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

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1. Purpose of the Peer Review Manual

1.1 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.

1.2 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.

1.2.1 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.

1.2.2 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.

1.2.3 New Zealand Health Delivery (NZHD)

All research that can contribute to a primary outcome of improved health service delivery over the short-to-medium term (within five years of the contract commencing) 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.

1.2.4 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.

1.2.5 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.

1.3 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.
1.4 Acknowledgements

The HRC acknowledges the time, effort and valuable contribution committee members and 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 has a Disclosure of Interest policy for the Board and its statutory committees (Appendix 3). 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. From an HRC perspective, the term “conflict of interest” refers to situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, professional judgement in objectively assessing research proposals.

As such, in evaluating a conflict of interest, it is important to consider not only known conflicts but also the appearance of conflict. Note that any HRC Board member, who also chairs a research committee, cannot serve on a SAC.

The HRC provides all external reviewers and SAC members with guidelines regarding conflicts of interest. The intent of the guidelines is to assist in both the identification and declaration of potential conflicts of interest and to provide guidance in terms of evaluating 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:

| 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. A Programme NI cannot be a Committee Reviewer (CR) on a competing Programme application.

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1 New Zealand State Services Commission, Board Appointment and Induction Guidelines, November 2009.
2 Adapted from the Association of American Medical Colleges, Guidelines for dealing with faculty conflicts of commitment and conflicts of interest in research, February 22, 1990.
2.2 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

SAC members and 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, and
- for whatever reason, feel that they cannot provide an objective review of the application.

2.3 Evaluation of Conflict of Interest

External reviewers exclude themselves from the assessment process when they recognise a potential conflict of interest by opting out at their point of contact on the HRC reviewer website. No further action is required. Reviewers, in their reports, also have an opportunity to declare potential conflicts. When an external reviewer does not recognise or declare a conflict of interest, but the potential conflict is later detected, their report will not be used by SAC.

Declarations of conflicts of interest 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. For example, a committee reviewer should declare an involvement in any competing application.

Following this discussion, one of the following agreed actions is taken:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1</strong></td>
<td>No action is necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3</strong></td>
<td>The reviewer report must not be considered, or the SAC member must not be present during discussion and scoring of the research proposal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Where a perceived conflict e.g. recent publication, arises from a person’s technical expertise e.g. biostatistics, 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.

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3 Adapted from the *Notes for CIHR Grants Committees: May 2001*, Canadian Institutes of Health Research.
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, Board 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 the HRC Board for funding.
• Funding decisions by HRC Board.

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 is a situation in which an individual’s financial relationships 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 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. Generic advice may be sought from those outside of the peer review process but the specific content of an application must never be revealed.
- 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.

### 2.7 False or Misleading Information

Once submitted to the HRC, a funding application is considered final and no changes will be permitted, although it may be withdrawn. The application is the primary source of information available for assessment. As such, it must contain all the information necessary for assessment of the application without the need for further written explanation or reference to additional documentation, including the World Wide Web. 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 consider future applications from the relevant investigators and/or to pursue legal action if deemed 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).
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 and Australia. 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, 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. 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 New Zealand and Australian 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 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.

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 Assessing Committee, 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).

In some circumstances, a SAC could have one member 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 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).

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.
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.

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 13),
- raising any other relevant issues as appropriate,
- write 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 statistician may not be assigned a CR1 or CR2 role for consistency of review of a technical nature across all applications assessed by that SAC. 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, 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 and the report was the last received by the HRC. It is the role of the HRC to coordinate and oversee all communications with the reviewers. Committee members and applicants should not contact reviewers.

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.

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 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. Members, who wish to make alternative arrangements before or after the meeting, may arrange other travel options with the HRC, but this may incur personal costs.

The first day starts with a briefing from HRC 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 or drinks reception at the end of the first day/endpoint of the meeting.

Some EOI SAC members, depending on the expertise required, will be asked to attend the meeting to assess Full Applications. The date for the second meeting will be notified to those members with sufficient time to allow them to address their 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 payable to committee members and some information on other expenses that may be claimed are available in Appendix 2. Assessing Committee Fees and Expenses. For example, paper copies of applications are no longer distributed to the Committee as the HRC is moving to an essentially “paperless” process. However, some reviewers may wish to have paper copies so printing costs may be claimed.
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. Each SAC Chair is asked to provide a short report on their experience and insights on the process, noting issues that would be useful for future rounds (see Appendix 12. Assessing Committee Chair’s 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. All comments are provided to Research Committees for further discussion.
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.

4.1.2 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.

4.1.3 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 Board.

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 Manager. At the EOI SAC meeting committee members score the proposals by ballot.

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 Health and Wellbeing in New Zealand, and Improving Outcomes for Acute and Chronic Conditions in New Zealand Research Investment Streams. These are summarised below; refer to Appendix 1 for a full description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale for Research</th>
<th>Design and Methods</th>
<th>Research Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significance of health issue; potential to advance knowledge and address an important gap; aims and hypotheses build on existing knowledge; and originality of the approach.</td>
<td>Appropriateness of the research design and methods chosen; the validity of the proposed analyses; and the feasibility of attaining the statistical power sought (if appropriate). Patient safety issues well managed.</td>
<td>Advance one or more of the Investment goals; contribution to increased knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains; importance of potential outcomes; and pathway for knowledge transfer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

Qualifications, experience and knowledge in the proposed research area; right mix of expertise, and appropriate networks and collaborations; history of productivity and delivery; and the right research environment.

The track record of the team (i.e. Named Investigators) must be assessed. It is important that Committees consider the time or FTE dedicated by senior investigators on each proposal and weight their scoring on the track record of the research team accordingly, i.e. high scores should not be allocated on the basis of a Named Investigator who has a small percentage FTE involvement in the research.

Global

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

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.

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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:

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Scoring Criteria: NZHD

Applications are scored on a 7-point word ladder using the following criteria for the New Zealand Health Delivery Research Investment Stream (NZHD). These are summarised below; refer to Appendix 1 for a full description.

Rationale for research
Importance of issue for health delivery; potential to advance knowledge and address an important gap; aims and hypotheses build on existing knowledge; and originality of the approach.

Design and Methods
Appropriateness of the research design and methods chosen; validity of the proposed analyses; achievable within the timeframe; and the feasibility of attaining the statistical power sought (if appropriate). Patient safety issues well managed.
Research Impact

Assessment of alignment with the Investment goal. Potential for a positive impact on the health and disability sector within the next five years and flow-on effects for the longer term.

Team Capability: Research Outcomes

Qualifications, experience and knowledge in the proposed research area; right mix of expertise and appropriate networks and demonstrated connections with the health sector; history of productivity and delivery; and the right research environment. The track record of each member of the team (i.e. Named Investigators) must be assessed. It is important that Committees consider the time or FTE dedicated by senior investigators on each proposal and weight their scoring on the track record of the research team accordingly (i.e. high scores should not be allocated on the basis of a Named Investigator who has a small percentage FTE involvement in the research).

Team Capability: Research Uptake

Assessment of mix of expertise, dissemination plan, networks for knowledge transfer and uptake. The team must demonstrate a strong component of service-user, clinical, health provider, support worker and community or population involvement from the outset of research. Fostering meaningful engagement and partnership between researchers and end-users is critical.

Global

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

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.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.3 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. These are summarised below; refer to Appendix 1 for a full description.

| Rationale for Research | The research is important, worthwhile and justifiable and addresses some or all the following: 1) It addresses a significant health issue that is important for Māori; 2) 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); 3) The research findings will be original and innovative. |
| Design and Methods | The study has been well designed to answer the research questions, because it demonstrates some or all of the following: 1) Comprehensive, appropriate and feasible study design that is achievable within the timeframe and addresses the objectives; 2) Awareness of statistical considerations, technical or population issues/practicalities; 3) Evidence of availability of materials/samples; 4) Māori health research processes (Goal 3); 5) Māori ethics processes (Goal 4); 6) Partnerships with, and responsiveness to the needs of Māori stakeholders and communities (Goal 6); 7) Plan for dissemination of results. Patient safety issues well managed. |
| Research Impact | Potential for the proposed outcomes to add value and make a difference as demonstrated by some or all of the following: 1) They will have impact and result in knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains for Māori; 2) Plans have been made for the dissemination, uptake and utilisation of research findings (Goal 2); 3) The research will contribute to building Māori health research capacity (Goal 5); 4) Outcomes relating to an important health issue will be achieved; 5) The research has met all six Goals of the RHM Research Investment Stream. |
| Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team | The team have the ability to achieve the proposed outcomes and impacts because they have demonstrated: 1) Appropriate qualifications and experience; 2) Right mix of expertise, experience and FTEs; 3) Capability to perform research in current research environment; 4) Relevant networks/collaborations; 5) History of productivity and delivery on previous research funding. |
| Global | Overall impression; factors not otherwise scored. For example, the risk:benefit profile in the context of the state of knowledge in the area. |

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.

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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:

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<td>25</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2.4 Other Criteria and Global Score

In assessing EOI, the SAC will also award 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.

### 4.2.5 EOI SAC Pre-Meeting Procedure

Prior to the meeting, SAC members will be required to provide preliminary scores, 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 discussion.

### 4.2.6 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, e.g.:

- 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).

### 4.2.7 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:

- 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.

### 4.2.8 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).

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, NZHD and RHM Research Investment Streams.

### 4.2.9 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 5. EOI Outcome and Feedback).

Outcomes will be published on the 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
- Health Significance
- Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team*

*For NZHD applications the Research Team assessment is split into the two criteria of Team Capability: Research Outcomes and Team Capability: Research Uptake.

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

<table>
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Note that Reviewers are asked to assess Health Significance, rather than Research Impact on Investment Signal goals used by the SAC, as it is expected that reviewer recruitment would be more difficult if potential reviewers are presented with too much additional documentation. Assessment of Health Significance includes consideration of the health issue, advancement of knowledge relevant to health and contribution to improvements in health and health outcomes.

Reviewer reports are available for applicants comments and rebuttals on the HRC online submission system (HRC Gateway). Reviewer reports and applicant rebuttals are sent to the SAC prior to the meeting. The HRC aims to provide 3-4 reviewer reports for Projects. Reports will be excluded for a number of reasons (e.g. exceptionally poor quality) or if more than four reports have been received. Applicants have the opportunity to rebut the reviewer comments in a two-page rebuttal.

Note that the Applicant 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.

**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 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 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 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 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.

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 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 SAC Scoring Criteria: NZHD

In the SAC meeting for NZHD, each research proposal is 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.

Scoring is considered as per the anchor point descriptors and the relevant Investment Stream goal. 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.

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The Committee also takes into consideration:
- 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 Project with respect to ‘value for money’.

The HRC 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.

### 4.3.6 Scoring Procedure

Each proposal is scored by ballot. In cases where any scores differ significantly or there are clearly identifiable outliers, the research proposal is revisited and further discussion takes place. Following this extended discussion, SAC members may be asked to re-score.

### 4.3.7 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:

- Any SAC member may bring forward an application for re-ranking,
- Conflicts of Interest are notified and managed appropriately,
- 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 average scores would then be put forward for consideration at the next stage by PAC and GAC,
- Re-ranking of other applications can be done using an iterative process until a final ranked list is reached.
4.3.8 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),
- 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 to the Chair of the relevant Research Committee.

4.4 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.

4.5 Review Summary and Feedback for Applicants

4.5.1 Expression of Interest (EOI)

All applicants will receive feedback based on SAC outcome (Appendix 5. 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 5. EOI Outcome and Feedback). Review Summaries for EOI will be brief and may identify several weaknesses and strengths.

4.5.2 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.

The SAC Chair 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 three or more established researchers 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 usually 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 Council, 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 because the requirement for health delivery outcomes to be achieved within 5 years is not compatible with the term of a Programme.

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 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 Board.

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
- Health significance
- 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Criteria Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

Note that Reviewers are asked to assess Health Significance, rather than Research Impact on Investment Signal goals used by the SAC, as it is expected that reviewer recruitment would be more difficult if potential reviewers are presented with too much additional documentation. Assessment of Health Significance includes consideration of the health issue, advancement of knowledge relevant to health and contribution to improvements in health and health outcomes.

Reviewer reports are available for applicants’ comments and rebuttal on the HRC online submission system. These are sent to the SAC prior to the meeting. The HRC aims to provide 3-6 reviewer reports for Programme applications. Applicants are usually not required to rebut more than 6 reports in their three-page rebuttal.

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 five criteria. These are
summarised below; refer to Appendix 1 for a full description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale for Research</th>
<th>Design and Methods</th>
<th>Research Impact</th>
<th>Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team</th>
<th>Cohesiveness of Research Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significance of health issue, potential to advance knowledge in the field; aims and hypotheses build on existing knowledge; and originality of the approach.</td>
<td>Appropriateness of the research design and methods chosen; the validity of the proposed analyses; and the feasibility of attaining the statistical power sought (if appropriate). Patient safety issues well managed.</td>
<td>The impact on at least one goal in HW and/or IOACC, or six goals in RHM; contribution to improved health outcomes and/or increased knowledge related to health issue; pathway for knowledge transfer.</td>
<td>Qualifications of the research team; experience and knowledge in the proposed research area; and track record of publications and the dissemination of research results. The track record of each member of the team, i.e. Named Investigators, must be assessed. It is important that Committees consider the time or FTE dedicated by senior investigators on each proposal and weight their scoring on the track record of the research team accordingly, i.e. high scores should not be allocated on the basis of a Named Investigator who has a small percentage FTE involvement in the research.</td>
<td>Planning and management of research for term of contract; integration or relationship between objectives/projects; collaboration between senior investigators.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 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 scored by ballot. In cases where there are clearly identifiable outliers, the research proposal may be revisited and further discussion takes place allowing SAC members the opportunity to change their scores. At this point, the scores allocated by members become final.

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 applications will be ranked in order of normalised score 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 11. SAC Review Summary: Programme).

The review summary version provided to the PAC should, if appropriate, include questions that the SAC wishes the PAC to ask the applicants, especially if there are issues not already addressed in the rebuttal.
5.3 Assessment by the Programme Assessing Committee (PAC)

5.3.1 PAC membership

The Programme assessing committee (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 and Australian 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 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 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. The
Chair is required to provide Chair’s feedback to the HRC and approve application Review Summaries after the meeting.

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.

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 improved Māori health outcomes,
- 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 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 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:
- CR1/CR2/MHR comments and general discussion (to identify questions for the applicants) – 45 minutes,
- applicant (Director 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 summarized here and detailed in Appendix 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall quality of health research</th>
<th>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.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential for Outcomes</td>
<td>Assessment of overall potential for health impact (including a clear focus on addressing inequalities) and/or economic outcomes, integration of on-going research, and training opportunities (to strengthen health research workforce capacity for Māori and young investigators).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision of Programme</td>
<td>Assessment of innovation, originality and/or visionary scientific thinking and planning by the Programme Director that is indicative of superior research activity and at the forefront of health research (nationally and internationally).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Team collaboration and integration</td>
<td>Academic qualifications of the research team; experience and knowledge in the proposed research area; track record of dissemination of research results; and collaborative integration of the team members. Assessment of the track record of senior Named Investigators, sufficient FTE allocated to this research, degree of collaboration between senior investigators, integration or synergy of research skills in the team and overall management or direction of the Programme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
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’,
- responsiveness to Māori.

The HRC 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.

5.3.5 PAC Scoring Procedure
At the end of the discussion, the proposal is scored by ballot. The PAC score is combined with the normalised SAC score to reach the total score for each application.

5.3.6 PAC Fundable and Not Fundable Line
At the end of the Committee meeting, 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.

Note: Once the proposals have been scored following discussion by the Committee, no scores are permitted to be reviewed or adjusted at the conclusion of the meeting. Any concerns about the process are identified by the Committee and are taken by the Chair to the Chair of the relevant Research Committee.

5.4 Review Summary for Applicants
At the conclusion of the funding round, applicants are sent two Review Summaries:

- Appendix 11. SAC Review Summary: Programmes minus Section 3,

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,
• other comments (e.g. budget, FTE, objectives, responsiveness to Māori).

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 Manager is responsible for ensuring they are forwarded to the host institution.

5.5 Scoring Criteria applied by the Science Assessing Committee (SAC)

The scoring criteria applied by the Science Assessing Committee for assessing Programme applications are the same as the criteria applied to Project applications (Appendix 1. Scoring Criteria and Anchor Point Descriptors). An additional criterion, ‘Cohesiveness of Research Programme’ is used to inform PAC, but not used as part of the total score for ranking applications.

All criteria are scored on a 7-point scale based on the word ladder used by SAC. Reviewers may only allocate whole scores.

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E. COHESIVENESS OF RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Planning and management of research for term of contract; integration or relationship between objectives/projects is more likely to yield outcomes than individual objectives/projects; collaboration between senior investigators is established and managed to determine overall research direction of the Programme.

5.6 Scoring Criteria applied by the Programme Assessing Committee (PAC)

A. OVERALL QUALITY OF HEALTH RESEARCH

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

Assessment of overall potential for health knowledge (including a clear focus on addressing inequalities), contribution to improvement in health, integration of on-going research, training opportunities (to strengthen health research workforce capacity for Māori and young investigators) and/or economic outcomes.

C. VISION OF PROGRAMME

Assessment of innovation, originality and/or visionary scientific thinking and planning by the Programme Director that is indicative of superior research activity and at the forefront of health research (nationally and internationally).
D. RESEARCH TEAM COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATION

Qualifications of the research team; experience and knowledge in the proposed research area; track record of dissemination of research results; and collaborative integration of the team members. Assessment of the track record of senior Named Investigators, sufficient FTE allocated to this research, degree of collaboration between senior investigators, integration or synergy of research skills in the team and overall management or direction of the Programme.
6  Emerging Researcher First Grant Application Assessment Process

6.1  Introduction

Applicants are advised to read this Manual in conjunction with HRC Application Guidelines to ensure that their applications meet HRC requirements. The targeted readers of this Manual are Assessing Committee members.

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 Māori Health Science Assessing Committee (MHAC) 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:

- are emerging researchers as defined above,
- are no more than 6 years from attaining a most recent relevant postgraduate degree prior to application. This period may be extended if the applicant has had a significant break in their career, in which case this needs to be outlined in the application,
- have not previously held a competitive research grant as a Principal Investigator for research expenses of ≥$100,000 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, provided they meet the $100,000 expenses threshold. 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 post-graduate research degree.
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 HRC Board 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 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 MHAC.

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).

In some circumstances, the Committee could have one member 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 30-40 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 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 Selection of Reviewers by the CR2

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, eTBlust, CRISP, 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. If a proposal requires a Māori and/or Pacific Health Importance Report, the CR2 indicates this and identifies appropriate reviewers. Currently the success rate for finding suitable reviewers is less than 40%, so 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.
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
- Health Significance

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

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Note that external reviewers are asked to assess Health Significance, rather than Research Impact on Investment Signal goals used by the SAC, as it is expected that reviewer recruitment would be more difficult if potential reviewers are presented with too much additional documentation. Assessment of Health Significance includes consideration of the health issue, advancement of knowledge relevant to health and contribution to improvements in health and health outcomes.

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 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.

During the FGAC meeting, the CR1 is responsible for:

- providing an overview and their assessment of the proposal, including comments on each score criterion,
- discussing the applicant’s past performance and publication record,
- commenting on any cultural issues relevant to the proposal,
- raising any other relevant issues as appropriate.

During the FGAC meeting, the CR2 is responsible for:

- summarising the reviewer reports, including comments on the quality of the reports,
- addressing the applicant’s response to the reviewers’ reports,
- raising any other relevant issues as appropriate.
6.9 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 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 the FGAC needs clarification or assistance, the HRC will provide additional information, or the matter may be referred to the HRC Chief Executive or his/her nominated representative for a decision.

In the FGAC meeting, each proposal is scored on a 7-point scale for each of the following RIS scoring criteria, as further outlined below:
- Four scoring criteria for HW, IOACC and RHM applications
- Five scoring criteria for NZHD applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suitability of the Applicant</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for Research</td>
<td>Significance of health issue; potential to advance knowledge and address an important gap; aims and hypotheses build on existing knowledge; and originality of the approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Methods</td>
<td>Appropriateness of the research design and methods chosen; the validity of the proposed analyses; and the feasibility of attaining the statistical power sought (if appropriate). Patient safety issues well managed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Impact</td>
<td>Advance one or more of the Investment Signal goals, (six goals for RHM); contribution to increased knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains; importance of potential outcomes; and pathway for knowledge transfer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Uptake (for NZHD application)</td>
<td>Assessment of expertise, dissemination plan, networks for knowledge transfer and uptake. There should be indication of service-user, clinical, health provider, support worker, or community interest or involvement from the outset of research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

### 6.10.1 Weighting of Scoring Criteria

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 'Applicant’s Background' 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 all Research Investment Streams except New Zealand Health Delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suitability of the Applicant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for Research</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Methods</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Impact</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suitability of the Applicant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for Research</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and methods</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Impact</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Uptake</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.10.2 Scoring

At the end of the discussion, the proposal is scored by ballot. In cases where any scores differ significantly or there are clearly identifiable outliers, the proposal is revisited and further discussion may take place. Following this extended discussion, FGAC members may be asked to rescore. At this point, the scores allocated by members become final.
6.10.3 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. This procedure will allow any application in the ranked table to move up or down by one position at a time:

- Any SAC 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 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 average scores would then be put forward for consideration at the next stage by GAC or directly to the HRC Board.
- Re-ranking of other applications can be done using an iterative process until a final ranked list is reached.

6.10.4 Fundable and Not Fundable Line

At the end of the Committee meeting, all proposals are ranked according to score. The Committee then:

- identifies the proposals assessed as Not Fundable (NF),
- 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 such that, irrespective of available budget, they should not be funded.

Note: Once the proposals have been scored following discussion by the Committee, no scores are permitted to be reviewed or adjusted at the conclusion of the meeting. Any concerns about the process are identified by the Committee and are taken by the FGAC Chair to the Chair of the relevant Research Committee.

6.11 Research Committee Ranking and Selection Review Process

The FGAC and MHAC results may be forwarded to the Research Committees for consideration of the overall ranking of proposals as well as the peer review process. Otherwise, the ranked applications may be forwarded to GAC. When there are no applications assessed by MHAC, recommendations may be forwarded directly to the Council for approval.

6.12 Review Summary 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 7. FGAC 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.

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.
6.13 Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Emerging Researcher First Grant Applications

6.13.1 Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Emerging Researcher First Grant Applications

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Criteria Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The proposed outcomes will add value and make a difference because some or all of:

- They advance one or more of the Investment Signal goals*,
- They will have impact and result in knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains4,
- Plans have been made for uptake and utilisation of research findings,
- Outcomes relating to an important health issue will be achieved
- There is appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

E. 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.

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4 Reviewers are asked to weigh the relative types of and timescales to impact. For example, research findings may:

- Become a knowledge resource of international value, that substantially effects the concepts or methods that drive an important field(s) of health research; and/or
- Lead to better patient outcomes through clinical advances/improved health services; and/or
- Lead to improved community health and health equity through policy or intervention; and/or
- Provide a cost-effective or revenue-generating product or service to improve human health or advance health research

* Score 1 if the proposal is out of scope for the RIS it has been submitted to.
6.13.2 Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Māori Health Research Proposals for Emerging Researcher First Grant Applications

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.

<table>
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</tbody>
</table>

**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

The proposed outcomes will add value and make a difference because some or all of:

- They will have impact and result in knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains for Māori.
- Plans have been made for the dissemination, uptake and utilisation of research findings (Goal 2).
- The research will contribute to building Māori health research capacity (Goal 5).
- Outcomes relating to an important health issue will be achieved.
- The research has met all six Goals for the Research Investment Stream.
7 Feasibility Study Application Assessment Process

7.1 Introduction

The HRC utilises international best practice peer review for identifying and funding new health research studies. The purpose of the Peer Review Manual is to describe each stage of the assessment/scoring/ranking processes for applicants and Science Assessing Committee (SAC) members. Additionally, descriptions of the roles of reviewers, Assessing Committee and HRC staff are provided.

Prospective applicants are advised to read this Manual and HRC Application Guidelines to ensure that their applications meet HRC requirements. The targeted readers of this Manual are Assessing Committee members.

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.

Applications in the Rangahau Hauora Māori investment stream are assessed by the Māori Health Assessing Committee (MHAC). 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 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).

7.2.2 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,
- prescoring 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 Board,
- the HRC Board makes final funding decisions.

7.3 HRC Feasibility Study Assessing Committees (FSAC)

FSAC consists of a Chair and 6-10 members. The Chair is usually a member (or designee) of one of the Statutory Research Committees (i.e. BRC, PHRC or MHC). FSAC members represent a mix of New Zealand clinical and public health researchers and are appointed for their research expertise and ability to effectively assess the applications received in that funding round.

Research proposals identified as Māori Health Research are reviewed by the Māori Health Assessing Committee with slightly different assessment criteria (outlined in Section 7.8.3)
Pacific Health research proposals may be reviewed by the Pacific Health Research Committee for relevance to Pacific priorities and for cultural appropriateness if the FSAC requests this.

### 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).

In some circumstances FSAC could have one member 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 Prescoring

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

During the FSAC meeting, Committee Reviewers are responsible for the following:
- providing an overview of each proposal, including commenting on each score criterion,
- discussing the applicant’s past performance and publication record,
- commenting on any cultural issues relevant to the proposal,
- discussing the budget for the research proposal,
- raising any other relevant issues as appropriate.

**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 - 1 minute,
- note feedback to applicants - 2 minutes.

**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 summarised below; refer to Appendix 1 for a full description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale for Research</th>
<th>Significance of health issue; potential to advance knowledge and address an important gap; aims and hypotheses build on existing knowledge; and originality of the approach.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design and Methods</td>
<td>Study design: appropriateness of the research methods chosen; the validity of the proposed analyses; and the feasibility of attaining the statistical power sought (if appropriate); feasibility issues and stage of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
development of the full study. Patient safety issues well managed in feasibility study and proposed full study.

**Research Impact**

Advance one or more of the Investment Signal goals; contribution to increased knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains; importance of potential outcomes; and pathway for knowledge transfer.

**Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team**

Qualifications, experience and knowledge in the proposed research area; right mix of expertise, and appropriate networks and collaborations; history of productivity and delivery; and the right research environment. The track record of the team (i.e. Named Investigators) must be assessed. It is important that Committees consider the time or FTE dedicated by senior investigators on each proposal and weight their scoring on the track record of the research team accordingly, i.e. high scores should not be allocated on the basis of a Named Investigator who has a small percentage FTE involvement in the research.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Criteria Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for Research</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Methods</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Impact</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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 summarised below; refer to Appendix 1 for a full description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale for research</th>
<th>Importance of issue for health delivery; potential to advance knowledge and address an important gap; aims and hypotheses build on existing knowledge; and originality of the approach.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design and Methods</td>
<td>Study design: appropriateness of the research methods chosen; the validity of the proposed analyses; and the feasibility of attaining the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
statistical power sought (if appropriate); feasibility issues and stage of development of the full study. Patient safety issues well managed in feasibility and proposed full study.

**Research Impact**
Assessment of alignment with the Investment Signal. Potential for a positive impact on the health and disability sector within the next five years and flow-on effects for the longer term.

**Team Capability:**
- **Research Outcomes**
  Qualifications, experience and knowledge in the proposed research area; right mix of expertise and appropriate networks and demonstrated connections with the health sector; history of productivity and delivery; and the right research environment.
  The track record of each member of the team (i.e. Named Investigators) must be assessed. It is important that Committees consider the time or FTE dedicated by senior investigators on each proposal and weight their scoring on the track record of the research team accordingly (i.e. high scores should not be allocated on the basis of a Named Investigator who has a small percentage FTE involvement in the research).

**Team Capability:**
- **Research Uptake**
  Assessment of mix of expertise, dissemination plan, networks for knowledge transfer and uptake. The team must demonstrate a strong component of service-user, clinical, health provider, support worker and community or population involvement from the outset of research. Fostering meaningful engagement and partnership between researchers and end-users is critical.

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.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Criteria Descriptor</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<td>Design and methods</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on NZ health delivery</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team capability - outcomes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team capability - uptake</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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 summarised below; refer to Appendix 1 for a full description.
### Rationale for Research
The research is important, worthwhile and justifiable because it addresses some or all of the following: 1) It addresses a significant health issue that is important for Māori; 2) 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); 3) The research findings will be original and innovative.

### Design and Methods
The study has been well designed to answer the research questions, because it demonstrates some or all of the following: 1) Comprehensive, appropriate and feasible study design that is achievable within the timeframe and addresses the objectives; 2) Awareness of statistical considerations/technical or population issues/practicalities; 3) Evidence of availability of materials/samples; 4) Māori health research processes (Goal 3); 5) Māori ethics processes (Goal 4); 6) Partnership with, and responsiveness to the needs of, Māori stakeholders and communities (Goal 6); 7) Plan for dissemination of results. Patient safety issues well managed.

### Research Impact
The proposed outcomes will add value and make a difference because some or all of the following: 1) They will have impact and result in knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains for Māori; 2) Plans have been made for the dissemination, uptake and utilisation of research findings (Goal 2); 3) The research will contribute to building Māori health research capacity (Goal 5); 4) Outcomes relating to an important health issue will be achieved; 5) The research has met all six Goals for the Research Investment Stream.

### Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team
The team have the ability to achieve the proposed outcomes and impacts because they have demonstrated: 1) Appropriate qualifications and experience; 2) Right mix of expertise, experience and FTEs; 3) Capability to perform research in current research environment; 4) Networks/collaborations; 5) History of productivity and delivery on previous research funding.

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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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Criteria Descriptor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
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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:

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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for Research</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Methods</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 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. In cases where any scores differ significantly, or there are clearly identifiable outliers, the research proposal is revisited and further discussion may take place. Committee members may be asked to rescore. At this point, the scores allocated by members become final.

### 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. This procedure will allow any application in the ranked table to move up or down by one position at a time:

- Any SAC member may bring forward an application for re-ranking.
- Conflicts of Interest are notified and managed appropriately.
- 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 average scores would then be put forward for consideration at the next stage by GAC or directly to the HRC Board.
- Re-ranking of other applications can be done using an iterative process until a final ranked list is reached.

### 7.8.7 Fundable and Not Fundable Line

At the end of the meeting, all proposals are ranked according to score. The Committee then:

- identifies the proposals assessed as not fundable (NF),
- 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 or are so fatally flawed that, irrespective of available budget, they should not be funded.

**Note:** Once the proposals have been scored following discussion by the Committee, no scores are permitted to be reviewed or adjusted at the conclusion of the meeting. Any concerns about the process are identified by FSAC and are taken by the Chair to the Chair of the relevant Research Committee.
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.

The FSAC 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.

Triaged applications not discussed at the meeting will not receive written Review Summaries, however a percentage ranking will be available under Outcomes on the online submission system.
7.10 Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Feasibility Study Applications

7.10.1 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.

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</table>

**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**

Significance of health issue; potential to advance knowledge and address an important gap; aims and hypotheses build on existing knowledge; and originality of the approach.

B. **Design and Methods**

Study design; appropriateness of the research methods chosen; the validity of the proposed analyses; and the feasibility of attaining the statistical power sought (if appropriate); feasibility issues and stage of development of the full study. Patient safety issues well managed in feasibility study and proposed full study.

C. **Research Impact**

Advance one or more of the Investment Stream goals; contribution to increased knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains; importance of potential outcomes; and pathway for knowledge transfer.

D. **Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team**

Academic qualifications of the research team; experience and knowledge in the proposed research area; and track record of publications and the dissemination of research results. The track record of each member of the team, i.e. Named Investigators, must be assessed. It is important that Committees consider the time or FTE dedicated by senior investigators on each proposal and weight their scoring on the track record of the research team accordingly, i.e. high scores should not be allocated on the basis of a Named Investigator who has a small percentage FTE involvement in the research.
7.10.2 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.

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**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**

Significance of health issue; potential to advance knowledge and address an important gap; aims and hypotheses build on existing knowledge; and originality of the approach.

B. **Design and Methods**

Study design; appropriateness of the research methods chosen; the validity of the proposed analyses; and the feasibility of attaining the statistical power sought (if appropriate); feasibility issues and stage of development of the full study. Patient safety issues well managed in feasibility study and proposed full study.

C. **Research Impact**

Advance one or more of the Investment Signal goals; contribution to increased knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains; importance of potential outcomes; and pathway for knowledge transfer.

D. **Team Capability: Research Outcomes**

Qualifications, experience and knowledge in the proposed research area; right mix of expertise and appropriate networks and demonstrated connections with the health sector; history of productivity and delivery; and the right research environment. The track record of each member of the team (i.e. Named Investigators) must be assessed. It is important that Committees consider the time or FTE dedicated by senior investigators on each proposal and weight their scoring on the track record of the research team accordingly (i.e. high scores should not be allocated on the basis of a Named Investigator who has a small percentage FTE involvement in the research).
E. Team Capability: Research Uptake

Assessment of mix of expertise, dissemination plan, networks for knowledge transfer and uptake. The team must demonstrate a strong component of service-user, clinical, health provider, support worker and community or population involvement from the outset of research. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>% score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Team capability - outcomes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.10.3 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.

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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
Significance of health issue; potential to advance knowledge and address an important gap; aims and hypotheses build on existing knowledge; and originality of the approach.

B. Design and Methods
Study design in relation to full study; appropriateness of the research methods chosen; the validity of the proposed analyses; technical issues; incorporates culturally appropriate methods for data handling and involvement of Māori participants; feasibility of attaining the statistical power sought (if appropriate); qualitative sampling and analytic frame (where appropriate); feasibility issues and stage of development of the full study. Patient safety issues well managed in feasibility study or proposed full study.

C. Research Impact
The proposed outcomes will add value and make a difference because some or all the following:

- The impact will result in knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains for Māori.
- Plans have been made for the dissemination, uptake and utilisation of research findings (Goal 2).
- The research will contribute to building Māori health research capacity (Goal 5).
- Outcomes relating to an important health issue will be achieved.
- The research has met all six Goals for the Research Investment Stream.

D. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team
Academic qualifications of the research team; experience and knowledge in the proposed research area; and track record of publications and the dissemination of research results. The track record of each member of the team, i.e. Named Investigators, must be assessed. It is important that Committees consider the time or FTE dedicated by senior investigators on each proposal and weight their scoring on the track record of the research team accordingly, i.e. high scores should not be allocated on the basis of a Named Investigator who has a small percentage FTE involvement in the research.
8 Explorer Grant Application Assessment Process

8.1 Introduction

Prospective applicants are advised to read this Manual in conjunction with Explorer Grant Guidelines (published on the HRC website) to ensure that their applications meet HRC requirements. The targeted readers of this Manual are Assessing Committee members.

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. 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.

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,
- triage of proposals where there is unanimous agreement that the Compatibility criteria are not met,
- revision of assessment for proposals where there is mixed assessment of the Compatibility criteria (followed by triage of proposals where there is not unanimous agreement that the Compatibility criterion: Transformative is met),
- EGAC members to nominate ('rescue') any triaged proposal for meeting discussion and final assessment,
- all remaining proposals for which there is unanimous agreement that the Compatibility criterion: Transformative is met and majority agreement that the Compatibility criterion: Viability is 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 HRC Board to make the final funding decisions.

8.3 HRC Explorer Grant Assessing Committee (EGAC)

EGAC consists of a Chair and 8-12 members (this number allows for applications to be assigned to subgroups of the committee 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 biomedical, clinical and public health 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.

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.

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 and goal(s) 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 will 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 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 assessors, 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 unanimously decide that a proposal is potentially transformative. There is no universally accepted definition of transformative research. Proposals are likely to be unconventional, highly original, have the potential to lead to disruptive change and not already have significant supporting evidence. The assessing panel will apply the USA National Science Board definition of transformative research:
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.5

An impact on knowledge is valid, and the idea, methodology, tool or technology need not be immediately applicable in terms of a health outcome. Applications assessed as being potentially transformative are also considered to have potential for impact with regard to the health, social and/or economic goals set out for each 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. 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 revise their scores and to discuss those proposals for which there are discrepancies of opinion about the two criteria. After discussion, these proposals will be re-evaluated by each assigned assessor, and those proposals for which there is now unanimous agreement that the transformative criterion is met and majority agreement the viability criterion is 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 their approval.

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 Statutory Research Committees (BRC, PHRC, MHC), HRC Chief Executive and is chaired by an independent person appointed by the Board.

GAC makes the final funding recommendations for HRC Board 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. The budget table will indicate available funding, split across contract types and spread between the Research Investment Streams (RIS).

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 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 HRC Board),
- Emerging Researcher First Grant applications (unless approved prior by the HRC Board),
- Explorer Grant applications (unless approved prior by the HRC Board),
- Project applications for each RIS,
- Programme applications for each RIS.

9.3 GAC Process
The members of GAC have in past processes worked in a collaborative manner to decide on the final list of applications to recommend to the Board 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 will need to be considered. Over several Funding Rounds, GAC will have the opportunity to apply or balance funding allocation so that the indicative budget goals of the RIS framework are achieved.
10 HRC Board

10.1 Introduction

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

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

10.2 Papers prepared for the Board

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 Board 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 Board and sent with the Board 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 Board 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 Board Approval

The Board 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
Level 3, 110 Stanley Street, Grafton
AUCKLAND 1141

Telephone: +64 9 303 5200
Fax: +64 9 377 9988
Email: info@hrc.govt.nz
Website: www.hrc.govt.nz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Application</th>
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<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Vernon Choy</td>
<td>HRC investment processes and programmes</td>
<td>+9 303 5206</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vchoy@hrc.govt.nz">vchoy@hrc.govt.nz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie Duncan</td>
<td>HRC investment processes and programmes</td>
<td>+9 303 5215</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mduncan@hrc.govt.nz">mduncan@hrc.govt.nz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Garland</td>
<td>Public Health, Feasibility Studies</td>
<td>+9 303 5214</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lgarland@hrc.govt.nz">lgarland@hrc.govt.nz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Miguel Jo-Avila</td>
<td>Biomedical</td>
<td>+9 303 5223</td>
<td><a href="mailto:MJo-Avila@hrc.govt.nz">MJo-Avila@hrc.govt.nz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolotea Lanumata</td>
<td>Pacific health research</td>
<td>+9 303 5224</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tlanumata@hrc.govt.nz">tlanumata@hrc.govt.nz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni Liu</td>
<td>Feasibility Studies</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:tliu@hrc.govt.nz">tliu@hrc.govt.nz</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stacey Pene</td>
<td>Māori health research, Emerging Researcher First Grants</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:spene@hrc.govt.nz">spene@hrc.govt.nz</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucy Pomeroy</td>
<td>Clinical research, Programmes</td>
<td>+9 303 5216</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lpomeroy@hrc.govt.nz">lpomeroy@hrc.govt.nz</a></td>
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## 12 Version Information

This section provides a document history only.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Version/Issue Date/Status</td>
<td>Final/July 2017/Published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of changes</td>
<td>Minor changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared by</td>
<td>Dir Research Investment &amp; Contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved by</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
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Appendix 1. Scoring Criteria and Anchor Point Descriptors (Projects and Programmes)

Introduction

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

The current criteria for assessment of proposals submitted to the Rangahau Hauora Māori Research Investment Stream (RHM) incorporate the previous ones, whilst ensuring that research funded meets the goals of the Investment Stream goals and supports the principles outlined in Ngā Pou Rangahau: The HRC’s Strategic Plan for Māori Health Research 2010 – 2015.

In addition to the scoring criteria that the SAC apply to Projects, Programmes are assessed by the SAC on a further scoring criterion “Cohesiveness of Research Programme”. This is not part of the Total Score, but it provides information for the Programme Assessing Committee.

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. This was expected to improve scoring consistency.
Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Research Project Proposals in HW and IOACC

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Criteria Descriptor</th>
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<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score one (“Poor”) if proposal is outside the scope of the RIS it has been submitted to.

**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 outcomes will add value and make a difference because some or all the following:

- They advance one or more of the Investment Stream goals*
- They will have impact, resulting in knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains*
- Plans have been made for uptake and utilisation of research findings.
- Outcomes relating to an important health issue will be achieved.
- There is appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

D. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

The team 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).

E. Global Score (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.

F. Cohesiveness of Research Programme (Programmes only)

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.

---

* Reviewers are asked to weigh the relative types of and timescales to impact. For example, research findings may:

- Become a knowledge resource of international value, that substantially effects the concepts or methods that drive an important field(s) of health research; and/or
- Lead to better patient outcomes through clinical advances/improved health services; and/or
- Lead to improved community health and health equity through policy or intervention; and/or
- Provide a cost-effective or revenue-generating product or service to improve human health or advance health research

* Score 1 if the proposal is out of scope for the RIS it has been submitted to.
Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Research Project Proposals in RHM

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.

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 outcomes will add value and make a difference because some or all the following:

- They will have impact, resulting in knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains for Māori7.
- Plans have been made for the dissemination, uptake and utilisation of research findings (Goal 2).
- The research will contribute to building Māori health research capacity (Goal 5).
- Outcomes relating to an important health issue will be achieved.
- The research has met all six Goals for the RHM Research Investment Stream*.

D. Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team

The team 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,
- capability to perform research in current research environment,
- networks/collaborations
- history of productivity and delivery on previous research funding.

E. Global Score (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.

F. Cohesiveness of Research Programme (Programmes only)

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.

---

7 Reviewers are asked to weigh the relative types of and timescales to impact. For example, research findings may:

- Become a knowledge resource of national and international value, that substantially effects the concepts or methods that drive indigenous health research; and/or
- Lead to better outcomes for Māori through clinical advances/improved health services; and/or
- Lead to improved community health and health equity for Māori through policy or intervention; and/or
- Provide a cost-effective or revenue-generating product or service to improve human health or advance health research

* Score 1 if the proposal is out of scope for the RIS it has been submitted to.
Criteria for Assessing and Scoring Research Project Proposals in NZHD

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.

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<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Rationale for Research

The research is important, worthwhile and justifiable because it addresses some or all of the following:
- It addresses an issue that is important for New Zealand health delivery,
- The aims research questions and hypotheses build on existing knowledge and address a knowledge gap,
- The research findings will 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 outcomes will add value and make a difference because some or all the following have been demonstrated:
- They will have a positive impact on New Zealand health and disability service delivery within 5 years of the Project commencing*,
- Plans have been made for the uptake and utilisation of research findings,
- Outcomes relating to an important health issue will be achieved
- There is appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

* Score 1 if the proposal is out of scope for the RIS it has been submitted to.
D. **Team Capability: Research Outcomes**

The team have the ability to achieve the proposed outcomes, because they have demonstrated:

- appropriate qualifications and experience,
- right mix of expertise, experience and FTEs,
- demonstrated connections with the health sector,
- history of productivity and delivery on previous research funding,
- capability to perform research in current research environment,
- appropriate responsiveness to Māori (if applicable).

E. **Team Capability: Research Uptake**

The proposed outcomes are likely to be used, because the proposal demonstrates:

- 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).

F. **Global Score (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 Proposals Submitted to the Programme Assesing Committee

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

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.

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applications are assessed initially by a discipline-based SAC for 5 scoring criteria (Rationale for research, Design and Methods, Research Impact, Expertise and Track Record of the Research Team, Cohesiveness of 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. The maximum total score awardable at the SAC stage is 28.

Subsequently, PAC assessment scores against 4 criteria (A, B, C, D) detailed below. The maximum total score awardable by PAC is 28 so that the aggregate maximum score is 56.

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,
- the total cost of the research with respect to ‘value for money’, and/or
- responsiveness to Māori.

Assessment of these factors may affect any of the criteria to be scored by PAC.

The HRC 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:

- health knowledge (including a clear focus on addressing inequalities),
- contribution to improvement in health,
- integration of on-going research,
- training opportunities (to strengthen health research workforce capacity for Māori and young investigators),
- economic outcomes.

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.

D. 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 applicant 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,
- 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.
## Appendix 2. Assessing Committee Fees and Expenses

### Fee Schedule

#### Expression of Interest SAC (for a 2-day meeting)

<table>
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<th>Committee Member</th>
<th>Ad hoc Member*</th>
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#### Full Application SAC / Ngā Kanohi Kitea Full Stage (for a 2-day meeting)

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#### FSAC (for a 2-day meeting)

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<td></td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>$500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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. 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 so that members can take part.

The HRC will reimburse for reasonable expenses incurred while serving on the Science Assessing Committee. Please note that movie charges will not be reimbursed. Minibar expenses are only reimbursed in lieu of a meal. 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 $65 per meal is not considered a reasonable expense. Alcohol claims other than with meals are not claimable.

An expense claim form is distributed at the meeting. Taxi fares, parking and mileage on private vehicles are claimable. Members should keep an accurate account of expenses and submit receipts with the claim.

Printing Costs

The HRC is moving towards fully digital processes so that copies of applications will not be distributed to all committees. 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. Policy on Managing Conflicts of Interest – Board and Committees

Reference No. | HRC | Version No. | 3
---|---|---|---
Governing | HRC Secretariat, contractors and consultants | | |
Prepared/updated by | Chief Executive | | |
Approved by | HRC Board | | |
Date approved | December 2008, February 2011, June 2014 | | |
Review date | June 2016 | | |

Introduction
It is important for the integrity of the Health Research Council (HRC) that conflicts of interest are managed properly and that the staff, and anyone working on behalf of the HRC ("staff member"), are seen to uphold the principles of integrity, honesty, transparency, openness, independence, good faith and service to the public. Or as stated more simply in the State Service Code of Conduct the key principles that public servants must uphold are fair, impartial, responsible and trustworthy.

Members of public organisations often have a number of professional and personal interests and roles. Occasionally, some of those interest or roles overlap, particularly in New Zealand in the specialist area of health research. Conflicts of interest sometimes cannot be avoided and can arise without anyone being at fault. The existence of a conflict of interest does not necessarily mean that the person has done anything wrong, or that the interests of the public entity have suffered. If the conflict of interest is not well managed it may lead to misconduct but merely labelling a situation as a conflict of interest does not mean that corruption or some other abuse of office has occurred.

The first step is to disclose the conflict of interest and for it to the correct people and for any conflicts identified recorded appropriately. The conflict of interest must then be managed properly.

What is a ‘conflict of interest’?
A conflict of interest is where:

A members' or official’s duties or responsibilities to a public entity could be affected by some other interest or duty that the member of official may have.

A conflict of interest arises where an individual has an interest which conflicts, might conflict, or might be perceived to conflict with the interests of the Crown body itself. Consideration has to be given to whether there is a reasonable risk that the situation could

---

8 Para 2.16 p15 Managing Conflicts of Interest: Guidance for public entities – Auditor General of New Zealand June 2007
9 Adapted from the Managing Conflicts of Interest: Guidance for public entities – Auditor General of New Zealand June 2007
10 Para 1.2 Managing Conflicts of Interest: Guidance for public entities, Auditor-General, June 2007
11 Adapted from the New Zealand State Services Commission, Board Appointment and Induction Guidelines, Annex 2 – Identifying and dealing with conflicts of interest.
undermine the public trust and confidence in the staff member of the HRC. It is not enough that staff members of the HRC are honest and fair, they should be seen to be so.\textsuperscript{12}

It is important to manage conflicts of interest well as it is not only good practice but it also protects the HRC and the person involved in the conflict of interest. A conflict of interest that is hidden, or that is poorly managed creates a risk of allegations or perceptions of misconduct or other adverse consequences such as litigation.

For some conflicts of interest it is clear that a staff member would have to be excluded from being involved in the matter or decision making process. For example:

- influencing or participating in a decision to award grants or contracts where the Staff Member is connected to a person or organisation that submitted an application or tender;
- being involved in a decision to appoint or employ someone the staff member has a personal relationship\textsuperscript{13} with;
- conducting business on behalf of the HRC with a company run by someone who the staff member has personal relationship with, and
- being involved in a decision in relation to another staff member (e.g. performance reviews, salary reviews or promotions) if they have a personal relationship with that staff member.

The Policy
The policy of the HRC is that potential conflicts of interest should be declared in the appropriate way and for any conflicts of interest to be managed in a transparent and appropriate way for the protection of both the HRC and its staff members.

Declaring Conflicts of Interest
When a member of staff or someone working on behalf of the HRC realises that they have a conflict of interest they must declare it as soon as is practical after they realise. They should declare the conflict of interest to their line manager or the appropriate person in the circumstances, either verbally or in writing, whichever is most appropriate.

Such declaration does not necessarily exclude the individual from further involvement in the relevant process, but it is important the conflict is declared so that consideration can be given to the appropriate way to manage the conflict of interest.

Managing a Conflict of Interest
The line manager is responsible for evaluating, resolving any areas of uncertainty, and making a final decision regarding whether a conflict of interest exists. If there is a conflict of interest one of the following actions will be taken:

i. No action is deemed necessary.

\textsuperscript{12} Adapted from para 1.11 Managing Conflicts of interest: Guidance for public entities, Auditor-General, June 2007

\textsuperscript{13} A “personal relationship” is defined as one which goes beyond the normal level of relationship which exists between individuals in similar circumstances. This includes any relationship where a reasonable person may believe that power and influence could be exerted for personal gain or adversely affect normal processes, particularly for other people within the working environment.
ii. The person may be present during the process or decision-making to provide information but may not participate in general discussions or vote, score or form policy (as appropriate).

iii. The person is excluded from the process or decision-making.

If there is any doubt the line manager should advise their line manager or discuss the matter with the Chief Executive.

**Training and Advice**
If staff would like any further training or advice in relation to conflicts of interest they should discuss this with their Manager or the Chief Executive.

**Breaches and complaints**
All complaints about breaches of this policy should be addressed to line manager, Finance Manager or Chief Executive in the first instances. If the complaints are of a serious nature they may be escalated to the Board.

**Failure to follow this policy**
Any failure to follow to this policy will be looked at seriously and disciplinary action may be taken. A serious breach may result in the action being taken under the staff member’s individual contract, particularly as a serious breach is also likely to be a breach of the State Services Commission Standards of Integrity and Conduct.
## Appendix 4. Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMAC</td>
<td>Biomedical/clinical science assessing committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRC</td>
<td>Biomedical research committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Career development awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDAC</td>
<td>Career development awards assessing committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR, CR1, CR2</td>
<td>Science assessing committee reviewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV</td>
<td>Curriculum vitae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTAC</td>
<td>Clinical Trials Assessing Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>EGAC</td>
<td>Explorer Grant Assessing Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOI</td>
<td>Expression of Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/NF</td>
<td>Fundable/Not Fundable; or, Full stage/Not full stage for EOI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA</td>
<td>Full application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGAC</td>
<td>Emerging Researcher First Grant assessing committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSAC</td>
<td>Feasibility Study assessing committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAC</td>
<td>Grant approval committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRC</td>
<td>Health Research Council of New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW</td>
<td>Health and wellbeing in New Zealand research investment stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOACC</td>
<td>Improving outcomes for acute and chronic conditions in New Zealand research investment stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHAC</td>
<td>Māori health science assessing committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHR</td>
<td>Māori health reviewer for Programme assessing committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHC</td>
<td>Māori health committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>Named investigator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Science Challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZHD</td>
<td>New Zealand health delivery research investment stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC</td>
<td>Programme assessing committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHRC</td>
<td>Public health research committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PacificHRC</td>
<td>Pacific Island health research committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHM</td>
<td>Rangahau Hauora Māori research investment stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIS</td>
<td>Research investment stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAC</td>
<td>Science assessing committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5. 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. NZHD and 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.
EOI Review Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Round</th>
<th>AFR</th>
<th>Application Type</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td></td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 (brief bullet points)
Appendix 6. Applicant Rebuttal Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>HRC Reference #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding Round</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 7. FGAC Review Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Round</th>
<th>AFR</th>
<th>Application Type</th>
<th>Emerging Researcher First Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. FSAC Review Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Round</th>
<th>AFR</th>
<th>Application Type</th>
<th>Feasibility Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 9. PAC Review Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Round</th>
<th>AFR</th>
<th>Application Type</th>
<th>Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
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<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 10. SAC Review Summary: Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Round</th>
<th>AFR</th>
<th>Application Type</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td></td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 11. SAC Review Summary: Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Round</th>
<th>AFR</th>
<th>Application Type</th>
<th>Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
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<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 12. Assessing Committee Chair’s Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee name</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Project Manager</th>
<th>PH/BM/Clin/MH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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

2. Venue and catering

3. Committee membership, expertise and working relationship

4. Assessment of applications
   - Management of COIs
   - Key recommendations

5. Other comments
## Appendix 13. Glossary of Māori Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahua</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ao</td>
<td>World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aroha</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ataahua</td>
<td>Beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hauora</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He aha te mea</td>
<td>What is this thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiamoe</td>
<td>Sleepy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinengaro</td>
<td>Mental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoki</td>
<td>Also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hui</td>
<td>Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iwi</td>
<td>Tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaha</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kai</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaimahi</td>
<td>Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaitiakitanga</td>
<td>Guardianship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaiwhakahaere</td>
<td>Organisers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanohi ki te kanohi</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karakia</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karanga</td>
<td>Call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katoa</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaumatua</td>
<td>Elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaupapa</td>
<td>Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaupapa Māori</td>
<td>Māori research ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawa</td>
<td>Protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawakawa</td>
<td>Pepper tree, <em>Macropiper excelsum</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Koe</td>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koha</td>
<td>Gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korero</td>
<td>Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koutou</td>
<td>All of you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuia</td>
<td>Elderly lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahana</td>
<td>Warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maioha</td>
<td>Heartfelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana</td>
<td>Prestige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana tangata</td>
<td>Self-determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana whenua</td>
<td>Local tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marama</td>
<td>Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matakite</td>
<td>Spiritual insight and gifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mātauranga</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mātou</td>
<td>Us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mema</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mihi/mihimihi</td>
<td>To greet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutunga Kore</td>
<td>Never ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nui</td>
<td>Great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oranga</td>
<td>Well-being</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ō ōtātou</td>
<td>Ours</td>
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<td>Pono</td>
<td>True</td>
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<td>Pōwhiri</td>
<td>Welcome ceremony</td>
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<td>Pūkenga</td>
<td>Abilities and skills</td>
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<td>Rangahau</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rangatahi</td>
<td>Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangatira</td>
<td>Chiefly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawa</td>
<td>Really</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reo</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rongoā</td>
<td>Traditional Māori medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori Word</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rōpū</td>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangata whenua</td>
<td>Local people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te</td>
<td>The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Hau Kāinga</td>
<td>The home of origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teina</td>
<td>Younger relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tēnei</td>
<td>This</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tīka</td>
<td>Right</td>
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<td>Tikanga Māori</td>
<td>Māori customs</td>
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<td>Physical</td>
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<td>Tino rangatiratanga</td>
<td>Māori control and sovereignty</td>
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<td>Tohunga</td>
<td>Priest</td>
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<td>Tuakana</td>
<td>Elder relationship</td>
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<td>Māori cultural identity</td>
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<td>Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uara tau</td>
<td>Guiding values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wahakura</td>
<td>Flax woven baby basket</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wāhine hapū</td>
<td>Pregnant women</td>
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<td>Waiata</td>
<td>Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wairua</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wānanga</td>
<td>Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whānau</td>
<td>Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whānau, Hapū, Iwi</td>
<td>Family, Sub-tribe, Tribe</td>
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<td>Family wellbeing</td>
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<td>Genealogy</td>
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<td>Survivor</td>
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<td>Listen</td>
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<td>Whakaruruhau</td>
<td>Safety</td>
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<td>Whakawhānaungatanga</td>
<td>Collaborative family relationships</td>
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<td>Whare Tapa Wha</td>
<td>Four-sided house, Māori model of health encompassing taha tinana, taha wairua, taha hinengaro and taha whānau</td>
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<td>Whenua</td>
<td>Land</td>
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