

Frequently asked questions: 2027 HRC Career Development Award Funding Round



Key messages for applicants

Each of the Māori, Pacific and Open Career Development Award investment streams has its own application guidelines, which provide important information on eligibility, conditions of tenure, grant scope, and completing your application. Please ensure you read these documents carefully before beginning your application.

Research offices provide support for research activities across the organisation. Most large institutions will have a research office who are well equipped to support the submission of your application. We recommend you get in touch with your research office as soon as possible to seek support for developing and submitting your application. Many institutions will have an internal submission deadline before the HRC submission deadline to ensure they can best support your application.

If your organisation does not have a research office, please contact the HRC at info@hrc.govt.nz and we will be happy to provide guidance where we can.

Important note: *if you attended the HRC webinar on our 2027 Career Development Awards, please be aware the values we gave for working expenses associated with the Māori Postdoctoral Fellowship and the Pacific Postdoctoral Fellowship were incorrect. The correct values are as follows. We apologise for any confusion.*

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

Pacific Postdoctoral Fellowships 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.

Available 2027 Career Development Award (CDA) investment

1. How much money is allocated to the CDA round?

Due to a reallocation of government funding, the HRC has less to invest across the 2027 funding rounds. We are unable to provide an exact figure of available budget for the 2027 CDA round and the Council will determine the balance of investment across the different grant types and streams for the CDA round.

In 2026, the HRC invested just over \$8M in the CDA round. It is anticipated that we will invest less in the 2027 CDA round.

2. How many grants of each type will be able to be funded?

We are unable to provide an exact number, apart from the Foxley Fellowship. The Foxley Fellowship comes from a separate Trust (a bequest) and only 1 can be funded per year.

Regarding all other grants, the HRC will fund a range of grants across different streams, within the available funding envelope. Council will consider the balance of investment across the different grant types and streams.

Māori and Pacific funding opportunities

For opportunities through the Māori investment stream, applicants must be of Māori descent.

For opportunities through the Pacific investment stream, applicants must be of Pacific indigenous descent.

All scholarships and fellowships have individual requirements, please read the guidelines to find out more about the eligibility and conditions of tenure for these opportunities.

3. What are the requirements for Māori and Pacific Master's and PhD scholarships?

It is recommended that master's and PhD scholarship holders dedicate 1 FTE to their proposed course of study, however, flexibility is provided of up to 500 hours per year for teaching duties (and clinical duties for others). Therefore, it is expected that scholarship holders will dedicate a minimum of 0.7FTE to their proposed programme of study. If you are dedicating less than 1 FTE to your study, detailed justification should be provided in your application regarding the feasibility of research completion within the proposed timeframe and what strategies you have in place to support your research. It is recommended you provide evidence of endorsement from your research supervisor, attached to your application as a letter of support. The assessing committee will take this into consideration when assessing your application.

Master's applicants must be enrolled in the final year and undertaking the research component of their master's degree.

PhD applicants should be enrolled, or intend to enrol, for a research-based degree at the doctoral level, usually a Doctor of Philosophy in a New Zealand university. Programmes of study where the primary focus is a clinical practice qualification rather than advancing the individual's research skills do not meet the PhD scholarship requirements. Please get in touch with your research office or the HRC if you are unsure of your intended programme's eligibility.

4. What are the requirements for Māori and Pacific Postdoctoral Fellowships?

Postdoctoral Fellowship applicants should not have had more than five years' postdoctoral experience, although this period could be greater considering parental leave, caring responsibilities, career breaks, ill health, or other justified reasons. Time spent working in a career other than research is not considered a justified reason. Eligibility will be counted from the date of degree conferment, which should be confirmed in the application.

Usually, successful applicants will be involved in full-time research. The HRC will however, consider applicants wishing to undertake part-time research on their individual merit. In the case of part-time fellowships, applicants must be involved in research for a minimum of 0.5FTE and the maximum duration of the fellowship will remain at four years.

5. How do you apply to the named Māori Postdoctoral Fellowships?

To apply for a named Māori Postdoctoral Fellowship, using the *2027 Māori Health Research Career Development Awards Application Form* indicate which named postdoctoral fellowship you would like to be considered for in table 1, section 1B.

Named postdoctoral fellowships include the Erihapeti Rehu-Murchie Fellowship, Eru Pōmare Fellowship, Hohua Tutengaehe Fellowship and the Irihapeti Ramsden Fellowship.

The assessing committee will consider the alignment of your proposed research when assessing your application. If your application is successful but the assessing committee does not consider your proposed research aligns with your selected named Postdoctoral Fellowship, you will be offered a general Postdoctoral Fellowship.

6. What is the panel looking for in terms of Pacific Postdoctoral applications?

Like many of our funding opportunities, assessment is guided by the respective grant's score criteria. When writing your application, ensure you are responsive to the score criteria. The application guidelines provide a wealth of information to support your consideration of what should be included in your application.

Ensure you have appropriate research supervision, including supervision and/or mentorship available to support the cultural elements of your proposed research.

The intention of the Postdoctoral Fellowship is to support graduates to gain further experience in their chosen fields and for them to become established as an independent health researcher. You should ensure you have highlighted how your research will develop your skills and support you on your pathway to becoming an independent health research leader.

Ensure you emphasise the potential impacts of your research on Māori or Pacific communities and how your proposed research will support improved health outcomes for your communities. It is advisable to include support letters from your community partners and/or stakeholders to evidence your commitment and connections within the stated communities.

See slides 24 – 27 of the 2027 CDA webinar slide deck (available on the HRC website <https://www.hrc.govt.nz/grants-funding/how-get-funding-fit>) to gain further insights into what assessing committees look for in applications.

Please note that Council will take into consideration alignment with the HRC priorities when making decisions on the Postdoctoral Fellowships. See question 8 for more details on the HRC priorities.

7. What if my postdoctoral salary is higher than \$100,000 per year? Can I still apply to the postdoctoral fellowship?

You can still apply; however, the salary is capped at \$100,000 per year. The introduction of a salary cap for this grant aligns with the approach for our other career development opportunities such as the Sir Charles Hercus Health Research Fellowships.

HRC priorities

As a crown entity, the HRC are responsive to the expectations set by our ministers in investing in government funded health research. This is provided to us each year in a Letter of Expectations from our responsible Ministers with updated signals to guide our investment 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. For the health system, the Government is committed to improving health outcomes by providing New Zealanders with timely access to high quality healthcare.¹ A key focus for the science, innovation and technology system is to harness the benefits of research and innovation to drive economic transformation.²

The application guidelines are the primary source of information regarding funding round specific priorities. Please ensure you read the guidelines to understand the expectations and requirements for the grant you are applying to.

8. What are the 2027 HRC priorities?

Council is particularly interested in opportunities to invest in research that:

- maximises benefit for healthcare delivery, such as:
 - new models of care and treatments
 - improved effectiveness and efficiency
 - innovation and technology in healthcare, and/or
- demonstrates a pathway to commercialisation, and/or
- enhances the development of clinician-researchers,³ and/or
- contributes to achievement of the health and/or mental health and addiction targets.⁴

It is important to consider and identify how your research will add value and contribute to one or more of these goals and to reflect this in the relevant sections of your application.

Please note that Council will take into consideration alignment with the HRC priorities when making decisions on the Postdoctoral Fellowships and the Sir Charles Hercus Health Research Fellowships.

For all career development awards ensure you carefully read the guidelines specific to the award to which you are applying before beginning your application.

Open stream criteria and eligibility

¹ The Government Policy Statement on Health (2024-2027): <https://www.health.govt.nz/publications/government-policy-statement-on-health-2024-2027>

² <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/economic-growth/going-for-growth>

³ A clinician-researcher conducts research and provides clinical services in any setting, under formal work arrangement and is eligible to undertake clinical practice in New Zealand either under the Health Practitioners Competence Act 2003, through registration with the relevant responsible authority, or as a member of Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand.

⁴ The five health targets are: faster cancer treatment; improved immunisation for children; shorter stays in emergency departments; shorter wait times for first specialist assessment; and shorter wait times for elective treatment. For more information see: <https://www.healthnz.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/planning-and-performance/health-targets>

The five mental health and addiction targets are: faster access to specialist mental health and addiction services; faster access to primary mental health and addiction services; shorter mental health and addiction-related stays in emergency departments; increased mental health and addiction workforce development; and strengthened focus on prevention and early intervention. For more information see: <https://www.healthnz.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/planning-and-performance/mental-health-and-addiction-targets>

9. Are there any updates or changes to the criteria for the Sir Charles Hercus Health Research Fellowship?

There are no changes for the Sir Charles Hercus Health Research Fellowship. The intent and assessment process remain the same as previous years.

10. What are the scholarship opportunities for applicants who currently hold a clinical role? Can you provide advice on applying for such funding opportunities?

The Clinical Research Training Fellowships support suitably qualified and practising health professionals to undertake specialised or further research training (PhD) in areas that can improve health and economic outcomes or health services.

To be eligible for the Clinical Research Training Fellowship you must hold a current clinical role. This includes practising medical graduates, dental graduates, psychologists, nurses, allied health professionals, or graduates with research ability, background training and expertise in fields relevant to clinical research.

We also offer Health Delivery Career Development Awards, with a funded placement in a health delivery research team or health sector setting. These awards are offered as an alternative pathway into health delivery research aimed at attracting more people with relevant skills into this discipline.

Support navigating the changes

11. How can I access support as a new and early career researcher to navigate through these changes?

Subscribe to the HRC's 'Update' newsletter to keep informed. You can sign up [here](#).

Ensure you read the relevant funding round application guidelines to understand expectation, conditions of tenure, eligibility and other requirements related to the grant you wish to apply for.

Speak to your research office on what support they can provide you. You can contact the HRC for general scope, criteria and submission guidance, however, we are unable to provide guidance on research methodology and design, and specific application writing aspects.

12. Do you have any tips for accessing other (non-HRC) career development opportunities?

Your research office is a good place to start, as some universities may offer their own career development grants and will have information a wide range of funding opportunities.

Royal Society Te Apārangī have recently opened their [Tāwhia Te Mana Fellowship funding round](#) which provides support researchers across different career stages to develop into leaders in their fields.

MBIE has also just announced a new [Transition Research Fund](#). This fund combines contestable research previously provided through the Marsden and Endeavour funds into

a single, investigator-led research fund. Applications open later this year, with up to \$84.8m per year available for investment across three funding mechanisms:

- Talent Development (supporting future research leaders to build capability – commonly known as career development awards)
- Projects
- Programmes

13. Will the Emerging Researcher First Grant funding round be paused again this year?

Yes, this funding round will remain paused.