forward for consideration at the next stage.
- Re-ranking of other applications can be done using an iterative process until a final ranked list is reached.
- Any changes are recorded in the meeting scoresheet and notes.

6.10.7 Fundable and Not Fundable Line

After scoring and re-ranking discussion, the applications are ranked according to total score.

The Committee, noting conflicts of interest, then:

- identifies the proposals assessed as not fundable (NF), by starting at the bottom of the ranked list and going up the list,
- identifies the proposals assessed as fundable (F).

The Fundable/Not Fundable line refers to the position in the ranked list of applications below which all applications are of insufficient quality that, irrespective of available budget, they should not be funded.

Note: Once the proposals have been scored and re-ranked following discussion by the committee, no scores are permitted to be further reviewed or adjusted at or after the conclusion of the meeting. Any concerns about the process are identified by the committee and are taken by the SAC Chair(s) to the Chair of the relevant Research Committee.

6.10.8 Funding Approval

The FGAC and RHAC results and recommendations are provided to the HRC Council for funding approval.

6.11 Feedback to Applicants

The CR1 writes a Review Summary of the FGAC discussion to provide the applicant with a brief, balanced, objective statement of the Committee's response to the research proposal (Appendix 6. Emerging Researcher First Grant Review Summary).

Review Summaries should be constructive and include:

- information that applicants would find useful and wish to know,
- issues considered important enough by the committee to influence the scoring of the proposal,
- other comments (e.g. budget, FTE, objectives, Māori responsiveness).

Review Summaries should not include:

- reference to scores,
- identity of reviewers or committee members.

The FGAC Chair is responsible for approving the content of all Review Summaries. Once Review Summaries have been approved, the HRC is responsible for ensuring they are forwarded to the host institution.

7 Feasibility Study Application Assessment Process

7.1 Introduction

Specific guidelines for Feasibility Study proposals are published on the HRC website. These contracts have very specific eligibility criteria; biomedical research proposals are not eligible. The HRC, after discussion with the Chair, will exclude ineligible applications, which will not be forwarded to the Feasibility Study Assessing Committee (FSAC).

7.2 Assessment Framework for Feasibility Study Applications

Feasibility Study proposals received by the HRC are assessed by FSAC*. FSAC members are chosen for their specific expertise in relation to the fields of research of the set of proposals to be assessed.

*Feasibility Study applications in the Rangahau Hauora Māori investment stream are assessed by the Rangahau Hauora Assessing Committee (RHAC). Pacific Health Feasibility Study proposals may be reviewed by the Pacific Health Research Committee for relevance to Pacific priorities and consideration of cultural appropriateness.

7.2.1 Definition of a Feasibility Study

Feasibility studies are intended to be projects where there is already strong evidence to justify a full study, and where the nature and structure of the study are already known, but where critical practical information is needed to make this potential full study feasible. For example, a Feasibility Study might be essential to allow a robust estimate of the potential effect size, the variation between groups, the sustainable recruitment rate, or the real-world incidence rate of the condition. It would also be appropriate to determine the outcome measures and selection of the most appropriate primary end point of planned future study.

The fund does not support small standalone studies, pilot studies or the general development of a research area. It is most often a mistake to apply for this fund to develop tools that will be needed for a study since it suggests that the main study is not yet close to viability; although testing the performance of proposed tools is certainly appropriate, provided the evaluation criteria are crystal-clear.

7.2.2 Review of Merit

FSAC members score proposals under four Research Investment Streams on the following four criteria: Rationale for Research; Design and Methods; Research Impact; and, Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team (or Team Capability: Research Outcomes and Research Uptake if in NZHD stream).

7.2.3 Assessment Overview

Applications are assessed in several steps, as outlined below. This process does not use external reviewers:

- assignment of proposals to FSAC members for general review,
- pre-scoring of the proposals by FSAC members,
- triage up to 33% of total proposals (optional, depending on number of applications);
- discussion and scoring of proposals by FSAC,
- FSAC results forwarded to the Grant Approval Committee (GAC) or directly to the HRC Council,
- the HRC Council makes final funding decisions.

7.3 HRC Feasibility Study Assessing Committee (FSAC)

FSAC consists of a Chair (or Co-Chairs) and 7-12 members. The Chair is usually a member (or designee) of one of the Statutory Research Committees (i.e. BRC, PHRC or MHC). FSAC members can represent a mix of New Zealand and Australian clinical and public health researchers and are

appointed for their research expertise and ability to effectively assess the applications received in that funding round.

7.3.1 FSAC Membership

FSAC members are experienced researchers, who have the appropriate expertise relative to the breadth/scope of the research proposals received.

FSAC Members are expected to have:

- postgraduate qualifications in a discipline relevant to health research,
- a track record as a health researcher and be a Named Investigator on a funded research proposal submitted to a relevant funding agency (e.g. HRC, Cancer Society), and/or
- a track record in policy analysis/advice in an agency/department relevant to health research (e.g. Ministry of Health), and/or
- expertise in assessing the impact of health research.

In some circumstances FSAC could have members whose expertise and experience is less than that described above, however, all members of FSAC must be able to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a Primary Committee Reviewer (CR). As such, postgraduate students would not generally be eligible.

7.4 Responsibilities of FSAC Members

7.4.1 General

Assessing Committee members are required to declare at the outset any potential conflicts of interest, specific to applications to be assessed by the committee, so that the impact of any such conflicts on the assessment process is managed appropriately (Section 2).

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

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

SAC members are required to keep all information about the assessment of research applications confidential, i.e. they may not discuss outside the HRC specific details about applicants, applications or outcomes. However, they are allowed to talk about their SAC experience to colleagues in developing proposals.

7.4.2 Committee Reviewer (CR) Roles

In addition to reading and being able to contribute to the discussion of all of the proposals reviewed by FSAC, each member of FSAC has CR responsibilities for approximately 2-4 proposals. The requirements of this role are outlined below.

The CR of an application is required to:

- present an overview of the proposed research to the committee, commenting on each of the score criteria,
- write the Review Summary which outlines the committee's discussion of the proposal.

Committee members also need to be able to contribute to the discussion of other proposals reviewed by FSAC.

7.5 FSAC Pre-scoring

Prior to the meeting, FSAC members will be required to provide preliminary scores for applications in each of the Research Investment Streams: HW, IOACC and NZHD. RHM applications will be

assessed by the RHAC. Please refer to the sections below for scoring criteria and Appendix 1 for further details. Approximately 33% of the lowest ranked applications will be triaged, i.e. will not progress to full discussion at the SAC meeting. However, when there is a marked scoring discrepancy for an application it may be taken through to the meeting for full discussion.

The remaining applications will be randomised for discussion at the SAC meeting.

7.6 FSAC Meeting

FSAC members are provided with a briefing at the start of the one to two-day meeting. The briefing informs members as to the procedure for identifying and dealing with conflicts of interest, the meeting process, and the criteria on which the research proposals are scored. This provides committee members with the information and guidance they need to be consistent in their approach and to follow process.

7.7 Time Allocated to the Discussion of Each Proposal

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

The discussion time allocated to each proposal is around 20 minutes:

- declaration of conflicts of interest - 2 minutes,
- Committee Reviewer comments - 5 minutes,
- general discussion of the proposal - 10 minutes,
- scoring - 2 minutes,
- note feedback to applicants - 1 minute.

7.8 FSAC Criteria for Scoring

The policy and processes as set in the Manual must be adhered to and applied by FSAC. If, during the committee process, members need clarification or assistance with interpretation of the committee guidelines, the matter is referred to the HRC Chief Executive or his/her nominated representative, who makes a decision.

In the FSAC meeting, research proposals (after triage) are evaluated in random order and scored on a 7-point scale for each of the following criteria.

7.8.1 Scoring Criteria: HW and IOACC

Applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using the following equally weighted criteria for the two Research Investment Streams (HW and IOACC). These are listed below with full description in Appendix 1:

- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact
- Expertise and Track Record of Research Team.

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

Score	Criteria Descriptor
7	Exceptional
6	Excellent
5	Very good
4	Good

3	Adequate
2	Unsatisfactory
1	Poor

The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale of equal weighting, as listed in the table, so that the total maximum score is 28:

Criteria	Points	% score
Rationale for Research	7	25
Design and Methods	7	25
Research Impact	7	25
Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team	7	25
Total	28	100

7.8.2 Scoring Criteria: NZHD

Applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using the scoring criteria for the New Zealand Health Delivery Research Investment Stream (NZHD). These are listed below with full description in Appendix 1:

- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact
- Team Capability: Research Outcomes
- Team Capability: Research Uptake

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

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

The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale of unequal weighting, as listed in the table, so that the total maximum score is 28:

Criteria	Points	% score
Rationale for research	7	25
Design and methods	7	25
Research Impact	7	20
Team capability - outcomes	7	20
Team capability - uptake	7	10
Total	28	100

7.8.3 Scoring Criteria: RHM

Applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using the following equally weighted criteria for this Research Investment Stream. These are listed below with full description in Appendix 1:

- Rationale for Research
- Design and Methods
- Research Impact
- Expertise and Track Record of Research Team.

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

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

The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale of equal weighting, as listed in the table, so that the total maximum score is 28:

Criteria	Points	% score
Rationale for Research	7	25
Design and Methods	7	25
Research Impact	7	25
Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team	7	25
Total	28	100

7.8.4 Other Criteria

The committee also takes into consideration and discusses:

- the appropriateness of the timeline for the proposed research and likelihood of meeting objectives within the budget (for the proposed feasibility, as well as the planned full study),
- the appropriateness of the requested %FTE involvement of the applicant and other investigators, and
- responsiveness to Māori.

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

7.8.5 Scoring

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

7.8.6 Re-Ranking Procedure

After all applications have been scored, the ranked applications are considered by the SAC for possible re-ranking of applications on a case-by-case basis to remedy perceived inconsistencies. Applications cannot have points added to the score for the purpose of strengthening the score without re-ranking the application. This procedure will allow any application in the ranked table to move up or down by one position at a time. The re-ranking procedure is managed carefully by the committee Chair(s) and the HRC Research Investment Manager to avoid re-litigation of any applications and to mitigate against any bias affecting the process.

- Any SAC member may bring forward an application for re-ranking.
- Conflicts of Interest are notified and managed in the appropriate manner.
- The application under consideration would have its scores modified, after appropriate

discussion and agreement, by adding up to 0.5 points to one or two of the scoring criteria of choice to move the application up one place under consideration.
- The new ranking and new adjusted total scores would then be put forward for consideration at the next stage.
- Re-ranking of other applications can be done using an iterative process until a final ranked list is reached.
- Any changes are recorded in the meeting scoresheet and notes.

7.8.7 Fundable and Not Fundable Line

After scoring and re-ranking discussion, the applications are ranked according to total score.

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

The Fundable/Not Fundable line refers to the position in the ranked list of applications below which all applications are of insufficient quality that, irrespective of available budget, they should not be funded.

Note: Once the proposals have been scored and re-ranked following discussion by the committee, no scores are permitted to be further reviewed or adjusted at or after the conclusion of the meeting. Any concerns about the process are identified by the committee and are taken by the SAC Chair(s) to the Chair of the relevant Research Committee.

7.8.8 Funding Approval

The FGAC and RHAC results and recommendations are provided to the HRC Council for funding approval.

7.9 Feedback to Applicants

The Committee Reviewer writes a brief Review Summary of the FSAC discussion for each of their assigned proposals. The intent of the Review Summary is to provide the applicant with a brief, balanced and objective statement of the committee's response to the research proposal (Appendix 8. FSAC Review Summary).

Review Summaries should be constructive and include:
- information that applicants would find useful and wish to know,
- issues considered important enough by FSAC to influence the scoring of the proposal,
- other comments (e.g. budget, FTE, objectives).

Review Summaries should not include:
- reference to scores,
- identity of reviewers or committee members.

The FSAC Chair(s) is responsible for approving the content of all Review Summaries. Once Review Summaries have been approved, the HRC is responsible for ensuring they are forwarded to the host institution.

Triaged applications not discussed at the meeting will not receive written Review Summaries.

8 Explorer Grant Application Assessment Process

8.1 Introduction

Specific guidelines for Explorer Grant proposals are published on the HRC website before the Explorer Grant opens. Applicants should carefully note the eligibility and assessment criteria for this grant. The HRC will apply the eligibility criteria and exclude ineligible applications from the process. The selection of successful proposals will not be the same as that for other HRC contracts; a full description of the assessment process to determine eligibility, compatibility and which applications will receive funding can be found in Sections 8.2-8.4.

8.2 Assessment Framework for Explorer Grant Applications

Explorer Grant proposals received by the HRC are assessed using a three-step assessment process to determine eligibility, compatibility and funding selection. All proposals that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed by the Explorer Grant Assessing Committee (EGAC) for compatibility with the scheme's intent; proposals will not be scored or ranked. For this part of the process, investigator details are withheld from EGAC. All proposals that are considered eligible and compatible will be considered equally eligible to receive funding, and a random process will be used to select the proposals to be offered funding.

8.2.1 Definition of an Explorer Grant

Explorer grants support transformative research ideas that have a good chance of making a revolutionary change to how we manage New Zealanders' health. They are available in any health research discipline and are worth $150,000 for a term of up to 24 months.

8.2.2 Assessment Overview

Applications are assessed in several steps, as outlined below. The process does not use external reviewers:

- eligibility is reviewed by the HRC Manager and the Assessing Committee Chair,
- eligible proposals assigned to EGAC members as appropriate,
- EGAC members to confirm (not score) for each assigned proposal whether the Compatibility criteria are met,
- Decline as not fundable proposals where there is unanimous agreement that the Transformative criterion is not met,
- meeting discussion and assessment of any proposal for which there is a majority agreement that the Transformative criterion is met and any other proposals nominated ('rescued') by the EGAC members,
- at meeting conclusion, all remaining proposals for which there is a majority agreement that the Transformative and Viability criteria are met are added to the pool of potentially fundable proposals,
- all potentially fundable (i.e. eligible and compatible) proposals are randomly ordered, with funding recommended to the first ordered proposals up to the limit of the available budget,
- EGAC results forwarded to the Council for funding approval.

8.3 HRC Explorer Grant Assessing Committee (EGAC)

EGAC consists of a Chair and approximately 12 members (this number allows for applications to be assigned to subpanels of approximately 3 members and not all committee members). The Chair is usually a member (or designee) of one of the Statutory Research Committees (i.e. BRC, PHRC or MHC). EGAC members represent a mix of New Zealand and Australian biomedical, clinical, public health, social science and interdisciplinary researchers and are appointed for their research expertise and ability to effectively assess the applications received in that funding round.

EGAC Members are expected to have:

- postgraduate qualifications in a discipline relevant to health research,

- a track record as a health researcher and be a Named Investigator on a funded research proposal or Career Development Grant submitted to a relevant funding agency (e.g. HRC, Cancer Society),
- a track record in policy analysis/advice in an agency/department relevant to health research (e.g. Ministry of Health).

EGAC members are required to declare at the outset any potential conflicts of interest, specific to applications to be assessed by the committee, so that the impact of any such conflicts on the assessment process is managed appropriately (see Integrity of Peer Review). However, as the assessment process is anonymous, the number of conflicts of interest is expected to be minimal. Furthermore, committee members are not able to sit on EGAC if they are a NI on an Explorer Grant application.

EGAC members are required to keep all information about the assessment of research applications confidential, i.e. they may not discuss outside the HRC specific details about applicants, assessors, applications or outcomes. However, they are allowed to talk about their SAC experience to colleagues in developing proposals.

8.4 Criteria for Assessing Explorer Grants

The process used to assess Explorer Grant applications follows three steps and is quite different from other assessment processes.

8.4.1 A proposal's eligibility to be considered for funding is confirmed.

The following criteria **must** be met to be eligible for assessment:

- The proposal must identify which Research Investment Stream it is addressing, but does not need to provide a detailed explanation. This is to ensure that proposals remain within the scope of what HRC currently considers to be the important areas for investment. Fit to the HRC's Investment Streams may be reviewed; proposals outside the scope will be excluded, with the decision of the Assessing Committee Chair considered to be final.
- The proposal must have host institution support. The submission of the application by the host will be taken as agreement to cover research costs other than those supported by the HRC.
- The application conforms to the prescribed format.

Eligibility will be reviewed by the HRC Research Investment Manager, and the Assessing Committee Chair, in advance of assessment by the full committee. Ineligible proposals will not proceed to the next step.

8.4.2 Compatibility of the proposal with the scheme's intent is confirmed by the assessing committee.

The purpose of this step is to eliminate any proposals that do not meet the scheme's intent, not to determine a score or a rank order of proposals. A panel of assessors will be appointed by the HRC Manager. All eligible proposals will be assigned to a subpanel of 3 assessors (and a reviewer with cultural expertise if appropriate), who will be asked to confirm (not score) for each proposal that the two criteria listed below are met:

- The research is potentially transformative

The subpanel must decide by majority that a proposal is potentially transformative.

> There is no universally accepted definition of transformative research. The assessing panel will apply the core elements of the USA National Science Board definition of transformative

research[1], alongside additional information for clarity, captured in the following bullet point descriptors of transformative research:

- has the potential to radically change our knowledge base by disrupting understanding of existing theories or concepts, OR has the potential to create a new paradigm or pathway to a new field2;
- is not restricted by discipline, and can include any health-related research in the clinical, kaupapa Māori, basic, behavioural, social, public-health and translational sciences;
- may be challenging to accept;
- encompasses novel hypotheses, methods, tools, technologies, and/or conceptual frameworks;
- embraces a flexible and exploratory approach to a question3, and may be interdisciplinary;
- is likely to be untested and lacking supporting data; and
- is not incremental - a next step or extension to current research.

The subpanel is encouraged to focus on strengths and potential of an application. An impact on knowledge is valid, and the research results may need not be immediately applicable in terms of a health outcome. Applications assessed as being potentially transformative would be considered to have potential for impact on the health, social and/or economic goals of the Research Investment Stream.

- The proposal is exploratory but viable

The subpanel must decide by majority that the proposal is viable. The assessing panel will be asked to confirm that the idea and methodology are potentially viable, the research environment is appropriate and that sufficient progress can be made within the term of the grant.

Each assessor will return their judgement about the two criteria for each assigned research proposal, along with a supporting statement to justify how the transformative criterion is, or is not, met. Those proposals for which there is unanimous agreement that the transformative criterion is met and majority agreement the viability criterion is met will enter the pool of potentially fundable proposals. The panel of assessors will have the opportunity to discuss those proposals for which there are discrepancies of opinion about the two criteria at a subpanel meeting. After discussion, these proposals will be re-evaluated by each assigned assessor, and those proposals for which there is a majority agreement that both the transformative and viability criteria are met will be added to the pool of potentially fundable proposals.

8.4.3 Random selection of proposals to receive funding.

All proposals that have been judged compatible with the scheme's intent are equally likely to receive funding. These proposals will be randomly ordered, with funding offered to the first ordered proposals up to the limit of the available budget. The funding recommendations will be presented to the HRC Council for approval.

[1] *a range of endeavors which promise extraordinary outcomes, such as: revolutionizing entire disciplines; creating entirely new fields; or disrupting accepted theories and perspectives – in other words, those endeavors which have the potential to change the way we address challenges in science, engineering, and innovation*

[2] https://www.nsf.gov/nsb/documents/2007/tr_report.pdf

[3] https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR506.html

9 Grant Approval Committee

9.1 Introduction

This section is not comprehensive but provides an overview for applicants and reviewers.

The Grant Approval Committee (GAC) membership includes the Chairs (or designees) of the Research Committees (BRC, PHRC, MHC, Pacific RC) and HRC Chief Executive. It is chaired by an independent person appointed by the Council.

GAC makes the final funding recommendations for HRC Council approval. GAC takes into account scores, advice from the respective Research Committees, budgetary information, Research Investment Streams and contract types.

9.2 Information Prepared for GAC

Prior to the GAC meeting, after all other processes have been completed, the HRC Manager collates the scores and confirms the budget available for allocation. A set of papers is prepared for the Committee for prior distribution or for tabling at the meeting.

9.2.1 General

The Terms of Reference for GAC give details regarding its membership and role.

9.2.2 Budget Information

The budget available for distribution is based on the HRC Statement of Intent, the most recent government allocation and HRC financial situation as advised by the Chief Financial Officer. The budget table will indicate available funding, split across contract types and spread between the Research Investment Streams.

9.2.3 Applications Booklet

A copy of Module 1 and Module 2A of each eligible application that is to be considered by GAC is provided at the meeting. This contains administrative information, lay summary and 1-page summary of the research. The applications are collated in booklet form with a Table of Contents. The final list cannot be produced until the completion of the Science Assessing Committee stage.

9.2.4 Collated Table of Ranked Applications

Within each RIS and for each contract type, applications, ranked by score, will be tabulated with relevant budget information.

The set of tables will include:

- Feasibility Study applications (unless approved prior by the Council),
- Emerging Researcher First Grant applications (unless approved prior by the Council),
- Explorer Grant applications (unless approved prior by the Council),
- Project applications for each investment stream,
- Programme applications for each investment stream.

9.3 GAC Process

The members of GAC decide on the final list of applications to recommend to the Council for funding. To this end, the success rates within each RIS, the indicative budgets (when applicable), the success rates between biomedical and public health, and the balance between Projects and Programmes are considered.

10 Council

10.1 Introduction

This section is not comprehensive but provides an overview for applicants and reviewers.

The Council makes final funding decisions. The Council is provided with updates throughout the funding round. Papers may be tabled at the Council meeting where the funding recommendations forwarded by Grant Approval Committee (GAC) are reviewed and presented for approval .

10.2 Papers prepared for the Council

Prior to the meeting, after the GAC meeting, the HRC Manager collates the scores and confirms the budget available for allocation. A set of papers is prepared for tabling at the meeting.

10.2.1 GAC Review

The Chair of GAC attends the Council meeting to provide an overview of the GAC meeting and its processes.

10.2.2 Budget Information

The Chief Financial Officer prepares and tables a paper detailing the budget for allocation and the financial position with respect to present and future commitments. The budget information must show the affordability of the Funding Round recommendations.

10.2.3 Applications Booklet

A copy of Module 1 and Module 2A of each eligible application is provided to the Council and sent with the agenda prior to the meeting. This contains administrative information, lay summary and 1-page summary of the research. The applications are collated into booklet form with a Table of Contents. The booklet is the same as that prepared for GAC.

10.2.4 Tables of Applications

A full set of applications showing outcomes or recommendations for each contract type, the fit within each Research Investment Stream, and individual and cumulative budgets is provided. A reserve list is also provided for future contingency, should additional funds become available.

10.2.5 Paper Requesting Approval to Fund Recommended Applications

This document lists applications within each category and within each Research Investment Stream. Budgets and accumulated budgets are tabulated so that it is clear how many approvals can be made.

10.2.6 Other Information

The Council may from time to time require additional information about the application and assessment processes and/or individual applications in order for them to make informed decisions.

10.3 Council Approval

The Council considers the requested approvals, and taking into account potential conflicts of interest, may approve the recommendations, or may modify decisions on how many approvals to make based on the budgets and the balance across the Research Investment Streams.

11 Contact Details

Health Research Council of New Zealand
PO Box 5541, Wellesley Street
Auckland 1141
Level 3, 110 Stanley Street, Grafton
Auckland 1010
Telephone: +64 9 303 5200

Email: info@hrc.govt.nz
Websites: www.hrc.govt.nz
https://gateway.hrc.govt.nz

Contact Us
If you have any questions about the HRC or would like to know more about our funding processes, contact details are found here: http://www.hrc.govt.nz/contact-us

12 Version Information

This section provides a document status only.

Title	**Peer Review Manual 2019**
Version/Issue Date/Status	**July 2019**
Supersedes Version/Issued on	**Peer Review Manual 2018/July 2018**
Description of changes	Minor changes, Management of Interest Policy removed, repetitive instructions combined, scoring details in Appendix 1. Research Impact scoring for IOACC/HW in PRJ & PRG changed. MHA scoring for PRG added.
Prepared by	**Director Research Investment & Contracts**
Approved by	**Chief Executive**
File name	**Peer Review Manual 2019.doc; Peer Review Manual 2019.pdf**

Appendix 1. Scoring Criteria and Anchor Point Descriptors

Introduction

The HRC criteria for assessing and scoring research proposals were extensively changed in 2011 from those previously used. The current criteria for assessment of proposals incorporate the previous ones, whilst ensuring that research funded constructively addresses the Research Investment Stream goals.

The 7-point scale with descriptors was introduced in the 2011 funding round to provide assistance on how to score according to the criteria rather than other considerations such as budget allocation.

For the 2019 funding round, the requirements for the Research Impact section of Project applications and how it is scored was changed for two investment streams – HW and IOACC. For the 2020 funding round, this change has now been rolled out across all investment streams and grant types. The change for Research Impact requires applicants to address a much wider definition of research impact.

For the 2020 funding round, an additional scoring criterion has been added for Programme assessment, Māori Health Advancement (MHA). This scoring criterion will be part of assessment for other grant types in future rounds.

Māori Health Advancement Criterion

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

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

All applicants for HRC funding will be required to address these two questions in their proposals. In responding to these questions, applicants should consider how their research is informed by the four domains of Māori health advancement (see the Māori Health Advancement Guidelines for more details). Researchers are encouraged to consider the domains during development of their research, as this may identify aspects of the research not previously considered. It is not a requirement that all four domains are specifically addressed in the proposal, but researchers are advised to consider each in formulating the strongest rationale for the application. **Consideration of Māori health advancement is context-specific, as determined by the nature and scope of the research**.

Alignment of the response to the Māori Health Advancement criterion and other assessment criteria will strengthen an application.

1. **How will the outcomes of your research contribute to Māori health advancement?**
Provide a realistic description of how this research could contribute to improved Māori health outcomes or reductions in inequity over time. Consideration should be given to potential short-term and/or longer-term Māori health gains, within the specific context of the research and where it is positioned along the research pathway (cf. potential 'line of sight' or 'pathway' to impact in the Research Impact section). In addition, more immediate users and beneficiaries of the research who can utilize the research findings for Māori health gain should be identified.

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?**

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 the research is not expected to make direct contributions to Māori health, identify actions that will be undertaken throughout the life of the project to contribute to other facets of Māori health advancement. Identify barriers to actioning your aspirations for advancing Māori health, and your mitigation strategies (where relevant). Identify elements of the team's track record that provide confidence that this research will optimally contribute to Māori health advancement. For example: existing links, relationships, or networks with relevant Māori communities and next-users or end-users of research; demonstrable examples of knowledge translation and uptake; or changes to practice or policy that have enhanced equity and advanced Māori health. This component is considered relative to opportunity (i.e. stage of career progression, nature of research, and institutional capacity and capability).

Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Research Project Proposals in HW and IOACC by SAC

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

Note:

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

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

Criteria	Points	% score
Rationale for Research	7	25
Design and Methods	7	25
Research Impact	7	25
Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team	7	25
Global (EOI only; not in Total)	7	0
Total	28	100

A. Rationale for Research

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

- It addresses a significant health issue that is important for health/society,
- The aims, research questions and hypotheses build on existing knowledge and address a knowledge gap,
- The research findings should be original and innovative,
- There is appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

B. Design and Methods

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

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

C. Research Impact

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

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

D. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

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

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

E. Global Score (Project EOI only)

In assessing EOI, the SAC will also award a global score, on a 7-point scale, that reflects:

- overall impression, and
- other factors not otherwise scored. For example, the risk:benefit profile in the context of the state of knowledge in the area.

The Global Score is not part of the Total Score used for ranking applications, unless applications have the same Total Score, in which case the Global Score will be used to rank those applications. The Global Score is awarded.

Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Research Project Proposals in RHM by SAC

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

Note:

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

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

Criteria	Points	% score
Rationale for Research	7	25
Design and Methods	7	25
Research Impact	7	25
Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team	7	25
Global (EOI only; not in Total)	7	0
Total	28	100

A. Rationale for Research

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

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

B. Design and Methods

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

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

C. Research Impact

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

- Applicants have described a credible pathway for how their research will:
  - result in benefits or opportunities for future research in NZ, or
  - influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in NZ, leading to improved health or other social/economic impacts.
- The research team are undertaking steps to maximise the likelihood of impact by: contributing to the creation of Māori health knowledge (Goal 1); contributing to the translation of findings into Māori health gains (Goal 2); incorporating Māori health research processes (Goal 3); incorporating Māori ethics processes (Goal 4); contributing to building a highly skilled Māori health research workforce (Goal 5); and, responding to the needs of, and working in partnership with, Māori stakeholders and communities (Goal 6).

D. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

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

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

E. Global Score (Project EOI only)

In assessing EOI, the SAC will also award a global score, on a 7-point scale, that reflects:

- overall impression,
- other factors not otherwise scored. For example, the risk:benefit profile in the context of the state of knowledge in the area.

The Global Score is not part of the Total Score used for ranking applications, unless applications have the same Total Score, in which case the Global Score will be used to rank those applications. The Global Score is awarded.

Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Research Programme Proposals in HW and IOACC by SAC

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

Note:

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

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

Criteria	Points	% score
Rationale for Research	7	22.5
Design and Methods	7	22.5
Research Impact	7	22.5
Māori Health Advancement	7	10
Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team	7	22.5
Cohesiveness of Research Programme (not in Total)	7	0
Total	28	100

A. Rationale for Research

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

- It addresses a significant health issue that is important for health/society,
- The aims, research questions and hypotheses build on existing knowledge and address a knowledge gap,
- The research findings should be original and innovative,
- There is appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

B. Design and Methods

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

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

C. Research Impact

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

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

D. Māori Health Advancement

The proposed research is likely to advance Māori health because:

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

E. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

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

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

F. Cohesiveness of Research Programme

Programme support is justified because:

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

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

Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Research Programme Proposals in RHM by SAC

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

Note:

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

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

Criteria	Points	% score
Rationale for Research	7	22.5
Design and Methods	7	22.5
Research Impact	7	22.5
Māori Health Advancement	7	10
Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team	7	22.5
Cohesiveness of Research Programme (not in Total)	7	0
Total	28	100

A. Rationale for Research

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

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

B. Design and Methods

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

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

C. Research Impact

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

- Applicants have described a credible pathway for how their research will:
    - result in benefits or opportunities for future research in NZ, or
    - influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in NZ, leading to improved health or other social/economic impacts.
- The research team are undertaking steps to maximise the likelihood of impact by: contributing to the creation of Māori health knowledge (Goal 1); contributing to the translation of findings into Māori health gains (Goal 2); incorporating Māori health research processes (Goal 3); incorporating Māori ethics processes (Goal 4); contributing to building a highly skilled Māori health research workforce (Goal 5); and, responding to the needs of, and working in partnership with, Māori stakeholders and communities (Goal 6).

D. Māori Health Advancement

The proposed research is likely to advance Māori health because:

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

E. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

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

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

F. Cohesiveness of Research Programme

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

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

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

Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Research Proposals Submitted to the Programme Assessing Committee

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

Note:

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

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

Criteria for SAC	Points	% score
Rationale for Research	7	22.5
Design and Methods	7	22.5
Research Impact	7	22.5
Māori Health Advancement	7	10
Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team	7	22.5
Cohesiveness of Research Programme	7	0
Total	28	100

Applications are assessed initially by a discipline-based SAC for 6 scoring criteria (Rationale for research, Design and Methods, Research Impact, Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team, Māori Health Advancement, Cohesiveness of Research Programme). Four criteria are weighted at 22.5% of maximum score, Māori Health Advancement is weighted at 10%. The Cohesiveness of Research Programme score provides an opinion to PAC but is not included in the total score for ranking by the SAC. The maximum score awardable at the SAC stage is 28.

Subsequently, PAC assessment scores against 5 criteria (A, B, C, D, E) detailed below. The maximum total score awardable by PAC is 28 so that the aggregate maximum score is 56.

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

Criteria for PAC	Points	% score
Overall quality of health research	7	22.5
Potential for outcomes	7	22.5
Vision of programme	7	22.5
Māori Health Advancement	7	10
Research team collaboration & integration	7	22.5
Total	28	100

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

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

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

A. Overall quality of health research

The proposed research demonstrates quality through:

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

B. Potential for Outcomes

The proposed research has potential for the realisation of:

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

C. Vision of Programme

The application indicates:

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

D. Māori Health Advancement

The proposed research is likely to advance Māori health because:

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

E. Research Team Collaboration and Integration

The research team:

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

Applicant Presentation and Interview

The applicants' one hour presentation and interview allow the PAC to gain a better understanding of why the research proposal and team should be funded as a Programme.

The presentation is expected to:

- provide a high-level review of the Programme, its strategic nature, research impact, rationale, focus, synergism and collaborative nature,
- give an overview of each objective/project,
- show how the objectives/projects contribute to, and form part of the overall Programme,
- address the assessment criteria used by PAC to score and rank applications,
- provide information on technical details and the research design, sufficient to understand the proposal,
- discuss the track record of the team's collaboration and organisation together
- note how the team has addressed Māori health advancements,
- note future strategic directions for the Programme over the 5 years,
- be appropriate to the multidisciplinary membership of PAC (clinical, biomedical, public health, Māori health),
- ensure that the Programme content does not depart significantly from the proposal assessed by the SAC.

The PAC discussion with the applicants may:

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

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

Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Emerging Researcher First Grant Applications in HW/IOACC/NZHD

Each research proposal is scored on:

A. Suitability of the Applicant,
B. Rationale for Research,
C. Design and Methods,
D Research Impact,
E. Research Uptake (NZHD applications only).

The 7-point word ladder assists scoring according to the descriptors rather than other considerations such as success rates of application.

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

Note: Reviewers should allocate **whole numbers** only. Where the information required to assess an application on one or more of the above criteria is inadequate, that part of the research proposal should receive the lowest possible score of 1.

A. Suitability of the Applicant

The applicant assessment, relative to opportunity, includes:

- Evidence of the applicant's commitment to establish an independent research career,
- The extent to which the research proposal represents an independent research stream,
- The applicant's ability to take overall responsibility for the work to be completed,
- The applicant's plan for developing an independent research programme, stemming from the research proposal,
- The quality of the applicant's track record, based not only on quantity of publications but on the applicant's PhD, prizes and scholarships, and other academic achievements. Track record is assessed **relative to opportunity,**
- The nature and level of support provided by the applicant's mentors and colleagues.

B. Rationale for Research

The research is important, worthwhile and justifiable because it addresses some or all of:

- It addresses a significant health issue that is important for health/society,
- The aims, research questions and hypotheses build on existing knowledge and address a knowledge gap,
- The research findings should be original and innovative
- There is appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

C. Design and Methods

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

- comprehensive and feasible study design that is achievable within the timeframe,
- appropriate study design to address the objectives of the research,
- awareness of statistical considerations/technical or population issues/practicalities,
- evidence of availability of materials/samples,
- culturally appropriate methodology and responsiveness to Māori (if applicable),
- patient safety issues well managed.

D. Research Impact

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

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

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

E. Track Record: Research Uptake (NZHD)

In the NZHD Research Investment Stream, the research is expected to contribute to a primary outcome of improved health service delivery over the short to medium term.

The applicant or team should have:

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

Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Emerging Researcher First Grant Applications in RHM

Each research proposal should be scored on:

A. Suitability of the Applicant,
B. Rationale for Research,
C. Design and Methods,
D. Research Impact.

The 7-point word ladder assists scoring according to the descriptors rather than other considerations such as success rates of applications.

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

Note: Reviewers should allocate **whole numbers** only. Where the information required to assess an application on one or more of the above criteria is inadequate, that part of the research proposal should receive the lowest possible score of 1.

A. Suitability of the Applicant

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

- Evidence of the applicant's commitment to establish an independent research career,
- The extent to which the research proposal represents an independent research stream,
- The applicant's ability to take overall responsibility for the work to be completed,
- The applicant's plan for developing an independent research programme, stemming from the research proposal,
- The quality of the applicant's track record, based not only on quantity of publications but on the applicant's PhD, prizes and scholarships, and other academic achievements. Track record is assessed **relative to opportunity,**
- The nature and level of support provided by the applicant's mentors and colleagues.

B. Rationale for Research

The research is important, worthwhile and justifiable because it addresses some or all of:

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

C. Design and Methods

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

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

D. Research Impact

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

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

- Applicants have described a credible pathway for how their research will:
    - result in benefits or opportunities for future research in NZ, or
    - influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in NZ, leading to improved health or other social/economic impacts.
- The research team are undertaking steps to maximise the likelihood of impact by: contributing to the creation of Māori health knowledge (Goal 1); contributing to the translation of findings into Māori health gains (Goal 2); incorporating Māori health research processes (Goal 3); incorporating Māori ethics processes (Goal 4); contributing to building a highly skilled Māori health research workforce (Goal 5); and, responding to the needs of, and working in partnership with, Māori stakeholders and communities (Goal 6).

Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Feasibility Study Applications in HW/IOACC

Each research proposal is scored on:
A. Rationale for Research,
B. Design and Methods,
C. Research Impact,
D. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team.

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

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

Note: Committee members may allocate **whole numbers** only. Where the information required to assess an application on one or more of the above criteria is inadequate, that part of the research proposal should receive the lowest possible score of 1.

A. Rationale for Research

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

- It addresses a significant health issue that is important for health/society,
- The aims, research questions and hypotheses build on existing knowledge and address a knowledge gap,
- The research findings should be original and innovative,
- There is appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

The full study should be fully-described. A strong justification should be provided for undertaking the feasibility study – the feasibility issues affecting the full study should be clearly identified and well-justified. The committee should be confident that critical practical information can be obtained to determine whether it is feasible to undertake the full study.

B. Design and Methods

The feasibility study has been well designed (and described) to answer the feasibility issues and the research questions respectively, because it demonstrates some or all the following:

- comprehensive and feasible study design that is achievable within the timeframe,
- appropriate study design to address the objectives of the research,
- awareness of statistical considerations/technical or population issues/practicalities,
- evidence of availability of materials/samples,
- culturally appropriate methodology and responsiveness to Māori (if applicable),
- sound data management and data monitoring arrangements,
- patient safety issues well managed,
- that the full study is suitably close to viability – there should be strong evidence to justify a full research project, and the nature and structure of the research project should be already known.

C. Research Impact

In addressing research impact for feasibility studies, applicants should focus on describing the potential benefits arising from the proposed full study and the likely pathway to impact. Consideration can also be given to any additional benefits associated with the feasibility study as appropriate (beyond addressing the identified feasibility issues and informing the full study).

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

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

D. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

It is important that the team includes those with the necessary skills to address the specific feasibility aspects to be tested. Consideration of those who might be needed for the full study should also be given at this stage as they may well highlight issues that should be addressed at the feasibility stage.

The team (for both the feasibility study and the proposed full study) have the ability to achieve the proposed outcomes and impacts because they have demonstrated:

- appropriate qualifications and experience,
- right mix of expertise, experience and FTEs,
- capability to perform research in current research environment,
- networks/collaborations,
- history of productivity and delivery on previous research funding,
- there is appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

The team criterion is assessed with relative to opportunity and with consideration to career breaks.

Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Feasibility Study Applications in NZHD

Each research proposal is scored on:
A. Rationale for Research,
B. Design and Methods,
C. Research Impact,
D. Team Capability: Research Outcomes
E. Team Capability: Research Uptake.

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

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

Note: Reviewers may allocate **whole numbers** only. Where the information required to assess an application on one or more of the above criteria is inadequate, that part of the research proposal should receive the lowest possible score of 1.

A. Rationale for Research

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

- it addresses a significant health issue that is important for health/society,
- the aims, research questions and hypotheses build on existing knowledge and address a knowledge gap,
- the research findings should be original and innovative,
- there is appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

The full study should be fully-described. A strong justification should be provided for undertaking the feasibility study – the feasibility issues affecting the full study should be clearly identified and well-justified. The committee should be confident that critical practical information can be obtained to determine whether it is feasible to undertake the full study.

B. Design and Methods

The feasibility study has been well designed (and described) to answer the feasibility issues and the research questions respectively, because it demonstrates some or all the following:

- comprehensive and feasible study design that is achievable within the timeframe,
- appropriate study design to address the objectives of the research,
- awareness of statistical considerations/technical or population issues/practicalities,
- evidence of availability of materials/samples,
- culturally appropriate methodology and responsiveness to Māori (if applicable),
- sound data management and data monitoring arrangements,
- patient safety issues well managed, that the full study is suitably close to viability – there should be strong evidence to justify a full research project, and the nature and structure of the research project should be already known.

C. Research Impact

In addressing research impact for feasibility studies, applicants should focus on describing the potential benefits arising from the proposed full study and the likely pathway to impact. Consideration can also be given to any additional benefits associated with the feasibility study as appropriate (beyond addressing the identified feasibility issues and informing the full study).

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

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

D. Team Capability: Research Outcomes

It is important that the team includes those with the necessary skills to address the specific feasibility aspects to be tested. Consideration of those who might be needed for the full study should also be given at this stage as they may well highlight issues that should be addressed at the feasibility stage.

The team (for both the feasibility study and the proposed full study) have the ability to achieve the proposed outcomes and impacts because they have demonstrated:

- appropriate qualifications and experience,
- right mix of expertise, experience and FTEs,
- capability to perform research in current research environment,
- networks/collaborations,
- history of productivity and delivery on previous research funding,
- there is appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

This criterion is assessed with relative to opportunity and with consideration to career breaks.

E. Team Capability: Research Uptake

The team (for both the feasibility study and the proposed full study) have the ability to achieve the proposed research uptake because they have demonstrated:

- meaningful engagement of end-users throughout the research process,
- dissemination plan that has been tailored towards specific end-users,
- networks to maximise knowledge transfer and research uptake,
- appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

Fostering meaningful engagement and partnership between researchers and end-users is critical.

Scoring is considered as per the anchor point descriptors and the relevant Investment Signal.
The criteria are scored using a 7-point scale of unequal weighting, as listed in the table, so that the total maximum score is 28:

Criteria	Points	% score
Rationale for research	7	25
Design and methods	7	25
Impact on NZ health delivery	7	20
Team capability - outcomes	7	20
Team capability - uptake	7	10
Total	28	100

Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Feasibility Study Applications in RHM

Each research proposal should be scored on:
A. Rationale for Research,
B. Design and Methods,
C. Research Impact,
D. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team.

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

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

Note: Reviewers may allocate **whole numbers** only. Where the information required to assess an application on one or more of the above criteria is inadequate, that part of the research proposal should receive the lowest possible score of 1.

A. Rationale for Research

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

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

The full study should be fully-described. A strong justification should be provided for undertaking the feasibility study – the feasibility issues affecting the full study should be clearly identified and well-justified. The committee should be confident that critical practical information can be obtained to determine whether it is feasible to undertake the full study.

B. Design and Methods

The feasibility study has been well designed (and described) to answer the feasibility issues and the research questions respectively, because it demonstrates some or all the following:

- comprehensive and feasible study design that is achievable within the timeframe,
- appropriate study design to address the objectives of the research,
- awareness of statistical considerations/technical or population issues/practicalities,
- evidence of availability of materials/samples,
- incorporates culturally appropriate methods for data handling and involvement of Māori participants
- sound data management and data monitoring arrangements,
- patient safety issues well managed,
- that the full study is suitably close to viability – there should be strong evidence to justify a full research project, and the nature and structure of the research project should be already known.

C. Research Impact

In addressing research impact for feasibility studies, applicants should focus on describing the potential benefits arising from the proposed full study and the likely pathway to impact. Consideration can also be given to any additional benefits associated with the feasibility study as appropriate (beyond addressing the identified feasibility issues and informing the full study).

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

- Applicants have described a credible pathway for how their research will:
    - result in benefits or opportunities for future research in NZ, or
    - influence policy, practice, or health services or technologies in NZ, leading to improved health or other social/economic impacts.
- The research team are undertaking steps to maximise the likelihood of impact by: contributing to the creation of Māori health knowledge (Goal 1); contributing to the translation of findings into Māori health gains (Goal 2); incorporating Māori health research processes (Goal 3); incorporating Māori ethics processes (Goal 4); contributing to building a highly skilled Māori health research workforce (Goal 5); and, responding to the needs of, and working in partnership with, Māori stakeholders and communities (Goal 6).

D. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

It is important that the team includes those with the necessary skills to address the specific feasibility aspects to be tested. Consideration of those who might be needed for the full study should also be given at this stage as they may well highlight issues that should be addressed at the feasibility stage.

The team (for both the feasibility study and the proposed full study) have the ability to achieve the proposed outcomes and impacts because they have demonstrated:

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

The team criterion is assessed with relative to opportunity and with consideration to career breaks.

Appendix 2. Assessing Committee Fees and Expenses

Fee Schedule

Expression of Interest SAC (for a 2-day meeting)			
	Committee Chair	Committee Member	Ad hoc Member*
Meeting fee (*per diem* x 2 days)	$540	$400	$400
Meeting preparation fee	$810	$600	$600
Review Summary preparation	$200**	$200**	$200**
Review of Review Summaries	$100		
Chair's report to HRC	$200		
TOTAL	$1850	$1200	$1200

Full Application SAC / Ngā Kanohi Kitea Full Stage (for a 2-day meeting)				
	Committee Chair	Committee Member	Ad hoc Member*	Technical reviewer
Meeting fee (*per diem* x 2 days)	$540	$400	$400	
Meeting preparation fee	$270	$200	$200	
CR1 Reviewer Report preparation	$300**	$300**	$300**	
Review Summary preparation	$200**	$200**	$200**	
Review of Review Summaries	$100			
Chair's report to HRC	$200			
Technical report preparation				$50 per application
TOTAL	$1610	$1100	$1100	

Programme Assessing Committee Member (for a 3-day meeting)				
	Committee Chair	Committee Member	MHR Member	Technical reviewer
Meeting fee (*per diem* x 3 days)	$810	$600	$600	
Meeting preparation fee	$270	$200	$200	
CR/MHR preparation		$400**	$600	
Review summary preparation		$200**	$200**	
Review of Review Summaries	$100			
Chair's report to HRC	$200			
Technical report preparation				$100 per application
TOTAL	$1380	$1400	$1600	

FGAC (for a 2-day meeting)			
	Committee Chair	Committee Member	Ad hoc Member*
Meeting fee (*per diem* x 2 days)	$540	$400	$400
Meeting preparation fee	$200	$200	$150
CR1 Reviewer Report preparation	$400**	$400**	$400**
Review Summary preparation	$200**	$200**	$200**
Presentation report preparation			$100
Review of Review Summaries	$100		
Chair's report to HRC	$200		
TOTAL	$1640	$1200	$1250

FSAC (for a 2-day meeting)			
	Committee Chair	Committee Member	Ad hoc member*
Meeting fee (*per diem* x 2days)	$540	$400	$400
Meeting preparation fee	$200	$200	$200
Review Summary preparation	$200**	$200**	$200**
Presentation report preparation			$100
Review of Review Summaries	$100		
Chair's report to HRC	$200		
TOTAL	$1240	$800	$900

EGAC (for a half day meeting)		
	Committee Chair	Committee Member
Meeting fee	$270	$100
Meeting preparation fee	$270	$200
Chair's report to HRC	$200	
TOTAL	$740	$300

*Includes biostatisticians, Māori consultants, Pacific consultants or other members providing input related only to their area of expertise. These members do not have CR roles as above and act in an advisory capacity. ** Only paid if assigned these roles.

Expenses

Please note that fees will be paid upon receipt of Review Summary commitments.

Travel and Accommodation

The HRC administrator will organise travel and accommodation for members to attend meetings at destinations away from their home town applying the HRC travel policy as appropriate. If required, members may organise travel and additional accommodation to fit their other travel, but they should obtain clearance to do so from the HRC, as extra costs may be incurred.

Other Expenses

Should teleconferences be required, these will also be arranged by the HRC administrator.

The HRC will reimburse for reasonable expenses incurred while serving on the SAC including transport to meetings or hotel (taxi cards can be provided if required), parking and mileage when using private transport, but not hotel movie charges and mobile phone roaming/data charges.

The HRC hosts a committee dinner after the first day of a two day meeting. Meals on other days may be claimed but a claim of more than $45 per meal is not considered a reasonable expense.

Alcohol costs are not claimable.

An expense claim form is distributed at the meeting. Members should keep an accurate account of expenses and submit receipts with the claim.

Printing Costs

Printed copies of applications will not be distributed to all committees. However, some committee members may wish to have hard copies to work with. In that case, printing costs may be claimed as an expense.

Appendix 3. Abbreviations

BMAC	Biomedical/clinical science assessing committee
BRC	Biomedical research committee
CDA	Career development awards
CDAC	Career development awards assessing committee
CR, CR1, CR2	Science assessing committee reviewer, -1, -2
CV	Curriculum vitae
CTAC	Controlled Trials Assessing Committee
EGAC	Explorer Grant Assessing Committee
EOI	Expression of Interest
F/NF	Fundable/Not Fundable; or, Full stage/Not full stage for EOI
FA	Full application
FGAC	Emerging Researcher First Grant assessing committee
FSAC	Feasibility Study assessing committee
GAC	Grant approval committee
HRC	Health Research Council of New Zealand
HW	Health and wellbeing in New Zealand research investment stream
IOACC	Improving outcomes for acute and chronic conditions in New Zealand research investment stream
MHR	Māori health reviewer for Programme assessing committee
MHC	Māori health committee
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NI	Named investigator
NSC	National Science Challenges
NZHD	New Zealand health delivery research investment stream
PAC	Programme assessing committee
PHRC	Public health research committee
PacificHRC	Pacific Island health research committee
RHM	Rangahau Hauora Māori research investment stream
RHAC	Rangahau Hauora science assessing committee
RIS	Research investment stream
SAC	Science assessing committee

Appendix 4. EOI Outcome and Feedback

The number of applications and the relatively short time available makes extensive feedback to applicants difficult. However, in some cases, e.g. RHM applicants are encouraged to develop their full applications further with advice from the SAC.

If the EOI application is triaged, applicants will be informed that the application was in the 33rd percentile of applications based on SAC pre-scores and not discussed at the SAC meeting.

If the EOI application is discussed at the SAC meeting, the Review Summary will be written to briefly reflect the SAC discussion and focus on key strengths and weaknesses, which may aid completing the full application. Suggestions should be addressed in any subsequent full application.

Project EOI Review Summary

HRC Reference #		**Applicant Surname**	
Title of Research			
Host			

Applicants who have been invited to submit a full application must note that addressing issues identified in this Review Summary does not mean that the full application will be funded.

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

1. What key strengths were considered by the Science Assessing Committee as important enough to influence the scoring of this proposal? (brief bullet points)

2. What key weaknesses were considered by the Science Assessing Committee as important enough to influence the scoring of this proposal? (brief bullet points)

3. Other Comments/suggestions (please also include specific biostatistical feedback if not captured above) (brief bullet points)

Appendix 5. Applicant Response or Rebuttal Template

Applicant Surname		**HRC Reference #**	
Funding Round		**Due Date**	
Title of Research			

Instructions (delete after reading): Programme applications have a 3-page limit. All other applications have a 2-page limit. The page limit includes references. Do not change the default margins and font (size 11) although you should use bold and underlining for emphasis. Try to leave spaces to improve legibility. Ensure to address all the issues raised by the reviewers, remain objective and avoid emotion in your rebuttals.

Appendix 6. Emerging Researcher First Grant Review Summary

HRC Reference #		**Applicant Surname**	
Title of Research			
Host			

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

1. What issues were considered by the Science Assessing Committee as important enough to influence the scoring of this proposal? (200-300 words)

2. Other Comments

Appendix 7. Feasibility Study Review Summary

HRC Reference #		**Applicant Surname**	
Title of Research			
Host			

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

1. What issues were considered by the Science Assessing Committee as important enough to influence the scoring of this proposal? (200-300 words)

2. Other Comments

Appendix 8. Programme Review Summary

HRC Reference #		**Applicant Surname**	
Title of Research			
Host			

With regard to the criteria for assessing and scoring research Programme proposals:

1. What issues were considered by the Programme Assessing Committee as important enough to influence the scoring of this proposal? (200-300 words)

2. Summarise the investigator interview and the applicants' response to the discussion of this research Programme.

3. Other comments

Appendix 9. SAC Review Summary: Projects

HRC Reference #		**Applicant Surname**	
Title of Research			
Host			

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

1. What issues were considered by the Science Assessing Committee as important enough to influence the scoring of this proposal? (200-300 words)

2. Other Comments

Appendix 10. SAC Review Summary: Programmes

HRC Reference #		**Applicant Surname**	
Title of Research			
Host			

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

1. What issues were considered by the Science Assessing Committee as important enough to influence the scoring of this proposal? (200-300 words)

2. Other Comments (e.g. Suitability for support as a Programme)

3. Comments and questions for the Programme Assessing Committee to ask the applicants (this section will not be sent to applicant)

Appendix 11. Science Assessing Committee Chair's Report

Committee name	
Chair(s)	
Date(s)	
Research Investment Manager	
BM/Clin/PH/MH/PacH	

Please provide brief comments or bullet points in the following sections, which represent the consensus views from the committee. This confidential information will be forwarded to the HRC statutory committees and used for the continuous improvement of HRC processes.

1. Administration and communications, venue and catering

2. Committee membership, expertise and working relationship

3. Integrity of the process

- Management of COIs
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Mitigating against bias

4. Assessment of applications

- Assessment of Impact
- Key recommendations

5. Comments about the HRC Gateway.

6. Other comments

Appendix 12. Glossary of Māori Terms

Ahua	Feeling
Ao	World
Aroha	Love
Ataahua	Beautiful
Hauora	Health
He aha te mea	What is this thing
Hiamoe	Sleepy
Hinengaro	Mental
Hoki	Also
Hui	Gathering
Iwi	Tribe
Kaha	Strong
Kai	Food
Kaimahi	Workers
Kaitiakitanga	Guardianship
Kaiwhakahaere	Organisers
Kanohi ki te kanohi	Face to face
Karakia	Prayer
Karanga	Call
Katoa	All
Kaumatua	Elder
Kaupapa	Topic
Kaupapa Māori	Māori research ideology
Kawa	Protocol
Kawakawa	Pepper tree, *Macropiper excelsum*
Koe	You
Koha	Gift
Korero	Talk
Koutou	All of you
Kuia	Elderly lady
Mahana	Warm
Maioha	Heartfelt
Mana	Prestige
Mana tangata	Self-determination
Mana whenua	Local tribe
Marama	Moon
Matakite	Spiritual insight and gifts
Mātauranga	Education
Mātou	Us
Mema	Member
Mihi/mihimihi	To greet
Mutunga Kore	Never ending
Nui	Great
Oranga	Well-being
Ō tātou	Ours
Pono	True
Pōwhiri	Welcome ceremony
Pūkenga	Abilities and skills
Rangahau	Research
Rangatahi	Youth
Rangatira	Chiefly
Rawa	Really
Reo	Language
Rongoā	Traditional Māori medicine

Rōpū	Group
Tangata whenua	Local people
Te	The
Te Hau Kāinga	The home of origin
Teina	Younger relationship
Tēnei	This
Tika	Right
Tikanga Māori	Māori customs
Tinana	Physical
Tino rangatiratanga	Māori control and sovereignty
Tohunga	Priest
Tuakana	Elder relationship
Tuakiri-ā-Māori	Māori cultural identity
Tupapa	Foundation
Uara tau	Guiding values
Wahakura	Flax woven baby basket
Wāhine hapū	Pregnant women
Waiata	Song
Wairua	Spiritual
Wānanga	Forum
Whānau	Family
Whānau, Hapū, Iwi	Family, Sub-tribe, Tribe
Whānau Ora	Family wellbeing
Whaikōrero	Formal speech
Whakapapa	Genealogy
Whakarauora	Survivor
Whakarongo	Listen
Whakaruruhau	Safety
Whakawhānaungatanga	Collaborative family relationships
Whare Tapa Wha	Four-sided house, Māori model of health encompassing taha tinana, taha wairua, taha hinengaro and taha whānau
Whenua	Land