

## Guidelines for Marsden Fund Referees (for Fast-Start Applications)

The Marsden Fund invests in investigator-initiated research aimed at generating new knowledge, with long-term benefit to New Zealand. It supports excellent research projects that advance and expand the knowledge base and contributes to the development of people with advanced skills in New Zealand. The research is not subject to government's socio-economic priorities.

The Marsden Fund encourages New Zealand's leading researchers to explore new ideas that may not be funded through other funding streams and fosters creativity within the research, science and innovation system.

In supporting investigator-initiated research the Government is ensuring that New Zealand is contributing to, and benefiting from, the advancement of knowledge globally and is fostering a diversity of research activities of the highest calibre. The Marsden Fund also provides for the long-term and sometimes serendipitous aspects of research, which may lead to profound or unexpected discoveries, or catalyse significant developments in previously unrelated and strategically important fields of knowledge.

Your role as a referee is an integral part of the appraisal process. Your detailed comments help in the final assessment of the proposal, and to provide feedback to the applicant. Referees used by the Marsden Fund are anonymous – names are not disclosed to the applicants.

- **Submission of Referee Reports is via a Web-based portal. If you are available to act as a referee, you will receive a URL which will link to the proposal (available from 30<sup>th</sup> June onwards) and instructions on how to complete the Referee Report on-line.**
- **Section 1 of the Referee Report goes back to the applicant for comments. Section 2, including grades and the referee's identity, remains confidential to the Marsden Fund Council.**
- **If you consider that you have a minor conflict of interest, describe its nature on section 2 of the Referee Report Form, after appraising the application.**
- **If the conflict of interest is serious, please do not appraise the proposal, and inform the Marsden Fund.**
- **The contents and ideas contained in the proposal are strictly confidential. The proposal material must not be used for any purpose other than assessment of the proposal.**

Referees who have assessed proposals will receive a list detailing the successful programmes in late 2023.

### Fast-Start Initiative: For Emerging Researchers

---

This is one of three categories of grants available within the Marsden Fund:

- *Fast-Start:* For emerging researchers, capped at \$120,000 per year for up to three years.

#### Funding for research excellence

The Marsden Fund is administered by The Royal Society Te Apārangi, PO Box 598, Wellington 6140.

Email: [marsden@royalsociety.org.nz](mailto:marsden@royalsociety.org.nz), <http://royalsociety.org.nz/what-we-do/funds-and-opportunities/marsden>

- **Standard:** Open to all eligible researchers. Amount of funding is flexible, dependent on the panel and is capped (maximum \$320,000 per year for up to three years). These are larger than Fast-Start applications. Funding can be sought for up to three years.
- **Marsden Fund Council Award:** Open to all eligible researchers. Approximately 3 times larger than Standard grants; up to \$1 million per year for up to 3 years.

The Fast-Start programme is targeted at emerging researchers who are trying to establish independent research careers and create research momentum. The purpose is to support research by promising individuals and to give an impetus to their careers by promoting them as sole Principal Investigators in their own research programmes. While linkages with established researchers, as Associate Investigators, both within and outside New Zealand are useful and encouraged, the emphasis for this funding is on individual researchers in the early stages of their careers.

**The applicant should be involved in independent research and not be merely part of a larger group's research programme.**

A PhD degree is required to apply for a Fast-Start grant; researchers are eligible to apply if they are within seven fulltime years of completion of their PhD or ten fulltime years of the start of their research career.

The eligibility period for Fast-Start grants may be extended under the following scenarios:

- In addition to any excluded time spent on parental leave and/or on sickness leave, applicants who have had part-time employment will have their seven years' experience calculated *pro rata* for the year count.
- Eligibility may also be extended to account for any career interruptions experienced due to being the primary caregiver for young children. If the applicant is the primary caregiver of a dependent child born since their PhD, the applicant can extend the period of eligibility by two years per child. The extension of two years per dependent child is inclusive of any periods of parental leave. There is no maximum identified.

Applicants wishing to bid into the Fast-Start scheme may apply for funding for up to 3 years. This amount is capped at NZ\$120,000 per year and is roughly one-third the maximum size of Standard Marsden grants.

An optional "Mentor" category is present for Fast-Start applications. This person is expected to play a role in advising the applicant on various aspects of project management, career guidance and professional development. Mentors are **not** expected to have a scholarly input into the proposed research. **CVs are not required for mentors, and their academic track records should not be taken into account when assessing the proposal.**

## Assessment Criteria

---

The key assessment criteria are:

- Proposals must have the potential for significant scholarly impact\* because of the proposal's novelty, originality, insight and ambition
- Proposals must be rigorous, and should have a basis in prior research and use a sound research method
- The research team must have the ability and capacity to deliver
- Proposals should develop research skills in New Zealand, particularly those at the post-doctoral level and emerging researchers (*please note that this criterion is considered already satisfied for Fast-Start applicants*).

Where relevant to the proposal:

- Proposals must consider the relation of the research to the themes of Vision Mātauranga\*\* and, where relevant, how the project will engage with Māori.

**\*Scholarly impact** is a demonstrable contribution to shifting understanding and advancing methods, theory and application across and within disciplines.

\*\* For an explanation of **Vision Mātauranga**, please refer to Appendix I.

## Assessment Criteria for Refereeing

---

The Marsden Fund is proposal-based, and referees are asked to comment separately on both the *proposal* and the *researcher(s)*, considering the above assessment criteria. The referee report consists of two important aspects: your **comments** on both proposal and researchers (section 1 below), and numeric **grades** for both the proposal and researchers (section 2 below). Grades given in section 2 should be consistent with the comments given. Please do not refer to the grades given in your comments, as they are not revealed to the applicants.

The assessors of these proposals are researchers from a broad range of disciplines, so your comments as a specialist referee are essential in making final judgments on the applications. Please note also that your *comments* as a referee are the most important aspect of your review. Gradings without comments may be discounted by the Marsden Fund Council.

## Referee's Comments (Section 1)

---

Referees should address their comments primarily to each of the following categories and base their judgment on them.

- I. **Comments on the proposal.**
- II. **Comments on the researcher(s).**
- III. **Comments on how the proposal could be improved.**

### I. Comments on the proposal

The overall excellence of the proposed research. This should incorporate the potential of the research for significant scholarly impact due to its novelty, originality, insight and ambition; rigour of the proposed research; and, where a referee feels comfortable commenting on Vision Mātauranga, how the proposal has addressed this aspect.

- **Excellence** may be determined by consideration of the merit of the proposal, its design and planning, and how the research compares with other New Zealand or international research in the same field.
- Your assessment of the **potential for significant scholarly impact** of the research should consider whether the work outlined in Sections 3A to 3E of the proposal will significantly contribute to advances in theoretical understanding, develop new methodologies, contribute to new knowledge, or lead to advancement in a field by cross-fertilisation with ideas and results from another field.
- **Rigour of the proposed research:** Often the design and planning of a programme of research determines its success. Good design and planning are determined by whether the overall proposal and its specific objectives have a clear focus, and the methods and experimental or sampling design are rigorous and likely to produce high quality results.

The Roles and Resources section of the proposal form (3G) asks applicants to identify the resources and skills available or needed to conduct the research; and how the research will help the applicant establish their own independent research career. Please comment on these aspects where appropriate.

- You may comment, if you feel comfortable in doing so, on the proposal's **Vision Mātauranga** component (section 3D) if the researcher has identified that one or more of the Vision Mātauranga themes is relevant to their research in Section 2. For an explanation of, and more information on, Vision Mātauranga, please see Appendix I. Please note, there is no requirement for referees to comment on this aspect.

For a glossary of commonly used Māori concepts, words and phrases commonly seen in Marsden research proposals, please see Appendix II.

There is no prescribed maximum or minimum length for this section. For guidance, the average word count varies between 200-450 words.

## II. Comments on the researcher(s)

The ability and capacity of the researcher to carry out the proposed research.

Please assess the researcher's potential to carry out the research by examining their **track record**. As an applicant in this programme is at the start of their career, the track record must be assessed in relation to the years of research experience. Other factors will be the quality of the research training and its appropriateness for carrying out the proposed research.

There is no prescribed maximum or minimum length for this section. For guidance, the average word count varies between 50-150 words.

## III. How could the proposal be improved?

Although this is not one of the criteria of the Marsden Fund, it is very helpful if referees can include a paragraph on how the proposal could be improved.

This section is optional. There is no prescribed maximum or minimum length for this section. For guidance, the average word count varies between 50-200 words.

## Other Information

The applications have already been considered in a preliminary assessment round. Approximately 25% of these applicants have been invited to write full proposals, which are then sent out to referees for comment. Finally, about half of full applications will be recommended for funding.

Please note that applicants have had both word and space limitations imposed on them (six pages in total for "Background", "Overall Aim of the Research", "Proposed Research" and "Vision Mātauranga", or five pages in total if the proposal does not have a Vision Mātauranga component), which may affect the amount of detail they are able to include.

**Budgets are not attached**, as referees are not required to comment on them. The Marsden Fund Council will assess the appropriateness of budgets. However, section 4 of the application lists the time involvement of researchers. **Note that time involvements are expressed as full-time equivalents, or FTEs; for example, 0.2 FTE per year is equivalent to 1 day per week on the research.**

## Referees' Grades (Section 2; Confidential)

---

In Section 2 of the report, please provide two numeric grades.

**The first grade, “A”,** is an overall grade for the **proposal**, reflecting the potential of the research for significant scholarly impact, the rigour of the proposed methodology, and Vision Mātauranga if relevant.

Please use the following scale:

Grade 1: Outstanding (almost certain to be funded by any international agency)

Grade 2: Excellent (very likely to be funded by any international agency)

Grade 3: Well above average (worthy of funding)

Grade 4: Average (unlikely to be funded as lacks novelty or just not strong enough)

Grade 5: Below average (would not be funded as contains serious flaws)

**The second grade, “B”,** is a grade for the **researcher(s)** on the proposal and should reflect track record **relative to opportunity**. This is especially important when considering Fast-Start applicants, as they will be at a relatively early stage in their research careers.

Please use the following scale:

Grade 1: Outstanding

Grade 2: Excellent

Grade 3: Well above average

Grade 4: Average

Grade 5: Below average

If you have received any early career research proposals for review from international funding agencies, please benchmark Marsden proposals against these.

Note that the grades will **not** be made available to applicants, which is why this scale is included in “confidential” information in Section 2.

## Conflicts of Interest (Section 2; Confidential)

---

In Section 2 of the Referee Report, as well as your grades, please indicate any conflicts of interest. This section is not seen by the applicant.

## Additional Information

---

**COVID-19:** Please assess proposals under the current Marsden Fund criteria listed above. For the 2023 funding round, applicants have been requested to provide a Covid-19 risk mitigation plan in the Roles and Resources section (3G).

Additional information on the Marsden Fund is available on our website:

<http://royalsociety.org.nz/what-we-do/funds-and-opportunities/marsden/>

## Checklist before Submitting your Report

---

Before submitting your Referee Report, please ensure that the **intended grades** and all comments have been entered.

**Reports are due for completion via the portal no later than 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 (or as otherwise advised).**

## Marsden Fund Contact Details (for reference)

---

Marsden Fund  
c/- Royal Society Te Apārangi

**Marsden Fund.** 2023 Guidelines for Referees (Fast-Start Applications)

P O Box 598  
Wellington 6140  
New Zealand  
Telephone: +64-4-472 7421  
E-mail: marsdenref@royalsociety.org.nz

## Appendix I

### Vision Mātauranga

---

Vision Mātauranga is a policy about innovation, opportunity and the creation of knowledge that highlights the potential contribution of Māori knowledge, resources and people. Vision Mātauranga is now included as an assessment criterion where relevant to the proposed research.

<http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/science-innovation/agencies-policies-budget-initiatives/vision-matauranga-policy>

There are four themes:

- Indigenous Innovation, which involves contributing to economic growth through distinctive research and development;
- Taiao, which is concerned with achieving environmental sustainability through iwi and hapū relationships with land and sea;
- Hauora/Oranga, which centres around improving health and social wellbeing;
- Mātauranga, which involves exploring indigenous knowledge.

Where research projects are of relevance to Māori or involve Māori, the Marsden Fund Council expects that applicants are in consultation with Māori at the planning stage, to achieve the best possible outcomes.

For guidance, the relevance does vary according to panel. Examples of relevance could include proposals that involve biomedical research of significance to Māori health, social research, educational research, entrepreneurship, indigenous research, natural hazards, native flora and fauna, anthropology, the environment, sporting and cultural activities, literature, and language (even if the approach to these topics is seemingly irrelevant, such as algorithm development, biochemical pathways or mechanical properties).

For background, guidance and resources for applicants can be found here:

<https://www.royalsociety.org.nz/what-we-do/funds-and-opportunities/marsden/marsden-fund-application-process/submitting-a-proposal/vision-matauranga/>

Up to one page is available for statements on Vision Mātauranga in section 3D, immediately following the description of research in Sections 3A-C. This is to enable Vision Mātauranga to be more easily integrated into the conceptual framework and/or research design.

## Appendix II

### Glossary of te reo Māori terms

---

Definitions taken from maoridictionary.co.nz

With thanks to Professor Angus Macfarlane, University of Canterbury, for his input.

Aotearoa	the Māori name for New Zealand
Aroha	affection, sympathy, charity, compassion, love, empathy
Atua	ancestor with continuing influence, god, demon, supernatural being, deity, ghost, object of superstitious regard, strange being - although often translated as 'god' and now also used for the Christian God
Hapū	kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe - section of a large kinship group and the primary political unit in traditional Māori society. It consisted of a number of whānau sharing descent from a common ancestor, usually being named after the ancestor, but sometimes from an important event in the group's history. A number of related hapū usually shared adjacent territories forming a looser tribal federation (iwi)
Hau kāinga	home, true home, local people of a marae, home people
Hauora	Health, wellbeing
Hui	gathering, meeting, assembly
Iwi	extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, nationality, race - often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct territory
Kāinga	home, address, residence, village, settlement, habitation, habitat, dwelling
Kaitiaki	trustee, minder, guard, custodian, guardian, caregiver, keeper, steward
Kaitiakitanga	guardianship, stewardship, trusteeship
Kaumātua	adult, elder, elderly man, elderly woman, senior person - a person of status within the whānau or iwi
Kaupapa	Philosophy, topic, policy, matter for discussion, plan, purpose, scheme, proposal, agenda, subject, programme, theme, issue, initiative
Kaupapa Māori	Māori approach, Māori topic, Māori customary practice, Māori institution, Māori agenda, Māori principles, Māori ideology - a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society
Koha	gift, present, offering, donation, contribution - especially one maintaining social relationships and has connotations of reciprocity
Kōiwi tangata	Human bones or remains
Kōrero	to tell, say, speak, read, talk, address; speech, narrative, story, news, account, discussion, conversation, discourse, statement, information
Mamae	be painful, sore, hurt
Mana	prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma - mana is a supernatural force in a person, place or object. Mana goes hand in hand with tapu, one affecting the other. The more prestigious the event, person or object, the more it is surrounded by tapu and mana. Mana is the enduring, indestructible power of the atua

	and is inherited at birth, the more senior the descent, the greater the mana. The authority of mana and tapu is inherited and delegated through the senior line from the atua as their human agent to act on revealed will. Since authority is a spiritual gift delegated by the atua, man remains the agent, never the source of mana. This divine choice is confirmed by the elders, initiated by the tohunga under traditional consecratory rites (tohi). Mana gives a person the authority to lead, organise and regulate communal expeditions and activities, to make decisions regarding social and political matters. A person or tribe's mana can increase from successful ventures or decrease through the lack of success.
Manaakitanga	hospitality, kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others
Māori	Māori, Indigenous New Zealander, Indigenous person of Aotearoa/New Zealand - a new use of the word resulting from Pākehā contact in order to distinguish between people of Māori descent and the colonisers
Marae	courtyard - the open area in front of the wharenui (meeting house), where formal greetings and discussions take place. Often also used to include the complex of buildings around the marae
Mātauranga	knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill - sometimes used in the plural; education - an extension of the original meaning and commonly used in modern Māori with this meaning
Mauri	life principle, life force, vital essence, special nature, a material symbol of a life principle, source of emotions - the essential quality and vitality of a being or entity. Also used for a physical object, individual, ecosystem or social group in which this essence is located
Moana	sea, ocean, large lake
Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa	the Pacific Ocean
Pākehā	English, foreign, European, exotic - introduced from or originating in a foreign country; New Zealander of European descent - probably originally applied to English-speaking Europeans living in Aotearoa/New Zealand
Pepeha	tribal saying, tribal motto, proverb (especially about a tribe), set form of words, formulaic expression, saying of the ancestors, figure of speech, motto, slogan - set sayings known for their economy of words and metaphor and encapsulating many Māori values and human characteristics
Pūrākau	myth, ancient legend, story
Rangatahi	younger generation, youth
Rangatira	chief (male or female), chieftain, chieftainess, master, mistress, boss, supervisor, employer, landlord, owner, proprietor - qualities of a leader is a concern for the integrity and prosperity of the people, the land, the language and other cultural treasures (e.g. oratory and song poetry), and



	an aggressive and sustained response to outside forces that may threaten these
Rangatiratanga	chieftainship, right to exercise authority, chiefly autonomy, chiefly authority, ownership, leadership of a social group, domain of the rangatira, noble birth, attributes of a chief
Rohe	boundary, district, region, territory, area, border (of land)
Rūnanga	council, tribal council, assembly, board, boardroom, iwi authority - assemblies called to discuss issues of concern to iwi or the community
Tamariki	children - normally used only in the plural
Tāne	husband, male, man
Tangata whenua	local people, hosts, indigenous people - people born of the whenua, i.e. of the placenta and of the land where the people's ancestors have lived and where their placenta are buried
Taonga	treasure, anything prized - applied to anything considered to be of value including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and techniques
Tapu	be sacred, prohibited, restricted, set apart, forbidden, under atua protection; restriction, prohibition - a supernatural condition. A person, place or thing is dedicated to an atua and is thus removed from the sphere of the profane and put into the sphere of the sacred. It is untouchable, no longer to be put to common use
Te reo Māori	Māori language
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi
Tikanga	correct procedure, custom, habit, lore, method, manner, rule, way, code, meaning, plan, practice, convention, protocol - the customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context
Tino rangatiratanga	self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy, self-government, domination, rule, control, power
Tipuna	ancestor, grandparent, grandfather, grandmother - singular form of tīpuna and the eastern dialect variation of tupuna
Tohunga	skilled person, chosen expert, priest, healer - a person chosen by the agent of an atua and the tribe as a leader in a particular field because of signs indicating talent for a particular vocation
Tupuna	ancestor, grandparent – singular form of tūpuna and the western dialect variation of tipuna
Tūrangawaewae	domicile, standing, place where one has the right to stand - place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship and whakapapa
Wairua	spirit, soul - spirit of a person which exists beyond death. It is the non-physical spirit, distinct from the body and the mauri

Wahine/wāhine	wahine - woman, female, lady, wife; wāhine - women, females, ladies, wives – plural form of wahine; female, women, feminine
Wairuatanga	spirituality
Wānanga	seminar, conference, forum, educational seminar; tribal knowledge, lore, learning - important traditional cultural, religious, historical, genealogical and philosophical knowledge; tertiary institution that caters for Māori learning needs - established under the Education Act 1990
Whaikōrero	oratory, oration, formal speech-making, address, speech - formal speeches usually made by men during a pohiri and other gatherings
Whakapapa	genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent - reciting whakapapa was, and is, an important skill and reflected the importance of genealogies in Māori society in terms of leadership, land and fishing rights, kinship and status. It is central to all Māori institutions. There are different terms for the types of whakapapa and the different ways of reciting them including: tāhū (recite a direct line of ancestry through only the senior line); whakamoe (recite a genealogy including males and their spouses); taotahi (recite genealogy in a single line of descent); hikohiko (recite genealogy in a selective way by not following a single line of descent); ure tārewa (male line of descent through the first-born male in each generation)
Whakataukī	proverb, significant saying, formulaic saying, cryptic saying, aphorism. Like whakataukāki and pepeha they are essential ingredients in whaikōrero
Whānau	extended family, family group, a familiar term of address to a number of people - the primary economic unit of traditional Māori society. In the modern context the term is sometimes used to include friends who may not have any kinship ties to other members
Whānaungatanga	relationship, kinship, sense of family connection - a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging. It develops as a result of kinship rights and obligations, which also serve to strengthen each member of the kin group. It also extends to others to whom one develops a close familial, friendship or reciprocal relationship
Whenua	land - often used in the plural; territory, domain; country, land, nation, state