

2026 New Zealand Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowship Guidelines for referees

NGĀ ARATOHU MĀ NGĀ KAITAUTOKO

The **Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowship** is one of the Aotearoa New Zealand Tāwhia te Mana Research Fellowships. Mana Tūānuku is designed to support Aotearoa New Zealand's talented **mid-career researchers** to firmly establish themselves as experts in their research domain and as leaders within the research landscape.

Supported by the New Zealand Government with funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. Nā Te Hīkina Whakatutuki te mana hāpai.

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

Changes for 2026

Ngā huringa mō te tau 2026

The following changes have been made for the 2026 round:

- Added selection criteria that applicants will be assessed on alignment with Government priorities and rationale for how the research proposal may contribute to, support or build capability in those priority areas.
- Added guidance around the use of generative AI technologies in assessment of applications.

Background

He whakamārama

The New Zealand Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowship is one of three Tāwhia te Mana Research Fellowships designed to support researchers at different career stages to produce excellent and impactful research and to develop into leaders in their fields, their respective host organisations and across the whole of the Aotearoa New Zealand science, innovation and technology (SI&T) system. It is expected that Fellows, throughout their careers, will contribute to positive outcomes for Aotearoa New Zealand, including (where applicable) giving effect to the Vision Mātauranga policy in their work and their community.

The Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowship will support mid-career researchers to firmly establish themselves as experts in their research domain and as leaders within the research landscape.

The suite of Tāwhia te Mana Research Fellowships additionally aims to:

- improve the retention of talented future research leaders within the SI&T system, both during the fellowship and in their post-fellowship careers, through development of a strong track record
- support career development, to empower Fellows to become leaders in their fields, their organisations and across the SI&T system
- improve equity and diversity within the SI&T system, in particular by creating opportunities for Māori, Pacific peoples and women who are excellent researchers and future leaders of research
- reward and support a range of boundary-pushing research activities that build SI&T capability in areas of Government priority, including those that focus on generating economic impact from research.

The duration of the Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowship is four years with a total value of NZ\$1,160,000. Around ten Fellowships will be awarded annually.

The Fellowship is supported by the New Zealand Government with funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and administered by Royal Society Te Apārangi.

Information for referees

Ngā mōhiohio mā ngā kaitautoko

You have been asked to provide a reference for an applicant applying for a New Zealand Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowship. Your referee report is due no later than **Thursday 06 August 2026 at 2pm (NZST)**.

Please note that it is the applicant's responsibility to solicit a referee report from three referees. **Applications that are not supported by the necessary three referee reports at the referee deadline will be withdrawn from further consideration.** Should you, for ANY reason, be unable to submit a referee report in time, please contact the applicant as soon as possible to give them time to solicit another report before the deadline.

Confidentiality

Matatapu

The contents of the referee reports are confidential in every respect. A referee report is submitted on the understanding that: (i) it will only be used in the appraisal process; (ii) it is confidential to the selection panels appointed by Royal Society Te Apārangi; and, (iii) that it will not be made available to the applicant or the public (this includes all comments).

Referee's comments

Ngā kōrero a ngā kaitautoko

The referee reports play an important part in assuring that the selection process selects talented early to mid-career researchers to firmly establish themselves as experts in their research domain and as leaders within the research landscape.

Referees are asked to comment on an applicant's abilities in three aspects of a research career (see below). As applicants are eligible to apply for a Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowship over a range of 4-12 years of post PhD research experience, **you must consider the Applicant in relation to their years of research experience.** As an example, applicants that are only four years post-PhD research experience, should be compared to other researchers at a similar level, and not be directly compared to a researcher with 11 or 12 years of post-PhD research experience.

Applicants are asked to nominate three referees of which at least two should be able to comment on their capability as a researcher. One must be an international referee. Where relevant, applicants may choose to invite one referee that can comment on other aspects important for their career as a researcher, e.g. working with communities, stakeholder relationships, demonstration of leadership, research service or any other aspects that may be relevant.

Referees should not have a direct conflict of interest with the applicant, i.e. they should not hold a line of management role over the applicant or vice versa at the proposed host institution, and they should not be directly involved in the applicant's proposed research.

Guidance around the use of generative AI technologies in assessment

There is growing concern around the use of generative AI tools (large language models, e.g. Chat GPT) in the writing or assessment of grant proposals, as they could lead to confidentiality breaches and may generate fabricated content and citations.

Panellists and external reviewers must not use large language models (LLMs) or other generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies for assessing proposals. This is due to confidentiality concerns. Inputting substantial, detailed information into a generative AI tool forfeits control of where that data may be sent, saved, viewed, or used in the future.

Referee Report

Referees will be provided with a MS Word template on the referee portal, and are asked to comment on the applicant's:

1. **Calibre as a research leader**, which may include (but not limited to):
 - vision for their field of work, evidence of how their research can benefit New Zealand (including potential benefits in areas of future value, growth or critical need for New Zealand), team leadership, knowledge transfer activity, entrepreneurial activity (where applicable), giving effect to the Vision Mātauranga policy in their research and community (where applicable), and/or other ways applicants demonstrate leadership or intend to create impact from their fellowship and research.
2. **Track record and potential** to establish, re-enter or progress their career in research relative to opportunity
3. Ability to **design and execute a well-reasoned and boundary-pushing research plan.**

Referees are additionally given the opportunity to provide any other comments about the applicant.

Lastly, referees must indicate in what capacity they know the applicant, and whether they have any perceived conflict of interest in acting as a referee for the applicant, and to shortly summarise their experience (research or otherwise) relevant to their referee report in order to provide some context for the report.

If you are concerned about a potential conflict of interest you may have with an applicant, please see [Appendix I: Conflicts of interest](#).

If you are concerned about your suitability as a referee, please see [Appendix II: Referee suitability](#).

For a glossary of commonly used Māori concepts, words and phrases commonly seen in proposals, please see [Appendix III: Glossary of te reo Māori terms](#).

Online web-based referee reports

Ngā pūrongo kaitautoko ā-tukutuku tuihono

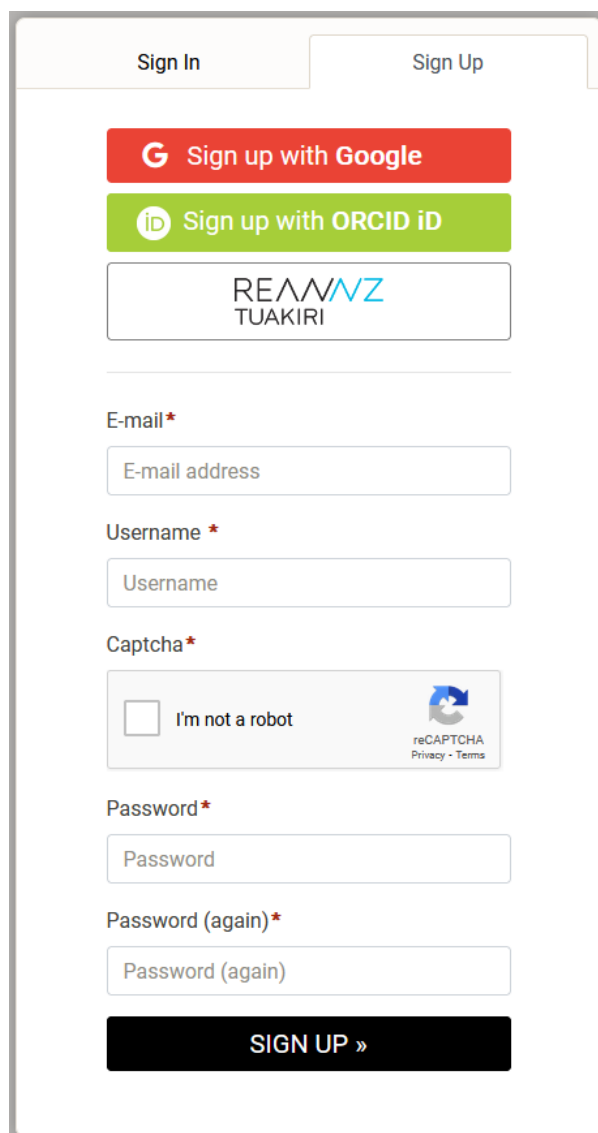
Referees will be emailed a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) link to a web-based portal to complete their report. The timing of this invite is determined by the applicant. Applicants have been asked to confirm that their chosen referee are willing to submit a referee report before the invite is emailed to the referee.

Clicking on the URL will take you to the referee portal

Sign up to the portal

Rēhita ki te tomokanga

If you have interacted with this portal before (e.g., for the Prime Ministers Science Prize or Ngā Puanga Pūtaiao Fellowship), you will already have a profile. Please use this existing Username and Password. Otherwise, you will need to sign up to the portal.



The image shows a web form for signing up to the REANZ TUAKIRI portal. At the top, there are two tabs: "Sign In" and "Sign Up". Below the tabs are three social login options: "Sign up with Google" (red button), "Sign up with ORCID iD" (green button), and the REANZ TUAKIRI logo. The form includes several required fields marked with an asterisk: "E-mail", "Username", "Password", and "Password (again)". There is also a reCAPTCHA section with the text "I'm not a robot" and a checkbox. At the bottom of the form is a large black button labeled "SIGN UP »".

It is preferred that all referees sign up by adding or creating an ORCID iD, but this is not mandatory. Alternatively, you can sign up using a number of options using i.e. TUAKIRI; Google or create a new account.

- To sign up with ORCID click the green “Sign up with ORCID iD” option and add your 16 digit ORCID iD and password.
- To create an ORCID iD click the green “Sign up with ORCID iD” option and follow the link “Don't have an ORCID iD yet? Register now” and follow the instructions.

Please continue to **use the same logon** for all interactions with Royal Society Te Apārangī portals. Creating multiple user accounts will cause problems with your portal profile and records.

Personal Profile

Tō Kīwhaiaro

Every person (including applicants and referees) using the portal for the first time must create a profile and must input at a minimum of the following:

- Name
- Contact email address
- Agree to the Privacy Statement
- **Organisation Affiliations:** Primary place of employment or education
- **Protection Pattern:** Provide Protection Pattern settings.

Other questions that are asked for making a profile are optional for referees. There is no need to answer, just press “Skip and Complete” or “Next” through all unrequired sections.

Submitting your referee report

Te tuku i tō pūrongo kaitautoko

When you have finished all sections of the referee report, upload the completed referee report to the Portal. Then you must click “Submit” on the portal before it will be included in the assessment process.

Contact us

Whakapā mai

If you are unable to submit your report before the deadline, you should **notify the applicant** as soon as possible to give them time to solicit another report before the deadline. It is not possible to extend the deadline for referee reports.

If you have any questions with regard to submission of the report, please address enquiries by email to: tawhia@royalsociety.org.nz or phone: + 64 4 472 7421

Additional information on the [Tāwhia te Mana Fellowships](#) is available on our website.

Appendix I: Conflicts of interest

Āpitianga I: Ngā take whai taharua

We want to make sure that there is a practically and procedurally fair process to apply for a New Zealand Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowship. Therefore, we will aim to take into account real and perceived conflicts of interest between applicants, referees and panel members along the application and assessment process.

Referees should ideally not have a direct conflict of interest with the applicant, i.e. they should not hold a line of management role over the applicant or vice versa at the proposed host organisation, and they should not be directly involved in the applicant's proposed research, as funding of the application would be seen to benefit the referee. It is recommended to use referees you have not co-published within the last 5 years.

It is expected and acknowledged that each participant in the application and assessment process will have a range of outside interests and obligations. We also imagine you will likely have wide-ranging whakapapa and whanaunga relationships across Aotearoa and the rest of the Pacific due to whānau, iwi, hapū, motu/island, community and research sector ties. We believe that the best approach to deal with potential conflicts of interest is:

- for some relationships to be generally considered conflicted
- to clearly outline, and declare, a perceived conflict as it arises
- for all participants to be flexible in navigating potential conflicts
- for a clear record of the nature of any perceived conflict and the action taken in accounting for this to be noted/documentated.

For the purposes of Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowship applications, a referee is generally deemed to be conflicted if:

- they are a panel member in the current funding round
- they are the applicant's parent, sibling or child
- they have a low level of comfort assessing the application due to their relationship with the applicant.

Appendix II: Referee suitability

Āpitianga II: Te tōtika o te kaitautoko

A suitable referee will be able to comment on one or more of the following about the applicants:

- **Calibre as a research leader**, which may include:
 - vision for their field of work,
 - evidence of how their research can benefit New Zealand (including potential benefits in areas of future value, growth or critical need for New Zealand),
 - team leadership,
 - knowledge transfer activity,
 - entrepreneurial activity (where applicable) and,
 - Giving effect to the Vision Mātauranga policy in their research and community (where applicable).
- **Track record and potential** to establish, re-enter or progress their career in research relative to opportunity
- Ability to **design and execute a well-reasoned research plan**, and where relevant, showing skill and expertise in mātauranga Māori and/or kaupapa Māori or other knowledge systems.

Alternatively, applicants may choose to invite one referee that can comment on other aspects important for their career as a researcher, e.g. working with communities, stakeholder relationships, demonstration of leadership, research service or any other aspects that may be relevant. In that case, the referee can choose to comment on the questions above as they see relevant and place more emphasis on the “Any other comments” option.

To help in assessing your appropriateness as a referee, please consider the following:

- Whether you wish to act as a referee for the applicant
- Whether a conflict of interest exists in that you have a line management role over the applicant or vice versa
- Whether a conflict of interest exists in that you are, or could be, directly involved in the proposed programme of research
- Whether the applicant is a relative or close friend.

If you choose to withdraw as a referee, please advise the applicant as soon as possible so another referee can be contacted.

Appendix III: Glossary of te reo Māori terms

Āpitihanga III: Papakupu o ngā kupu reo Māori

Definitions taken from maoridictionary.co.nz

Ka mihi ki a Ahorangi Angus Macfarlane, Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha, mō tēnei. 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 wharenuī (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 (for example, 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
Tāngata 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 pōhiri/pōwhiri 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 whakataukī 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