



# Performance-Based Research Fund Review

Proposed Changes and Options for Strengthening  
the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF)

Discussion Document



**Kōrero**

**Mātauranga**

**Me kōrero tātou**

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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Background.....	4
Quality Evaluation.....	4
Research Degree Completions .....	5
External Research Income .....	5
Review of the PBRF .....	5
Terms of Reference for the PBRF Review .....	5
The PBRF Review Panel.....	5
The Panel's Findings .....	6
<b>This Discussion Document</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Delaying the Next Quality Evaluation Until 2025 .....	7
<b>Overview of targeted consultation</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Our approach.....	8
Targeted consultation timeframes .....	8
What will happen following targeted consultation?.....	8
<b>Proposed Changes and Options for the PBRF</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Key objective one: Broadening the PBRF concept of research excellence</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Modifying the current objectives of the PBRF .....	9
Refreshing the PBRF's definition of research excellence .....	10
Reviewing subject areas.....	11
<b>Key objective two: Enabling a more sustainable and diverse research workforce</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Improving support for mātauranga Māori and Pacific research, and Māori and Pacific researchers .....	12
Reviewing qualifying criteria .....	13
<b>Key objective three: Improving how Government supports tertiary sector research</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Progressing work that builds tertiary sector research capability and capacity .....	14
Funding backstop for the NZIST in the next Quality Evaluation;.....	14
Reflecting the strengthened PBRF .....	15
Rebalancing the components of the PBRF .....	16
Seeking new PBRF metrics.....	17
Researching and assessing the PBRF.....	17
<b>Operational changes to the PBRF</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Building on the successes of the PBRF .....	18

**Glossary ..... 19**

**Annex One: Summary of Proposed Changes and Options for Strengthening the  
PBRF ..... 21**

**Annex Two: Indicative Timeline for Implementation ..... 22**

**Annex Three: Proposed Refocused Research Contribution Categories ..... 23**

# Introduction

## Background

The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) is designed to encourage and reward high-quality tertiary education research and research-led teaching, across all subject areas and types of research, in New Zealand's degree-granting tertiary education organisations (TEOs). The PBRF does not fund research directly but supports research, including post-graduate teaching and supervision.

The PBRF, established in 2002, is the main mechanism of Government funding for tertiary education research capability. The fund is a capped pool of \$315 million per year that can only be increased through Budget decisions.

The PBRF is accessed by universities, wānanga, institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs) and private training establishments (PTEs). PBRF funding works alongside tuition subsidy funding to enable New Zealand students and international students studying in New Zealand to receive world-class degree and postgraduate qualifications.

PBRF funding is used throughout our tertiary education system to support a wide range of different research that provides economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits to New Zealand. The PBRF is a key aspect of our tertiary research system and contributes to New Zealand's broader research, science and innovation system.

In its operation, the PBRF employs peer-review processes and performance measures. There are three funding components of the PBRF: the Quality Evaluation; Research Degree Completions; and the External Research Income components.

## Quality Evaluation

The Quality Evaluation (QE) component of the PBRF is 55% of the fund, and is an assessment of the research performance of staff at eligible TEOs<sup>1</sup>. TEOs present their staff members' research in Evidence Portfolios (EPs) that are assessed by expert peer-review panels.

The QE is held periodically (currently every six years). For information on the most recent round, see the [2018 Quality Evaluation](#)<sup>2</sup>. Participation in the QE component is mandatory for TEOs seeking funding through the PBRF.

Funding for this component is based on:

- » The Quality Categories assigned to EPs (a higher weighting is given to higher quality categories, and new and emerging researchers);
- » The subject area to which EPs have been assigned (a higher weighting is given to some subject areas where there is a higher cost to research);
- » The full-time-equivalent (FTE) status of the TEO's PBRF-eligible staff.

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<sup>1</sup> A TEO that receives PBRF funding is required to: comply with the requirements of the [Education Act 1989](#), and comply with the [conditions](#) specified in its funding approval documents.

<sup>2</sup> There have been three previous Quality Evaluation rounds in 2003, 2006 and 2012. For more information about these earlier rounds see [Previous Quality Evaluation rounds](#).

## Research Degree Completions

The Research Degree Completions component of the PBRF is 25% of the fund, and is an annual measurement of the number of PBRF-eligible postgraduate research-based degrees completed at participating TEOs. This helps to capture the connection between research staff and research training.

## External Research Income

The External Research Income component of the PBRF is 20% of the fund, and is an annual measurement of the amount and type of income received by participating TEOs from external sources for research purposes.

## Review of the PBRF

The PBRF has been periodically reviewed, the last review was held in 2012/13. Government commissioned a review of the PBRF (the Review) that commenced on 29 July 2019.

The Review examined the ways that the Government can continue to support research excellence by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of PBRF settings and ensuring that it delivers outcomes for learners, businesses, communities and New Zealand as a whole.

## Terms of Reference for the PBRF Review

The Terms of Reference for the PBRF Review highlighted six areas for consideration:

- » Revisiting the PBRF objectives: the Review considered whether the PBRF objectives meet current and future challenges and priorities.
- » Improving research collaboration and engagement with end users: the Review considered the merits of moving from individual-based assessment to a group-based assessment, in terms of collaboration, supporting workforce development, reducing compliance costs and measuring impact of research.
- » Boosting the impact of tertiary education research: the Review examined the PBRF assessment of impact on communities, the environment, businesses and Government.
- » Assessing excellent research with lower transaction costs: the Review examined options for modifying current PBRF settings to reduce transaction costs for research staff, TEOs and Government.
- » Recognising and rewarding all types of research activity: the Review considered how the PBRF can better support the activities of all types of research.
- » Sustainable and diverse workforce with investigator-led research capability: the Review examined the effectiveness of the PBRF on the development of a highly-skilled and diverse research workforce.

## The PBRF Review Panel

An independent panel was appointed by Associate Minister of Education Jenny Salesa and Minister of Education Chris Hipkins in July 2019 to carry out the Review of the PBRF. The panel members were:

- » Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith - Chair (*University of Waikato*)
- » Professor Wendy Lerner (*Victoria University of Wellington*)
- » Dr David Phipps (*York University, Canada*)
- » Professor Ian Town (*Ministry of Health*)
- » Associate Professor Yvonne Underhill-Sem (*University of Auckland*)
- » Associate Professor Marcus Williams (*Unitec Institute of Technology*)

The panel engaged with the tertiary education research sector during the Review, meeting with a range of key informants and stakeholders. The panel also invited written submissions to inform their review.

Throughout the Review, the panel was supported by the Ministry of Education, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

The panel provided Associate Minister Salesa with a final report on 31 January 2020, this report can be found on the [Ministry of Education website](#). The changes and options proposed in this discussion document are significantly informed by the recommendations made by the panel in its report.

### The Panel's Findings

Throughout the Review, the panel found that the PBRF has contributed to an improvement in measured tertiary research quality; that previously unrecognised strengths in our tertiary system are increasingly recognised and rewarded; and that the fundamentals of the fund largely work well.

The panel found that the following aspects of the PBRF should be retained:

- » The Quality Evaluation (QE) and Research Degree Completion (RDC) components;
- » Research excellence evaluated by peer-review assessment;
- » The individual as the unit of assessment;
- » A six year period between QEs.

To strengthen the PBRF, the panel found that the PBRF definition of research needs to be broadened; diversity and inclusion must be well integrated into our tertiary education research system; and improvements must be made to Government support for tertiary education research.

# This Discussion Document

The proposed changes and options for the PBRF that we are consulting on are grouped under three key objectives:

- 1 Broadening the PBRF concept of research excellence;
- 2 Enabling a more sustainable and diverse research workforce;
- 3 Improving how Government supports research across the tertiary education sector.

We are also consulting on some additional operational changes to the PBRF that are designed to support these three key objectives. In total, a package of twenty-six proposed changes and options is being consulted on, these are summarised as **Annex One**.

We have structured this discussion document around these objectives. Each section details the changes and options we are proposing in order to achieve that objective, the reasons for doing so and also some key questions we are seeking your feedback on.

These proposed changes and options were developed in a pre-COVID context, however we recognise that COVID-19 has impacted research and research-led teaching in many ways. We are therefore also seeking feedback about these proposals in the context of COVID-19.

An indicative timeline for proposed changes and options is summarised as **Annex Two**.

## Delaying the Next Quality Evaluation Until 2025

The next Quality Evaluation was scheduled to take place in 2024. However, recognising the impact of COVID-19 on researchers and tertiary education organisations, the Associate Minister has decided to delay the next round until 2025. This is due to the delays to the Review caused by COVID-19. Delaying until 2025 will allow the TEC and the Sector Reference Group to conduct a robust process of engagement on any operational changes before guidance is issued.

We are also conscious that the full impacts of COVID-19 on research programmes and researchers may not yet be known, and that a 2024 Quality Evaluation may have risked a lack of engagement as the focus remained on the COVID-19 response.

# Overview of targeted consultation

## Our approach

We recognise the significance of the PBRF as the main mechanism of Government funding for research capability that supports research, knowledge generation as well as teaching and learning throughout our TEOs. We also recognise the broader impacts of tertiary education research on the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspirations of New Zealand.

Given the broad reach of the benefits and impacts of the PBRF, we want to hear your views on the proposed changes and options for the fund. We have indicated throughout this discussion document where we are particularly interested in hearing from individual researchers or a departmental/organisational perspective.

## Targeted consultation timeframes

Consultation on the proposed changes and options for the PBRF will occur from Monday 31 August – Friday 6 November 2020. We are asking for feedback on the proposed changes and options via an online survey and written submissions.

A link to the online survey can be found on the [Ministry of Education website](#).

We also welcome any written submissions on the proposals in this discussion document. Written submissions should be sent to [PBRF.Consultation@education.govt.nz](mailto:PBRF.Consultation@education.govt.nz) by 5pm, Friday 6 November 2020.

## What will happen following targeted consultation?

Feedback we receive as part of this targeted consultation will inform advice to Ministers, who will decide what to take forward. Final decisions on any changes to the PBRF will be made by the incoming Government.

# Proposed Changes and Options for the PBRF

## Key objective one: Broadening the PBRF concept of research excellence

Throughout the Review, the panel found that the PBRF concept of research needs to encompass the full range of research activity and cultures in our tertiary education system, all of which lend to research excellence. The panel found that the richest examples of research excellence must be drawn out with a focus on the highest quality research outputs and the most important contributions to the research environment.

COVID-19 has put a focus on researchers from our TEOs and their work, showing the importance of policy that is grounded in evidence and data. Researchers from many fields have played a key role during the COVID-19 response, communicating to officials and the public about their research and its implications. Restrictions from different alert levels have had varying effects on researchers' plans and programmes, with potential for impacts over several years.

We are interested in exploring options to broaden the PBRF concept of research excellence in ways that would ensure this excellence is recognised and rewarded, and we welcome feedback about the following proposals in terms of the impacts of COVID-19.

*To support broadening the PBRF concept of research excellence, we are seeking feedback on the following proposed changes and options:*

## Modifying the current objectives of the PBRF

To reflect the changing research environment in New Zealand and Government's long-term strategic direction and priorities for the tertiary education system, the objectives of the PBRF<sup>3</sup> would be modified by:

- a. Adding a new objective, that "*the PBRF ensure a flourishing and inclusive system for developing and sustaining research excellence in New Zealand*"

### Discussion questions - *Modifying the current objectives of the PBRF*

Do you support the addition of this proposed objective?

Are there any changes you would make to this proposed objective?

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tec.govt.nz/funding/funding-and-performance/funding/fund-finder/performance-based-research-fund/>

## Refreshing the PBRF's definition of research excellence

The Quality Evaluation peer-review panels put into action the PBRF definition of research<sup>4</sup> within their disciplines. To support this work, and to recognise a wider range of world-class research excellence, we propose four options for refreshing how the PBRF defines and assesses research excellence:

- b. Rewording the PBRF definition of research to: emphasise excellence; encompass the production of research, engagement and impact relating to that research; and support for vibrant, diverse research cultures.
- c. Replacing the Nominated Research Outputs (NRO) component with *Examples of Research Excellence (ERE)*;
  - » *A shift to EREs would allow researchers to present up to four examples of research excellence across research production, engagement, impact and support for research cultures. These would still be anchored by research outputs.*
- d. Replacing the Other Nominated Research Outputs (ONRO) component with *Other Examples of Research Excellence (OERE)* and reducing the maximum number from twelve to six;
- e. Refocusing the Research Contributions section on the best examples of activities that contribute to the sustainability and viability of the research system (see Annex Three).

### Discussion questions - Refreshing the PBRF's definition of research excellence

Do you support the proposed refresh of the PBRF's definition of research?

Do you support the proposed ERE and OERE components?

What benefits and extra costs could the proposed ERE and OERE components have for TEOs in engaging with the Quality Evaluation?

Aside from the proposed ERE components, are there other components of the Evidence Portfolios where research impact should be assessed?

*For tertiary education researchers* - how would the proposed ERE and OERE components change your approach to your EP?

*For tertiary education leadership and research managers* - how would you expect this shift to change the behaviours of your researchers?

Do you support the proposed refocused Research Contributions?

What benefits and impacts will streamlining Research Contributions have?

Are there additional considerations that should be made for these proposals, including in the context of COVID-19?

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<sup>4</sup> [Guidelines for tertiary education organisations participating in the 2018 Quality Evaluation](#) – page14

## Reviewing subject areas

The PBRF applies subject area weightings to funding, these range from 1 to 2.5. These weightings are linked to Student Achievement Component funding and are intended to reflect the relative costs of research in different subject areas.

As these weightings are used in both the QE and RDC components, we propose:

- f. Reviewing subject area weightings to ensure they accurately reflect the costs to TEOs in undertaking a full range of research.

### Discussion questions - *Reviewing subject areas*

Do you believe the current subject area weightings accurately reflect the costs of research?

Do you support the proposed review of the current subject area weightings?

## Key objective two: Enabling a more sustainable and diverse research workforce

During the Review, the panel found that more work needs to be done to support equity, diversity and inclusion in our tertiary education research system for both our researchers and their work. The panel found that building a representative and diverse workforce is an important aspect of this, and that action must be taken to direct resources to areas where research excellence has been undervalued.

The impacts of COVID-19 could reshape the research workforce in many ways. A particular concern is that it may exacerbate existing issues of underrepresentation in our research workforce and that these impacts could fall disproportionately on new and emerging researchers as well as Māori and Pacific researchers and researchers with caring responsibilities.

*To enable a sustainably diverse workforce and system, we are seeking feedback on the following proposed changes and options:*

### Improving support for mātauranga Māori and Pacific research, and Māori and Pacific researchers

There are longstanding concerns that the PBRF does not sufficiently value mātauranga Māori and Pacific research, and that Māori and Pacific researchers are underrepresented in the research workforce.

We propose three options for changing the PBRF to better support and build a diverse research system:

- g.** Increasing the subject area weighting for EPs assessed by the Māori Knowledge and Development (MKD) and Pacific Research (PR) panels from 1 to 2.5;
  - » *This is intended to improve funding for these research areas and to support further capability and capacity development throughout tertiary education.*
- h.** Assigning an additional funding weighting of 2 for EPs submitted by staff who identify as Māori or Pacific;
  - » *This is intended to improve funding support for building a sustainable and diverse workforce.*
- i.** Adopting both of the above options.

#### Discussion questions - *Improving support for mātauranga Māori and Pacific research, and Māori and Pacific researchers*

Do you support the proposed increase of subject area weightings for EPs assessed by the MKD and PR panels?

Do you support the proposed additional funding weighting for EPs submitted by Māori and Pacific staff?

Do you support adopting both of the above options?

What benefits and impacts will these proposed changes to funding weightings have?

*For tertiary education leadership and research managers* - how would your department/organisation likely respond to these changes?

Are there alternative measures to better recognise and reward mātauranga Māori and Pacific research and to support Māori and Pacific researchers?

## Reviewing qualifying criteria

The panel found that the current extraordinary circumstances qualifying criteria do not allow peer-review panels to take full account of circumstances that impact researchers; and the new and emerging researchers qualifying criteria are too complex. To ensure PBRF settings support researchers, we propose:

- j. Reviewing the extraordinary circumstances qualifying criteria<sup>5</sup>, to introduce a 'merit relative to opportunity' concept<sup>6</sup> to be exercised by peer-review panels;
- k. Reviewing the new and emerging qualifying criteria<sup>7</sup>, with a view to simplification.

### Discussion questions - *Reviewing qualifying criteria*

Do you support the proposed refresh of extraordinary circumstances criteria?

Do you support the proposed review of new and emerging criteria?

Are there aspects of the qualifying criteria that should be modified, added or removed?

How would you like to see 'merit relative to opportunity' concepts being applied by peer-review panels?

How does your department/organisation currently assess the circumstances of researchers?

Are there specific considerations that should be made for the proposed review of the extraordinary circumstances qualifying criteria, including in the context of COVID-19?

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<sup>5</sup> [Guidelines for tertiary education organisations participating in the 2018 Quality Evaluation](#) – page 94

<sup>6</sup> How this would work in practice would need to be determined following this consultation and in collaboration with the sector. It would likely include ensuring a researcher's work is assessed relative to their experience, career stage and opportunities available to them.

<sup>7</sup> [Guidelines for tertiary education organisations participating in the 2018 Quality Evaluation](#) – page 19

### Key objective three: Improving how Government supports tertiary sector research

The Review highlighted work already underway that can contribute to improving how Government supports tertiary sector research. Opportunities for changes to the PBRF settings to further improve support for tertiary research was also highlighted.

Research capability and effective research-led teaching will continue to be critical for New Zealand's progress, including in the COVID-19 recovery, and we are looking to understand Government can support researchers and TEOs in the medium and long term. We are interested in feedback about the following proposed changes and options for improving support for research across the tertiary sector, in the context of COVID-19 and in recognition of the role of research in our COVID-19 recovery.

*To improve Government support of tertiary sector research, we are seeking feedback on the following proposed changes and options:*

#### Progressing work that builds tertiary sector research capability and capacity

A wider tertiary education work programme will be progressed to support tertiary research capability and capacity. Currently this includes the establishment of the New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology (NZIST) and the Wānanga Research Aspirations (WRA) project. We propose:

- l.** Supporting the NZIST to focus on researcher support and research capability and development, during its transition period;
- m.** Co-designing with wānanga an appropriate and sustainable funding solution to meet their research aspirations, including through the WRA project;
- n.** Working across Government to support a sustainable Māori and Pacific research workforce and a diverse research system, including linking in with MBIE's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion work programme.

#### Discussion question - *Progressing tertiary sector research capability and capacity*

Are there additional considerations for improving how Government supports tertiary research, including in the context of COVID-19?

#### Funding backstop for the NZIST in the next Quality Evaluation;

The next Quality Evaluation will be the first that the NZIST will be able to participate in, as a new entity. The consolidation of research cultures, processes and systems from across the ITP sector will take time, to support this we propose:

- o.** Fixing the minimum proportion of funding to be allocated to the NZIST in the next QE as the proportion allocated through the 2018 QE to ITPs, contingent on the NZIST participating in the QE.
  - » *This is intended to assist the NZIST in retaining its research capability during its transition period.*

#### Discussion questions - *Funding backstop for the NZIST in the next Quality Evaluation*

Do you support the proposal to fix the minimum proportion of funding for the NZIST in the next QE?

Are there additional considerations for supporting the NZIST, including in the context of COVID-19?

## Reflecting the strengthened PBRF

The name of the PBRF has not been altered since its establishment in 2002. The panel found that the PBRF could be renamed to better reflect the focus of the fund and the greater emphasis that should be placed on diversity and inclusiveness. We propose to better reflect the strengthened PBRF by:

- p. Renaming the PBRF in English and/or te reo Māori;
- q. Modifying the guiding principles to better reflect *partnership, inclusiveness, and equity* (see below).

### Proposed guiding principles to be added

**Partnership:** The fund should reflect the bicultural nature of New Zealand and the special role and status of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi).

- » *This is intended to reflect the significance of the partnership that underpins the relationship between Crown and Māori.*

**Inclusiveness:** The fund should encourage and recognise the full diversity of epistemologies, knowledges and methodologies to reflect New Zealand's people.

- » *This is intended to reflect diversity in society and our commitment to a capacious definition of research excellence.*

**Equity:** Different approaches and resources are needed to ensure that the measurement of research excellence leads to equitable outcomes.

- » *This is intended to underline the vital importance of addressing persistent, embedded and inherited inequities and their negative effects on the capacity of women, Māori and Pacific peoples, among other groups, to participate in the research, science and innovation system.*

### Proposed guiding principle to be removed

**Cultural inclusiveness:** The PBRF should reflect the cultural nature of New Zealand and the special role and status of the Treaty of Waitangi (te Tiriti o Waitangi), and should appropriately reflect and include the full diversity of New Zealand's population.

### Discussion questions - *Reflecting the strengthened PBRF*

Do you support the proposal to rename the PBRF?

Do you have recommendations for a new name?

Do you support modifying the guiding principles as proposed?

## Rebalancing the components of the PBRF

There are three components of the PBRF, each of which must contribute to the purpose of the PBRF, to encourage and reward excellent research in New Zealand's degree-granting organisations. In doing so, the PBRF does not fund research directly but supports research, including post-graduate level teaching support.

External Research Income (ERI) funding is allocated based on the amount and type of income received by TEOs from external sources for research purposes. Currently, 20% of the PBRF is allocated through the ERI component.

The ERI incentivises TEOs to seek external funding. The panel found from the sector that this worked well to establish this practice throughout TEOs. The panel also found that while the ERI component was successful, it now largely duplicates existing incentives, privileges particular disciplines and is intrinsically tied to the investment decisions of business and Government. The panel recommended that the ERI component be discontinued and that the ERI proportion of funding be allocated to the Quality Evaluation component.

This is an opportunity to refocus the PBRF on assessing and supporting research quality, and to support the other proposed changes in this discussion document, by rebalancing the components of the PBRF. We therefore propose:

- r. Discontinuing the ERI component via:
  - » a full discontinuation starting after the next QE, or
  - » a phased discontinuation starting after the next QE over four years.
- s. Subject to the above, redistribution of ERI funding into:
  - » the QE component, or
  - » a new component to replace the ERI, or
  - » a mixture of the QE component and a new component.

### Discussion questions - *Rebalancing the components of the PBRF*

Do you support the proposed discontinuation of the ERI?

If ERI is discontinued, do you support a full or phased discontinuation after the next QE?

If ERI is discontinued, how do you think redistribution of ERI funding should be implemented?

Do you have recommendations for a new component to replace ERI?

*For researchers* - what benefits and disadvantages could the proposed discontinuation of the ERI have for you?

What benefits and disadvantages could the proposed discontinuation of the ERI have for TEOs?

*For tertiary education leadership and research managers* - has the incentive of ERI promoted your department/organisation to seek out external funding?

*For tertiary education leadership and research managers* - how would your department/organisation likely respond to this proposed change?

Are there additional considerations that need to be made for the proposal to discontinue the ERI, including in the context of COVID-19?

## Seeking new PBRF metrics

The PBRF currently uses Average Quality Score (AQS) metrics as part of the QE, which show the intensity of research at each TEO relative to their staffing numbers and equivalent full-time students. However, they have been criticised as an ineffective measure of quality, being used by TEOs for, largely, ranking purposes and marketing. The panel recommended therefore that the TEC retain the focus on the increase in the total number of funded Quality Categories when reporting the results of the QE, and discontinue the AQS metrics.

To address this, we propose:

- t. Replacing the AQS metrics with a more appropriate measure of quality.

### Discussion questions - *Seeking new PBRF metrics*

Do you believe the current AQS metrics effective measures of quality?

Do you support the proposal to replace AQS metrics?

Do you have recommendations for how to represent the intensity and quality of research at different TEOs?

What QE performance information would you find useful to have publically available?

## Researching and assessing the PBRF

The QE component of the PBRF produces a significant amount of data about research carried out in our TEOs and the tertiary research workforce, in general. While there has been some analysis of the data generated, this has not been commissioned by government. To better inform decision-making in the Quality Evaluation, we propose:

- u. Establishing an ongoing programme of research into, and evaluation of, PBRF processes and impact on the sector and research workforce.

### Discussion questions - *Researching and assessing the PBRF*

Do you support the proposed establishment of an ongoing programme of research into the PBRF and its impact on the tertiary sector and workforce?

What considerations would need to be made in establishing this proposed programme of research?

## Operational changes to the PBRF

The following changes are intended to further support the proposed changes and options for strengthening the PBRF.

### Building on the successes of the PBRF

Throughout the Review, recommendations were made for Government to consider in the next QE. The TEC are responsible for the operation of the PBRF and are best placed for this. We propose the TEC consider:

- v. Ensuring the peer-review panels reflect the epistemological and demographic diversity of the research workforce, including ensuring gender parity, significant representation of Māori and Pacific researchers and a broad representation of researchers and other experts across career stages, TEOs and other research institutions.
  - w. Ensuring the peer-review panels are well supported with a programme of training to strengthen their capacity to take into account the diversity of research excellence and apply 'merit relative to opportunity' approaches.
  - x. Improving understanding of the PBRF and addressing myths about the QE in its communications.
  - y. Adopting the Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) as the unique identifier for PBRF-eligible staff.
  - z. Consulting the Sector Reference Group for the next QE on the implementation of all proposals for changes that are approved.
- » *Where possible the TEC should ensure significant representation of Māori and Pacific researchers and a broad representation of researchers across career stages and TEOs.*

### Discussion questions - *Building on the successes of the PBRF*

Do you support the proposal to build on the success of the QE peer-review panels by ensuring diversity of researchers is well represented?

Do you support the proposed programme of training for the QE peer-review panels?

Are there other considerations that should be included in these proposals?

Do you have recommendations for aspects of the PBRF that should be addressed in communications?

Do you have recommendations for myths about the PBRF that should be addressed in communications?

Do you support examining the potential in adopting the ORCID in the PBRF?

What benefits and disadvantages could the proposal to adopt the ORCID in the PBRF have?

# Glossary

Term	Definition
<b>Evidence Portfolio (EP)</b>	TEOs collect information on the research outputs and research-related activity of their PBRF-eligible staff members during the assessment period. This information forms the EP that is submitted by the TEO to the TEC for assessment by a peer review panel.
<b>External Research Income (ERI)</b>	A measure of the income for research purposes gained by a TEO from external sources. ERI is one of the three measures of the PBRF, along with the Research Degree Completion measure and the Quality Evaluation.
<b>Nominated Research Outputs (NROs)</b>	The up to four best research outputs that the PBRF-eligible staff member nominates in their Evidence Portfolio. NROs are given particular scrutiny during the Quality Evaluation process
<b>Other Research Outputs (OROs)</b>	Up to 12 research outputs that the PBRF eligible staff member nominates in their Evidence Portfolio if they have four Nominated Research Outputs. OROs form evidence of the staff member's platform of research.
<b>Peer review panel</b>	Group of experts who evaluate the quality of research as set out in an individual Evidence Portfolio. There are 13 peer review panels, each covering different subject areas.
<b>Quality Category</b>	A rating of researcher excellence assigned to the Evidence Portfolio of a PBRF-eligible staff member following the Quality Evaluation process. There are six Quality Categories: A, B, C, C(NE), R and R(NE). Quality Category A signifies researcher excellence at the highest level, and Quality Category R represents research activity or quality at a level that is insufficient for recognition by the PBRF. The A, B, C(NE) and R(NE) Quality Categories are available for new and emerging researchers. The A, B, C and C(NE) Quality Categories are funded Quality Categories.
<b>Quality Evaluation</b>	The process that assesses the quality of research output produced by PBRF-eligible staff members, the esteem within which they are regarded for their research activity, the contribution they have made to the research environment, and the impact their research has had within a given assessment period. The Quality Evaluation is one of the three measures of the PBRF, along with the Research Degree Completion measure and the External Research Income measure

<b>Research Contribution (RC) component</b>	<p>A research contribution item is evidence that describes the contribution or recognition or impact of a staff member's research and research-related activities. The Research Contribution (RC) component is one of the two components of an Evidence Portfolio and is worth 30 percent of the overall assessment score. A research contribution type is one of the 12 defined categories for listing research related activity in an Evidence Portfolio.</p>
<b>Research Degree Completion (RDC) measure</b>	<p>A measure of the number of research based postgraduate degrees completed within a TEO where there is a research component of 0.75 equivalent full-time students or more and external moderation. One of the three measures of the PBRF, along with the External Research Income measure and the Quality Evaluation.</p>
<b>Research Output (RO) component</b>	<p>A research output is a product of research that is evaluated during the Quality Evaluation process. The Research Output (RO) component is one of the two components of an Evidence Portfolio. A research output type is one of the defined categories for listing research outputs in an Evidence Portfolio.</p>
<b>Subject area</b>	<p>One of the 43 subject areas defined to represent the range of research disciplines assessed in the Quality Evaluation.</p>

# Annex One: Summary of Proposed Changes and Options for Strengthening the PBRF

<b>Key objective one:</b> Broadening the PBRF conception of research excellence	<b>Key objective two:</b> Enabling a sustainable and diverse research workforce	<b>Key objective three:</b> Improving how Government supports research across the tertiary sector
<p>Throughout the Review, the panel found that the PBRF concept of research needs to encompass the full range of research activity and cultures in our tertiary education system, all of which lend to research excellence. The panel found that the richest examples of research excellence must be drawn out with a focus on the highest quality research outputs and the most important contributions to the research environment.</p> <p>COVID-19 has put a focus on researchers from our TEOs and their work, showing the importance of policy that is grounded in evidence and data. Researchers from many fields have played a key role during the COVID-19 response, communicating to officials and the public about their research and its implications. Restrictions from different alert levels have had varying effects on researchers' plans and programmes, with potential for impacts over several years.</p> <p><i>To support broadening the PBRF concept of research excellence, we are seeking feedback on the following proposed changes and options:</i></p>	<p>During the Review, the panel found that more work needs to be done to support equity, diversity and inclusion in our tertiary education research system for both our researchers and their work. The panel found that building a representative and diverse workforce is an important aspect of this, and that action must be taken to direct resources to areas where research excellence has been undervalued.</p> <p>The impacts of COVID-19 could reshape the research workforce in many ways. A particular concern is that it may exacerbate existing issues of underrepresentation in our research workforce and that these impacts could fall disproportionately on new and emerging researchers as well as Māori and Pacific researchers and researchers with caring responsibilities.</p> <p><i>To enable a sustainably diverse workforce and system, we are seeking feedback on the following proposed changes and options:</i></p>	<p>The Review highlighted work already underway that can contribute to improving how Government supports tertiary sector research. Opportunities for changes to the PBRF settings to further improve support for tertiary research was also highlighted.</p> <p>Research capability and effective research-led teaching will continue to be critical for New Zealand's progress, including in the COVID-19 recovery, and we are looking to understand Government can support researchers and TEOs in the medium and long term. We are interested in feedback about the following proposed changes and options for improving support for research across the tertiary sector, in the context of COVID-19 and in recognition of the role of research in our COVID-19 recovery.</p> <p><i>To improve Government support of tertiary sector research, we are seeking feedback on the following proposed changes and options:</i></p>
<p><b>Modifying the current objectives of the PBRF</b></p>	<p><b>Improving support for mātauranga Māori and Pacific research, and Māori and Pacific researchers</b></p>	<p><b>Funding backstop for the NZIST in the next Quality Evaluation</b></p>
<p>a. Adding a new objective</p>	<p>g. Increasing the subject area weighting for EPs assessed by the MKD and PR panels                      h. Additional funding weighting of 2 for EPs submitted by staff who identify as Māori or Pacific                      i. Adopting both of the above options</p>	<p>o. Fixing a minimum allocation for the NZIST based on the proportion allocated through the 2018 QE to the ITPs</p>
<p><b>Refreshing the PBRF definition of research excellence</b></p>	<p><b>Reviewing qualifying criteria</b></p>	<p><b>Reflecting the strengthened PBRF</b></p>
<p>b. Rewording the PBRF definition of research to emphasise excellence                      c. Replacing the NRO component with <i>Examples of Research Excellence</i>                      d. Replacing the ORO component with <i>Other Examples of Research Excellence</i>, and reducing the maximum number                      e. Refocusing Research Contributions</p>	<p>j. Refreshing the extraordinary circumstances qualifying criteria                      k. Reviewing the new and emerging qualifying criteria</p>	<p>p. Renaming the PBRF in English and/or te reo Māori                      q. Modifying the guiding principles</p>
<p><b>Reviewing subject areas</b></p>	<p><b>Progressing work that builds tertiary sector research capability and capacity</b></p>	<p><b>Rebalancing the components of the PBRF</b></p>
<p>f. Reviewing subject area weightings for accuracy</p>	<p>l. Supporting the NZIST                      m. Co-designing with wānanga                      n. Working across Government to support a sustainable Māori and Pacific research workforce and a diverse system</p>	<p>r. Potentially discontinuing ERI                      s. Redistributing ERI funding into QE, or a new component</p>
<p><b>Building on the successes of the PBRF – operational changes</b></p>		
<p>v. Ensuring peer-review panels are diverse                      y. Adopting ORCID</p>	<p>w. Ensuring peer-review panels are well supported                      z. Consulting SRG on change implementation following this Review</p>	<p><b>Seeking new PBRF metrics</b></p> <p>t. Replacing AQS metrics</p>
<p><b>Researching and assessing the PBRF</b></p> <p>u. Establishing a programme of research into PBRF processes and impacts</p> <p>x. Improving understanding of the PBRF</p>		

# Annex Two: Indicative Timeline for Implementation

Indicative Timeframe for Implementation of Proposed Changes and Options		2025	Post 2025 Quality Evaluation
2021 - 2024			
Modifying Objectives	Finalised by Cabinet		
Refreshing Excellence Definition	< ----- Sector Reference Group carries out consultation at a to-be-determined point in this period ----- >	Implemented	
Reviewing Subject Area Weightings			Review takes place
Māori + Pacific Weightings	< ----- Sector Reference Group carries out consultation at a to-be-determined point in this period ----- >	Implemented	
Exceptional Circumstances/ N+E	< ----- Sector Reference Group carries out consultation at a to-be-determined point in this period ----- >	Implemented	
Wider Work Programme	< ----- Ongoing ----- >		
NZIST Backstop		Implemented	
Renaming PBRF + Modifying Principles	Finalised by Cabinet		
Discontinuing ERI	< ----- Sector Reference Group carries out consultation at a to-be-determined point in this period ----- >		Full or phased removal of ERI from 2027 – funding shifted to the QE or the QE + a new component
Replacing AQS Metrics	< ----- Sector Reference Group carries out consultation at a to-be-determined point in this period ----- >	Implemented	
Research Programme	Contingent on future Budget decisions		
Retaining Current Elements	Confirmed by Cabinet		
Delaying QE	Confirmed by Cabinet		
TEC Matters to Consider	< ----- Ongoing ----- >		
Key Events	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Cabinet makes final decisions on changes</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Sector Reference Group convened</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Standard Sector Reference Group consultation on the Quality Evaluation takes place</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">TEC Guidance for the 2025 Quality Evaluation published</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Quality Evaluation 2025 takes place</div> </div>		

# Annex Three: Proposed Refocused Research Contribution Categories

Research Contribution Category	Examples
Research Discipline and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Leadership roles or contributions within the discipline and/or institution</li> </ul>
Facilitation, Networking and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Major roles in conferences</li> <li>» Leadership or contributions to research networks</li> <li>» Hosting international visitors</li> <li>» Major roles in Professional or Industry groups/Consortia</li> </ul>
Outreach and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Leadership or contributions to outreach and engagement activities</li> <li>» Development and maintenance of deep, sustained and enduring partnerships outside of institutions, particularly with the community, iwi and industry</li> <li>» Prominent role in critic and conscience activities</li> </ul>
Research and Funding Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Track record of securing contestable grants</li> </ul>
Prizes, Fellowships and Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Significant, externally validated, awards relative to the career stage of staff</li> </ul>
Researcher Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Track record of successful mentoring of junior colleagues, particularly in relation to historically underrepresented groups</li> <li>» Successful initiatives to support new and emerging/early career researchers</li> </ul>
Reviewing and Refereeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Major roles in funding, advisory, promotions, tenure committees</li> <li>» Specialist advisory roles to institutions, governments, international bodies</li> </ul>
Student Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Track record of student success, particularly in relation to historically underrepresented groups</li> </ul>
Uptake and Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Leadership roles or contributions to research dissemination outside academia</li> <li>» Leadership roles or contributions to developing institutional capacity to support uptake and impact</li> <li>» Entrepreneurial success</li> </ul>
Māori Research Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Leadership in, or contributions to, undertaking and supporting research with Māori communities</li> <li>» Institutional leadership in, or contributions to, developing relative cultural capacity relating to research</li> </ul>
Pacific Research Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Leadership in, or contributions to, undertaking and supporting research with Pacific communities</li> <li>» Institutional leadership in, or contributions to, developing relative cultural capacity relating to research</li> </ul>



**Kōrero**

**Mātauranga**

**Me kōrero tātou**

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