

# Changes to the 2027 Career Development Award Funding Round

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# Today's webinar

- Introduction to the HRC and Career Development Awards (**CDAs**)
- CDA opportunities available in the 2027 Funding Round
- Rationale for the changes
- Overview of Assessment Process
- Key dates
- Where to find more information

# The HRC: A Crown Entity

- Established by the Health Research Council Act 1990
- The government's principal funder of health research
- Accountable to both the Ministers of Health and Science, Innovation, and Technology
- As a crown entity, HRC is responsive to the expectations set by our ministers in investing in government funded health research
- Mandate to foster the research workforce

# HRC priorities

- All HRC investment must have a clear line of sight to improving health outcomes for all New Zealanders
- New Zealand's investment in health research must contribute to achieving the goals of the health system and the science, innovation and technology sector
- The Government is committed to improving health outcomes by providing timely access to high-quality health services
- A key focus for the science system is to harness the benefits of research and innovation to drive economic transformation
- It is important to consider and identify how your research will add value and contribute to these goals and wider system performance

# Overview of 2027 CDA opportunities

# The 2027 CDA opportunities available



## Sir Charles Hercus Health Research Fellowships

**Objective:** Supports emerging scientists who have demonstrated outstanding potential to develop into highly skilled researchers able to initiate new avenues of investigation.

Established to build New Zealand's future capability to conduct world-class research. The fellowship is for untenured applicants and will support a researcher whose scientific field has the potential to contribute to both the health and economic goals for the government's investment in research, science, and technology.

Successful candidates are likely to have published papers in their chosen area in leading journals and should be able to demonstrate their ability to carry out independent research.

**Value:** \$600,000 over four years full-time, or five to six years part-time.

## Clinical Research Training Fellowships

⚠ **Key Change Introduced:** streamlined and now open to all clinicians (Open, Māori and Pacific)

**Objective:** Supports suitably qualified and practising health professionals, such as medical and dental graduates, psychologists, nurses, allied health professionals and other clinical researchers to enable them to undertake specialised or further clinical research training in areas that can improve health and economic outcomes or health services.

**Value:** \$260,000 over three years full-time, or four years part-time (stipend, university fees and research costs).

# Open stream

## Foxley Fellowship

**Eligibility:** Supports an individual with at least five years' experience within the health sector to undertake a research sabbatical within an academic institution.

**Objective:** The fellowship's primary objective is to enhance links between HRC-funded academic research and healthcare delivery and/or health policy environment.

**Value:** base salary and up to \$20,000 per annum per 1.0 FTE as research expenses. The fellowship can be held part-time for up to two years.

## Māori Postdoctoral Fellowships

 **Key Change Introduced:** Salary caps of 100k/year introduced

**Objective:** Supports outstanding Māori graduates who have completed a degree at a doctoral level within the last five years to gain further experience in their chosen fields and for them to become established as an independent health researcher.

**Value:** Salary of up to \$100,000 per annum over four years full-time, \$100,000 research working expenses, a tikanga allowance and an annual conference allowance.

# Māori stream

## Māori PhD Scholarships

**Objective:** Provides three years of personal support for Māori graduates undertaking their PhD in any discipline whose proposed research programme will contribute to improving health and economic outcomes for Māori.

**Value:** \$30,000 stipend per annum, tuition fees, \$10,000 total research working expenses, and tikanga allowance.

# Māori stream

## Māori Master's Scholarships

**Objective:** Provides one year of personal support for Māori students completing the research component of a master's degree in any discipline whose proposed research programme will contribute to improving health and economic outcomes for Māori. Working expenses are not included in this award.

**Value:** \$20,000 stipend per annum, tuition fees, tikanga allowance.

# Pacific stream

## Pacific Postdoctoral Fellowships



**Key Change Introduced:** Salary caps of 100k/year introduced

The Sir Thomas Davis Scholarship consolidated into Postdoctoral Fellowship

**Objective:** Supports outstanding Pacific graduates who have completed a degree at doctoral level within the last five years to gain further experience in their chosen fields and for them to become established as an independent health researcher.

**Value:** Salary of up to \$100,000 per annum over four years full-time, \$100,000 total research working expenses, a tufungatika allowance and an annual conference allowance.

## Pacific PhD Scholarships

**Objective:** Supports outstanding graduate students whose proposed research programme will contribute to improving health and economic outcomes for Pacific peoples.

**Value:** Up to three years of personal support of up to \$30,000 per annum, plus tuition fees, up to \$10,000 in total research working expenses, and tufungatika allowance.

## Pacific Master's Scholarships

**Objective:** Supports students completing the research component of a master's degree in any discipline whose proposed research programme will contribute to improving health and economic outcomes for Pacific peoples. Working expenses are not included in this award.

**Value:** up to \$20,000 towards one year of personal support, plus tuition fees, and tufungatika allowance.

# Health Delivery stream

## Health Delivery Research Career Development Awards

**Objective:** Supports career development with a funded placement in a health delivery research team or health sector setting. It is designed as an alternative pathway into health delivery research aimed at attracting more people with relevant skills into this discipline.

**Value:** The award is available to fund salary and salary associated costs of the applicant over a maximum term of 12 months.

HD CDAs must align with the HD investment signal and be located in a health delivery setting

# Rationale for the 2027 changes

## Our funding context

- The Health Research Council has seen a decline in government funding over recent years, as budget has been reprioritised within the science, innovation and technology sector, most recently to support the science system reforms.
- Last year, our Council communicated to the health research sector that we would have less to invest in the 2027 funding rounds.
- For the 2027 CDA round, Council has approved the reconfigured group of opportunities presented in the previous slides.
- This is designed to provide a meaningful range of career development support within the reduced funding envelope.

## 2027 CDA reconfiguration goals:

- Continue to provide opportunities across the open, Māori, Pacific, and health delivery categories.
- Target investment to early to mid-career researchers, including clinician researchers.
- Offer support in identified funding gaps across the sector.
- Offer a meaningful spread of grant types that are targeted and proportionate.
- Ensure all opportunities in the round can be funded within our new budget envelope.

## Summary of key changes:

- Streamline the Clinical Research Training Fellowships into one opportunity.
- Consolidate the Sir Thomas Davis Fellowship and Pacific Postdoctoral Scholarship.
- Introduce salary caps to the Māori and Pacific Postdoctoral Fellowships.
- Pause the Clinical Practitioner Research Fellowships.
- Pause the smaller grant types such as summer studentships and knowledge translation grants.

# Overview of assessment process and changes

# The assessment process

- All applications will be screened against the eligibility and formatting requirements
  - Ensure you read the application guidelines carefully and use the correct application form
  - Contact your research office and/or the HRC if you are unsure of your eligibility
- There are no changes to the assessment process
  - Applications will be reviewed and scored by a multidisciplinary assessing committee (AC)
  - A number of fellowships/scholarships undergo external peer review
  - A number of fellowships involve an interview with the assessing committee
- The intent of the available grants has remained unchanged
- The value of the grants remains largely unchanged (with the exception of new salary caps for Postdoctoral Scholarships)

# Understanding the assessment process

- Different CDA opportunities follow different assessment processes
- Read the Forms and Guidelines
  - Address all sections
- Write to a general scientific audience, only some opportunities undergo specialist external peer review
- Assessing committees (ACs) score proposals and make funding recommendations to Council
- Council have discretion to make final funding decisions based on a range of information and with consideration of the balance across the different investment streams

# Common application pitfalls to consider

Can you get a support letter to confirm stakeholder engagement?

Ensure you have provided enough time for your supervisor to review your proposal prior to submission.

Consider supervisory requirements. Cultural support and guidance is important

Speak to your Research Office well in advance of submitting your application

# What do committee members look for?

Clearly articulated knowledge gap with clear aims and objectives that are achievable.

Correct layout, spelling and grammar.  
Applications should be proofread by colleagues.

The diversity and fit of the research team to the application and the appropriateness FTE.

Ensure you have clearly described how this grant will support your development as an independent researcher.

# What do committee members look for?

Sufficient effort is being made to address Māori health advancement (in context for the type of research).

Appropriate time and budget is allotted for the proposed research.

It is written in a way that non-specialist assessing committee members can understand.

# What do committee members look for?

How well applicants describe the potential impact of their work without overstating the potential impact.

Consider technical, feasibility and impact aspects, such as, if the proposal can be achieved within the stated timeframes.

Long-term feasibility, such as what the applicants want to accomplish, and if the outcome will have a meaningful impact down the line.

Focus on how the research will positively contribute to health and well-being.

# Changes in the forms & guidelines

- All changes are outlined in the application guidelines.
  - \$100,000/yr caps over max of 4 yrs to Māori and Pacific postdoctoral salaries
- Use the updated CV template on HRC Gateway.
- Carefully read the score criteria.

# Where to find out more

# Key dates

Date	Action
18 May 2026	Webinar
4 June 2026	Open CDA round
2 July 2026	Applications due for General CDAs; compliance checks
23 July 2026	Applications due for Pacific, Māori, and Health Delivery CDAs
July – August 2026	AC Member recruitment, External review process
September 2026	Applicant rebuttal: AC prescore / triage process
October 2026	AC meetings
December 2026	Final funding decisions by Council  2027 CDA round outcomes released to applicants with an embargo period (public announcements estimated January 2027)

# How to get started?



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## People-focused funding

The HRC invests in developing excellent health researchers. We offer a range of career development opportunities designed to support emerging health researchers through to research leaders.

### Current funding opportunities

# Where to find more information

- See the HRC Gateway for further details about funding opportunities:  
<https://gateway.hrc.govt.nz>
- **Ensure your HRC Gateway profile is created in advance of your application**
- **Ensure you read the application guidelines**
- **Refer to your research office in the first instance**
- Sign up to the Update newsletter on HRC website under “News & Events” on Gateway
- Contact [info@hrc.govt.nz](mailto:info@hrc.govt.nz)