



MBIE Science Whitinga Fellowships

2021 Guidelines for REFEREES

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the world economy and is likely to have long-term adverse impacts on the Research, Science and Innovation (RSI) workforce. Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has held discussions with the RSI sector and heard that most early career researchers (ECRs) planning to take up employment overseas have either had offers deferred or fully rescinded, and new positions require ECRs to be within the country before applying. For those planning to remain in Aotearoa New Zealand the number of available positions has reduced.

In response to some of these acute impacts being experienced by Aotearoa New Zealand ECRs, the Government is providing support by funding a new “one off” fellowship, the MBIE Science Whitinga Fellowship.

The intent of the Fellowship is to support up and coming researchers to rise and establish a career in their chosen field of research. This is captured in the name of the Fellowship “Te whitinga mai o te rā” which can translate to “the rising of the sun”.

The MBIE Science Whitinga Fellowship is to be administered by the Royal Society Te Apārangi (the Society) on behalf of MBIE.

Objective

The objective of the funding is to support ECRs with the potential to excel in a research career who may otherwise be lost from the system due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their career path.

Supporting excellent ECRs who demonstrate a passion for research, science and innovation will help Aotearoa New Zealand maintain its excellent, world-class research capability. This in turn will boost resilience in the Aotearoa New Zealand research workforce and contribute to the recovery from the effects of the pandemic.

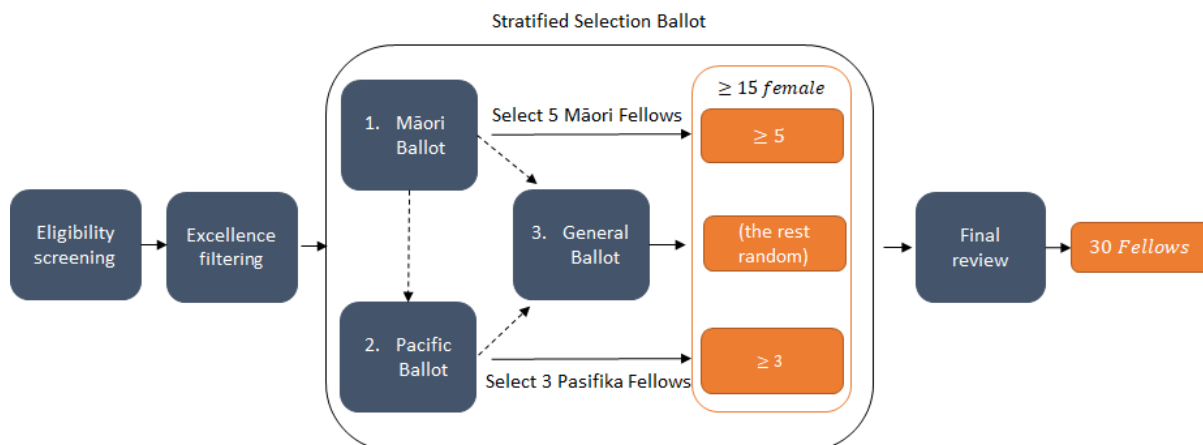
Description

Thirty fellowships of two years in length will be awarded by a competitive process for research undertaken in any field, including the humanities, mātauranga and social science at an eligible Aotearoa New Zealand research institution.

The earliest start date for the Fellowship is 01 July 2021.

Selection Process

The selection process will comprise eligibility screening, excellence filtering, a stratified selection ballot, and a final review as set out in the following process diagram. For further detailed information on the selection process please refer to the application guidelines available from Royal Society Te Apārangi's [MBIE Science Whitinga Fellowship](#) webpage. Referee scores will be used in the excellence filtering process.



Note: Full arrows denote the path for successful applications at each stage. Black dashed arrows denote the path for applications that have not been selected in either the Māori or Pacific Ballots and have been re-distributed into subsequent ballots.

Referee Selection

Applications must be supported by three applicant-solicited referee reports. Applications without the necessary three referee reports will be withdrawn from further consideration.

One referee must be the supervisor of applicant's PhD programme.

If the applicant has already undertaken postdoctoral research, the supervisor of this project should be another referee.

Referees should not have a conflict of interest with the applicant, i.e. they should not hold a line of management role over the applicant at the proposed host institution, and they should not be directly involved in the applicant's proposed research. An exemption to this rule is allowed for the supervisor of an applicant's PhD programme and supervisor of undertaken postdoctoral research.

Referee responsibilities

The referee reports plays an important part in assuring that the selection process selects applicants with the potential to excel in a research career. For this purpose, the best referees will include former supervisors who know the applicants well. It is recognised that some former supervisors will have a conflict of interest in that they have a line management role over the applicant or/and are directly involved in the applicants' research. However, it is expected that all referees act professionally and with integrity in accordance with Royal Society Te Apārangi's [Code of Professional Standards and Ethics in Science, Technology, and the Humanities](#) when providing a referee report.

Referee invitation

Referees are emailed a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) link to a web-based referee portal. 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.

Please note that the referee report is due on the same date as the application. We are therefore unable to provide information on the proposed research project. If you wish to learn more about the proposed research, please contact the applicant directly.

Filling out the Referee Report

Referees are asked to score applicants abilities on a series of 17 questions across four different attributes.

Referees are additionally given the opportunity to give an overall free text reference of the applicant in max 250 words that supports and further explains the given scores. The free text will be made available to the selection panel if the application is selected for final review.

Lastly, referees must indicate in what capacity they know the applicant.

Please ensure that you have familiarised yourself with the scoring indicators below in order for each applicant to be treated similarly.

Scoring indicators:

- **Outstanding (5)** – Performance is extraordinary with no gaps or weaknesses.
- **Excellent (4)** – Performance is clearly strong or exemplary. Gaps or weaknesses are insignificant and managed effectively.
- **Good (3)** – Performance is generally strong. Gaps or weaknesses are mostly insignificant and are managed effectively.
- **Adequate (2)** – Performance is average. There are gaps or weaknesses which are mostly managed effectively.
- **Below standard (1)** – Performance is below average to poor. Some gaps or weaknesses may not be managed effectively.
- **Insufficient evidence/knowledge (0)** – unable to score

The questions have been added below for your information. However, the questions must be answered directly on the referee portal, which can be accessed with the emailed URL.

Excellence Attribute	Description of Excellence
Research capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is recognised as having the potential to succeed in a research environment and, where relevant, has relationships in the area of research with traditional or local knowledge holders, tohunga, iwi, hapū, or other groups with whom knowledge exchange, transmission and development can occur. • Can independently develop and plan original and innovative research. This includes, where relevant, showing skill and expertise in mātauranga Māori and/or Kaupapa Māori. • Can independently execute planned research, accurately documenting methods and outcomes. This includes, where relevant, the use of Kaupapa Māori and/or the appropriate use and protection of mātauranga Māori. • Shows promising skills for collaboration with researchers from other teams and disciplines. • Is motivated to succeed.
Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can independently address and solve problems. • Can think critically and, where relevant, draw resourcefully on mātauranga Māori and/or Kaupapa Māori. • Can extract critical ideas from complex information. • Can use innovative ways to address issues.
Potential to advance knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has knowledge and familiarity with relevant research literature and knows what a major contribution to the field of research looks like. • Can communicate research in writing (e.g. writing of funding proposals, research synopses, publications, or other written material of relevance to the research field in question). • Can communicate research verbally (e.g. at conferences, seminars, hui, wānanga, discussion forums, outreach events, or other venues of relevance to the research field in question). • Can describe the value of their research in the context of its potential impacts and benefits to Aotearoa New Zealand. • Has awareness of Vision Mātauranga.
Impact on others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has begun to build a good working reputation with peers and colleagues. • Exhibits or cultivates skills and attributes as a mentor or leader. This includes, where relevant, a growing research reputation with iwi, hapū, and other Māori groups and communities. • Has made strong connections with others in the field of research.

Assessment relative to opportunity.

The referee report is asking for information that will assist the selection panel in selecting applicants that have demonstrated academic and research excellence relative to opportunity.

As some applicants have had more years to demonstrate research excellence, referee must consider applicants in relation to their years of research experience. As an example, applicants that have only just finished their PhD, should be compared to other researcher at a similar level, and not be directly compared to researcher with 3-4 years of post-PhD research experience.

Confidentiality

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 the Royal Society Te Apārangi; and, (iii) that it will not be made available to the applicant or the public (this includes all comments and grades).

Submitting referee reports

When you have finished all sections of the referee report, you must mark the report as COMPLETED on the portal before it will be included in the assessment process.

Deadline for completing the referee report

For the application to be eligible for consideration, it must be supported by the three required referee reports at the application closing day. Please ensure that your referee report is marked as completed on the referee portal no later than **20 April, 2021 at 5 pm (New Zealand Standard Time)**.

Referees based overseas are asked to remember the time difference between New Zealand and their location of residence to ensure their report is submitted before the New Zealand deadline.

Additional information and assistance

Additional information on the MBIE Science Whitinga Fellowships is available on the following website: <https://www.royalsociety.org.nz/what-we-do/funds-and-opportunities/mbie-science-whitinga-fellowship/>

If you require further assistance, please email the MBIE Science Whitinga Fellowship Secretariat at: whitinga.fellowship@royalsociety.org.nz or phone + 64 4 470 5764.