

**Tertiary Education
Commission**
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua



Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) User Manual

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The Tertiary Education Commission

Every effort is made to provide accurate and factual content. The TEC, however, cannot accept responsibility for any inadvertent errors or omissions that may occur.



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Contents

Purpose of the PBRF User Manual	5
Objectives, principles and elements of the PBRF	7
Purpose of the PBRF	7
PBRF governing principles	7
The three funding components of the PBRF	8
Definitions of research and research excellence	8
How the PBRF fits with other TEC and Government funds	10
PBRF participation criteria and funding	12
Funding available under the PBRF	12
PBRF funding period	12
The annual PBRF funding rounds	13
The Quality Evaluation component	15
The Research Degree Completion (RDC) component	17
External Research Income (ERI)	21
Reporting of PBRF Information	24
PBRF performance /allocation information	24
Key communications regarding the PBRF	24
Requests for PBRF information and data	24
APPENDIX A: Quality Evaluation Panels and Subject Areas	27
APPENDIX B: Ethnicity Codes	29
APPENDIX C: Guidance on External Research Income	30
Purpose	30
Principles behind the ERI component	30
ERI inclusions and exclusions	31
Definitions of income categories	32
Collaborative research agreements	34
Eligibility of income from Trusts	34
Recognition of revenue and liabilities	35
Evidence of funding source	36
Responsibilities in calculating ERI	37
Preparing for the collection of ERI information	37

Tables

Table 1: Quality Category Weightings	16
Table 2.1: Subject Area Weightings (2018 QE)	16
Table 2.2: Subject Area Weightings (2026 QE)*	17
Table 3: Cost Weighting	18
Table 4: Equity Weighting	19
Table 5: Research-component Weighting	19
Table 6: PBRF eligibility codes	20
Table 7. ERI categories and weightings	21
Table 8. PBRF 2018 Quality Evaluation panels and subject areas	27
Table 9. PBRF ethnicity codes	29
Table 10. Essential characteristics of liability	35

Figures

Figure 1. Public sector map	34
Figure 2. Decision tree for determining income source	36

Purpose of the PBRF User Manual

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) administers the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) budget received from Vote Tertiary Education and allocates the funds to tertiary education organisations (TEOs).

The PBRF User Manual is a comprehensive guide to the PBRF for all participating TEOs. It covers:

- › the objectives, principles, and elements of the PBRF
- › who can participate and how much funding is available
- › how PBRF funding is calculated
- › the annual PBRF funding rounds
- › financial administration
- › reporting of PBRF information.

For key communications regarding the PBRF, refer to the TEC website, www.tec.govt.nz.

The background of the slide is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this background is a complex, abstract geometric pattern. This pattern consists of several large, overlapping circles. Within these circles, there are numerous smaller, concentric circles and radial lines. The most prominent feature of the pattern is a series of small, dark blue arrows that point outwards from the center of the circles, creating a sense of expansion or movement. The overall effect is a dynamic and intricate design that fills the upper and middle portions of the slide.

Objectives, principles and elements of the PBRF

Objectives, principles and elements of the PBRF

Purpose of the PBRF

The PBRF is a performance-based funding system to increase the quality of research by encouraging and rewarding excellent research in Aotearoa New Zealand's degree-granting organisations. It does not fund research directly but supports research capacity and capability, including postgraduate-level teaching support.¹

The primary objectives of the PBRF are to:

- › increase the quality of basic and applied research at Aotearoa New Zealand's degree-granting TEOs
- › support world-leading research-led teaching and learning at degree and postgraduate levels
- › assist Aotearoa New Zealand's TEOs to maintain and lift their competitive rankings relative to their international peers
- › provide robust public information to stakeholders about research performance within and across TEOs
- › support a robust and inclusive system for developing and sustaining research excellence in Aotearoa New Zealand.²

In achieving these outcomes, the PBRF will also:

- › support the development of postgraduate student researchers and new and emerging researchers
- › support research activities that provide economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits to Aotearoa New Zealand, including the advancement of Mātauranga Māori
- › support technology and knowledge transfer to Aotearoa New Zealand businesses, iwi and communities.

PBRF governing principles

The PBRF is governed by the following principles:

- › **Partnership:** the PBRF should reflect the bicultural nature of Aotearoa New Zealand and the special role and status of the Treaty of Waitangi /Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- › **Equity:** different approaches and resources are needed to ensure that the measurement of research excellence leads to equitable outcomes.
- › **Inclusiveness:** the PBRF should encourage and recognise the full diversity of epistemologies, knowledges and methodologies to reflect Aotearoa New Zealand's people.
- › **Comprehensiveness:** the PBRF should appropriately measure the quality of the full range of original investigative activity that occurs within the sector, regardless of its type, form or place of output.
- › **Respect for academic traditions:** the PBRF should operate in a manner that is consistent with academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

¹ Between 2004 and 2007 the PBRF progressively replaced 'top-up' funding for research.

² This objective was added in 2021 to reflect the Government's decisions on the review of the PBRF held in 2019–20.

- › **Consistency:** evaluations of quality made through the PBRF should be consistent across the different subject areas and in the calibration of quality ratings against international standards of excellence.
- › **Continuity:** changes to the PBRF process should only be made where they can bring demonstrable improvements that outweigh the cost of implementing them.
- › **Differentiation:** the PBRF should allow stakeholders and the Government to differentiate between providers and their units on the basis of their relative quality.
- › **Credibility:** the methodology, format and processes employed in the PBRF must be credible to those being assessed.
- › **Efficiency:** administrative and compliance costs should be kept to the minimum consistent with a robust and credible process.
- › **Transparency:** decisions and decision-making processes must be explained openly, except where there is a need to preserve confidentiality and privacy.
- › **Complementarity:** the PBRF should be integrated with new and existing policies and quality assurance systems for degrees and degree providers.

The three funding components of the PBRF

The PBRF is a mixed performance-assessment regime that employs both peer-review processes and performance measures. The three funding components are:

- › The **Quality Evaluation:** this is a periodic assessment of the quality of research produced by eligible TEO staff, undertaken by expert peer-review panels. Rounds have been held in 2003, 2006, 2012 and 2018. Currently, this component is used to allocate 55 percent of the fund.
- › The postgraduate **Research Degree Completions (RDCs):** this is a measurement of the number of PBRF-eligible postgraduate research-based degrees completed in participating TEOs, assessed on an annual basis. This component is used to allocate 25 percent of the fund.
- › The **External Research Income (ERI):** this is a measurement of the amount of income for research purposes received by participating TEOs from external sources, assessed on an annual basis. Currently, this component is used to allocate 20 percent of the fund.

The next Quality Evaluation was originally scheduled to take place in 2024 but, following delays due to COVID-19, it was rescheduled to 2026. In March 2024, the Government announced the establishment of a University Advisory Group (UAG) to explore the challenges and opportunities in the university system and that, as a result, Quality Evaluation 2026 will not take place.

Annual PBRF funding allocations are calculated based on the performance of participating TEOs in these three components. RDC and ERI performance is considered annually, while the Quality Evaluation ratios were most recently set after Quality Evaluation 2018.

Definitions of research and research excellence

The main focus of the PBRF is on rewarding and encouraging research excellence. The PBRF Definition of Research is intended to be a broad and inclusive characterisation that includes original investigation in all domains, including mātauranga Māori, Pacific research, and creative, professional and applied research. The PBRF Quality Evaluation explicitly recognises that research excellence occurs across the full spectrum of original investigative activity.

PBRF Definition of Research

For the purposes of the PBRF, research is defined as a process of investigation or inquiry leading to new, recovered, or reinterpreted knowledge or understanding which is effectively shared and capable of rigorous assessment by the appropriate experts.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, our distinctive research cultures and environments draw on diverse ontological, epistemological and methodological traditions of critical inquiry, experimentation and knowledge-creation. This definition of research includes: Māori ways of knowing, being, and conducting rangahau, such as kaupapa Māori and mātauranga Māori; diverse Pacific ways of knowing, being, and conducting research; and work that embodies new insights of direct relevance to the specific needs of iwi, hapū, marae, communities, government, scholarship and teaching, industry and commerce, which may be developed through collaborative and practice-led processes involving stakeholders from those constituencies.

Research can be an individual or collective process and may be embodied in the form of artistic works, performances, designs, policies or processes that lead to novel or substantially improved insights.

For further clarification, research includes:

- › Activity that leads to scholarly books, journal articles, and other nationally and internationally published outputs and presentations that offer new, recovered or reinterpreted knowledge;
- › Activity that leads to contributions to the intellectual underpinning of different ontologies and epistemologies, subjects and disciplines (for example, dictionaries, scholarly editions, teaching materials that embody original research, or teaching practices or activities that produce original research);
- › Applications of existing knowledge to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products, designs, policies, granted patents, or creative outputs;
- › Re-centring and revitalisation of knowledge (for example, the study of raranga, whakapapa narratives, waiata composition, navigational knowledge, translation studies, historical or literary archival studies, or ecological research); and
- › The synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that the insights generated are new.

It does not include:

- › routine testing and data collection lacking analysis, interpretation and/or evaluation;
- › preparation for teaching that does not embody original research (for example, collation of existing research and research outputs into handbooks or textbooks where this does not embody new insights); or
- › the legal and administrative aspects of intellectual property protection and commercialisation activities.

Mātauranga Māori

The PBRF definition of research includes explicit reference to Māori ways of knowing, being, and conducting rangahau. Rangahau and knowledge of relevance to Māori communities, such as kaupapa Māori and mātauranga Māori, are essential components of Aotearoa New Zealand's distinctive research cultures.

Pacific Research

The PBRF definition of research includes explicit reference to diverse Pacific ways of knowing, being, and conducting research. Research and knowledge of relevance to Pacific communities are essential components of Aotearoa New Zealand's distinctive research cultures.

Research excellence and impact

For the purposes of the Quality Evaluation, research excellence will be assessed in terms of originality, rigour, reach and significance, with reference to the quality standards appropriate to the subject area and to the unique nature of Aotearoa New Zealand's research cultures and needs.

Excellence will be assessed across the following areas of activity:

- › The production and creation of knowledge, including ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies unique to Māori and to Pacific communities
- › The dissemination and application of that knowledge within academic and/or other communities and its impact outside the research environment, and
- › Activity which sustains and develops the research environment, within and across both academic and non-academic domains.

For the purposes of the Quality Evaluation, the impact of research is defined as a positive effect on, change, or benefit to society, culture, the environment or the economy at any level, outside the research environment.

Impacts on scholarship, research or the advancement of knowledge within the research environment are not included under impact as they already fall within the definition of excellence.

How the PBRF fits with other TEC and Government funds

After Delivery on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (DQ) funding, which accounts for most Investment Plan funding, the PBRF is the second biggest fund we administer.

The other fund through which the TEC supports research activity in the tertiary education sector is the Centres of Research Excellence (CoREs).

Other government funding secured for research, such as Vote Science and Innovation funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) and Marsden funding, is a common source of the income declared by each TEO in ERI returns to the TEC.

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PBRF participation criteria and funding

PBRF participation criteria and funding

TEOs that receive funding from the PBRF currently must have participated in the Quality Evaluation 2018.

TEOs that participated in the PBRF Quality Evaluation 2018 had to meet the following criteria:

- › be based in Aotearoa New Zealand
- › have degree-granting authority
- › have an approved Investment Plan
- › receive Student Achievement Component funding (now Delivery on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (DQ) funding) from the TEC.³

TEOs cannot receive PBRF funding through the Research Degree Completion or External Research Income elements of the PBRF unless they participated in the most recent Quality Evaluation and submitted Evidence Portfolios (EPs) that were assigned a funded Quality Category.

The key principles underpinning the participation of a TEO in the PBRF are:

- › Participation in the PBRF is voluntary for TEOs that meet the eligibility requirements.
- › TEOs that participate in the PBRF must do so in all three components even if their funding entitlement in one or more of the components is zero, or likely to be zero.
- › If a PBRF-eligible TEO did not participate in the most recent Quality Evaluation, then it is unable to make claims for any of the components.

Funding available under the PBRF

PBRF funding comes from Vote Tertiary Education and is set annually by Cabinet. The PBRF is capped and can only increase through government budget decisions.

The current pool size is \$315 million per annum (GST exclusive).

PBRF funding is paid through each participating TEO's Investment Plan. Delivery of Investment Plans is monitored by the TEC.

PBRF funding period

The funding period for the PBRF is the calendar year from 1 January to 31 December.

The funding allocation ratios for each component are calculated for each TEO using the formulae set out in this document. The TEC then uses these ratios to calculate each TEO's funding entitlement from the PBRF pool.

Each component ratio is an unrounded percentage. All final allocation dollar amounts are calculated to two decimal places.

³ The same eligibility criteria apply to any subsidiaries that are wholly owned by a TEO.

The annual PBRF funding rounds

Preparation for the funding rounds

There are two PBRF funding rounds in each calendar year:

- › an Indicative Funding round, for the following year
- › a Wash-up Funding round, for the previous year.

Indicative funding

The TEC will inform TEOs of their indicative allocation each year as part of the Investment Plan approval process. The ratios for Quality Evaluation, RDC, and ERI will be included in Plan letters.

Indicative allocations will use the most recent Quality Evaluation, RDC and ERI available. For RDCs, data will be extracted from the Single Data Return (SDR) as at 30 September. Any errors in this data can be corrected during the wash-up process. TEOs can submit corrections to their RDC data at any time.

Monthly payments will commence in January of the following year.

Final funding and wash-ups

The amount of a TEO's final PBRF funding allocation, calculated in the Wash-up, may vary from its Indicative Funding for a number of reasons, including:

- › A TEO may leave the PBRF during the course of a year by ceasing operation or changing course offerings, which would reduce its funding to zero and may increase the value of the share received by each remaining TEO.
- › Errors may be found in PBRF data related to RDCs or ERI as a result of checks. Once corrected, this may result in an increase or decrease in the share of a TEO (with a corresponding adjustment for other TEOs).
- › The total PBRF pool size may change as a result of Budget increases or decreases.

At each Indicative Funding round and Wash-up Funding round, TEOs are asked to verify their RDC data for the relevant years.

For example, following the April 2021 SDR, TEOs were informed of their final funding allocation for the 2020 year. Some TEOs had no change to their funding. However, if there was a difference between the Indicative Funding and the final funding allocation, some TEOs would have received an additional payment, and some TEOs would have had to pay part of their indicative funding back to the TEC.

If the Wash-up process results in a TEO paying part of their funding back to the TEC, the TEC will contact the TEO to explain the rationale for any recoveries and allow the TEO the opportunity to respond. Once all TEOs have responded, the TEC will arrange the fund recovery if it is still necessary.

If the Wash-up process results in an additional payment to a TEO, the TEO will be advised in writing of the amount and when to expect this payment.

The TEC provides RDC data to TEOs prior to the submission of the April and August SDRs, to give them an opportunity to identify and correct any errors and shorten the Wash-up process. While the TEC endeavours to complete the W-up process as quickly as possible, it is important to ensure data from all TEOs is correct as errors in one TEO's data can affect the funding allocations for all TEOs. As a result, where there are errors in TEOs' data, this process can take some time to complete.

Where TEOs find errors in their ERI declarations they can provide updated declarations to the TEC at any time.

Corrections affecting historic data

Action is taken by the TEC to correct errors in historic RDC and ERI data at the time of the Wash-up for the relevant year. No action will be taken if errors are identified after the completion of the Wash-up.

Allocation of additional appropriations

If the Government allocates additional PBRF funding in a Budget decision, the TEC calculates the amount each TEO is entitled to, based on the Quality Evaluation, RDC and ERI ratios used for the current year's allocation. The TEC will advise each TEO in writing of this amount and when to expect this payment. No additional information is requested from TEOs for this exercise.

Tax

The PBRF payments include GST but are shown GST exclusive in all correspondence (such as the Investment Plan letter). TEOs should take advice from an accountant or tax specialist about income from grants, including the effect on the costs and depreciation that may be claimed in tax returns. The TEC does not provide tax advice.

The Quality Evaluation component

The Quality Evaluation is an assessment of the quality of research submitted by staff at eligible TEOs.

TEOs determine which of their staff members are eligible to participate and then decide if each staff member's research is likely to meet the standard for a funded Quality Category. TEOs then compile Evidence Portfolios (EPs) and submit them to the TEC. EPs that are not likely to meet these requirements are not submitted for assessment.

Peer review panels complete an assessment and assign one of six Quality Categories to each EP (A, B, C, C(NE), R, or R(NE)).

The funding formula for the Quality Evaluation component

Funding in relation to the Quality Evaluation is currently based on:

- › the Quality Categories assigned to EPs in 2018
- › the full-time-equivalent (FTE) status of the participating TEO's PBRF-eligible staff as recorded in the PBRF Staff Data file
- › the funding weightings for the subject areas to which EPs have been assigned.

The current funding formula for the Quality Evaluation component is:

Formula for Quality Evaluation funding

$$\sum \text{TEO} [(\text{numerical Quality Category weighting}) \times (\text{FTE status of staff member}) \times (\text{funding weighting for relevant subject area})]$$

$$\div$$

$$\sum \text{all TEOs} [(\text{numerical Quality Category weighting}) \times (\text{FTE status of staff member}) \times (\text{funding weighting for relevant subject area})]$$

$$\times$$

Total amount of funding available for the Quality Evaluation component of the PBRF

Note: The Government's decisions on the PBRF in 2021 had required the TEC to amend this funding calculation for 2026 onwards, to take account of new weightings for Māori and Pacific researchers and for Evidence Portfolios assessed by the Pacific Research and Māori Knowledge and Development panels in the Quality Evaluation 2026. More information about these new weightings, which would have applied to the results of Quality Evaluation 2026, is provided below.

The Quality Categories

The PBRF funding generated by way of staff who participate in the Quality Evaluation is determined by the Quality Category assigned to their EP by the relevant peer review panel (see Appendix A for the 2018 list of panels).

These Quality Categories are then given a numerical weighting known as a 'quality weighting'. The quality weightings used in the 2012 and 2018 Quality Evaluations and those which would have been used for Quality Evaluation 2026 are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Quality Category Weightings

Quality Category	2012 Quality Weightings	2018 Quality Weightings	2026 Quality weightings
A	5	5	5
B	3	3	3
C	1	1	1
C (NE)	1	2	2
R	0	0	0
R (NE)	0	0	0

Full-time equivalent (FTE) status of staff

The FTE status of each staff member is also a factor in the formula. Funding is generated in proportion to FTE status stated in the PBRF Staff Data file. The *Guidelines for tertiary education organisations participating in the 2018 Quality Evaluation* set out the requirements for calculating FTE for the 2018 Quality Evaluation.

Funding weighting for subject areas

Subject-area weightings are based on an EP's primary subject area of research. The funding weightings for subject areas used in 2018 are shown in Table 2.1 below. Table 2.2 shows funding weightings for subject areas that were agreed for the Quality Evaluation 2026.

Table 2.1: Subject Area Weightings (2018 QE)

Subject Areas	Funding Category	Weighting
Māori knowledge and development; law; history, history of art, classics and curatorial studies; English language and literature; foreign languages and linguistics; philosophy; religious studies and theology; political science, international relations and public policy; human geography; sociology, social policy, social work, criminology and gender studies; anthropology and archaeology; communications, journalism and media studies; education; pure and applied mathematics; statistics; management, human resources, industrial relations, international business and other business; accounting and finance; marketing and tourism; economics; and Pacific research.	A, I, J	1
Psychology; chemistry; physics; earth sciences; molecular, cellular and whole organism biology; ecology, evolution and behaviour; computer science, information technology, information sciences; nursing; sport and exercise science; other health studies (including rehabilitation therapies); music, literary arts and other arts; visual arts and crafts; theatre and dance, film and television and multimedia; and design.	B, L, V	2
Engineering and technology; agriculture and other applied biological sciences; architecture, design, planning, surveying; biomedical; clinical medicine; pharmacy; public health; veterinary studies and large animal science; and dentistry.	C, G, H, M, Q, N	2.5

Table 2.2: Subject Area Weightings (2026 QE)*

Subject Areas	Funding Category	Weighting
Law; history, history of art, classics and curatorial studies; English language and literature; foreign languages and linguistics; philosophy; religious studies and theology; political science, international relations and public policy; human geography; sociology, social policy, social work, criminology and gender studies; anthropology and archaeology; communications, journalism and media studies; education; pure and applied mathematics; statistics; management, human resources, industrial relations, international business and other business; accounting and finance; marketing and tourism; and economics.	A, I, J	1
Psychology; chemistry; physics; earth sciences; molecular, cellular and whole organism biology; ecology, evolution and behaviour; computer science, information technology, information sciences; nursing; sport and exercise science; other health studies (including rehabilitation therapies); music, literary arts and other arts; visual arts and crafts; theatre and dance, film and television and multimedia; design;	B, L, V	2
Engineering and technology; agriculture and other applied biological sciences; architecture, design, planning, surveying; biomedical; clinical medicine; pharmacy; public health; veterinary studies and large animal science; dentistry; and Pacific research	A, C, G, H, M, Q, N	2.5
Māori knowledge and development	A	3

*Note that the 2026 weightings will not be applied due to the cancellation of Quality Evaluation 2026.

New weightings for Quality Evaluation 2026

Additional funding weightings for Māori and Pacific staff members were agreed by the Government in 2021. These were expected to apply to Quality Evaluation 2026 results as follows:

- › a funding weighting of 2.5 for Evidence Portfolios submitted by Māori staff members
- › a funding weighting of 2 for Evidence Portfolios submitted by Pacific staff members.

If a researcher had qualified as both a Māori staff member and a Pacific staff member, the higher weighting would have applied.

The Research Degree Completion (RDC) component

The RDC component is a measure of the number of research-based postgraduate degrees – including doctorates and master's degrees, as well as some postgraduate diploma and honours programmes – that are completed within a TEO. To be counted, these programmes must meet the following criteria:

- › the degree has an externally assessed research component of 0.75 EFTS value or more.
- › the student who has completed the degree has met all compulsory academic requirements by the end of the relevant year (the year preceding the return).
- › the student has successfully completed the course.

The use of RDCs as a performance measure in the PBRF serves two key purposes:

- › It captures, at least to some degree, the connection between staff research and research training – thus providing some assurance of the future capability of tertiary education research.
- › It provides a proxy for research quality. The underlying assumption is that students who choose to undertake lengthy, expensive and advanced degrees (especially doctorates) tend to search out departments and supervisors who have reputations in the relevant fields for high-quality research and research training.

RDC funding formula

The formula used to calculate funding for the RDC component for each TEO is:

$$\Sigma \text{ RDC} = [(\text{research component weighting}) \times (\text{cost weighting for relevant subject area}) \times (\text{equity weighting})]$$

The funding formula for the 2021 RDC component was:

$$\begin{aligned} & \Sigma [(\text{RDC for TEO2017} \times 0.15) + (\text{RDC for TEO2018} \times 0.35) + (\text{RDC for TEO2019} \times 0.5)] \\ & \div \\ & \Sigma [(\text{Total RDC for TEO2017} \times 0.15) + (\text{Total RDC for TEO2018} \times 0.35) + (\text{RDC for TEO2019} \times 0.5)] \\ & \times \\ & \text{Total amount of funding available for the RDC component of the PBRF} \end{aligned}$$

Within the RDC component of the PBRF, a funding allocation ratio calculated on a three-year rolling average determines the amount allocated to each TEO annually.

For example, in 2021 the funding allocation ratio for each TEO is based on 15 percent of its RDC figures for 2017, 35 percent of its RDC figures for 2018, and 50 percent of its RDC figures for 2019.

RDC funding allocations

There are two funding rounds associated with RDCs:

- › Indicative Funding round: RDC information will be extracted from the August SDR each year on 30 September. The data will be used 'as at' this date.
- › Wash-up Funding round: RDC information will be extracted from the April SDR on 30 May.

Before these two SDR submission periods, the TEC will provide RDC data extracts to TEOs to enable them to make any corrections to their SDR data ahead of submission.

RDC weightings

The funding formula for the RDC component includes weightings for the following factors:

- › the funding category of the subject area (a cost weighting)
- › Māori and Pacific student completions (an equity weighting)
- › the volume of research in the degree programme (a research-component weighting).

Table 3: Cost Weighting

Student Component Funding Category	Weighting
A, I, J	1
B, L, V	2
C, G, H, M, Q, N	2.5

Table 4, below, shows the equity weighting applied to each completion. This weighting aims to encourage TEOs to enrol and support Māori and Pacific students, as they are under-represented at higher levels of study.

Table 4: Equity Weighting

Ethnicity	Weighting
Māori	2
Pacific	2
All other ethnicities	1

The research-component weighting uses a ‘volume of research factor’ (VRF). The VRF is based on the volume of externally assessed research included in the degree programme that has been completed, as shown in Table 5 below.

Following the recommendations of the Sector Reference Group that reviewed the PBRF in 2008–2010, a strategic weighting of 4.0 is applied for the completion of theses in te reo Māori. Completion Code 8 has been introduced into the SDR for this purpose. The SDR Manual contains the definition of this completion code. Where Completion Code 8 is used, no ethnicity weighting is applied.

Table 5: Research-component Weighting

Volume of Research Factor (VRF)	Weighting
Less than 0.75 EFTS	0
0.75–1.0 EFTS of master’s	EFTS value
Master’s course of 1.0 EFTS thesis or more	1
Professional doctorate with research component	EFTS value of research component
Doctorate	3

Note: The research component weightings used for RDC calculations differ from the approach used for determining if a Delivery on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (DQ) funded course will receive a postgraduate funding rate.

RDC returns

It is essential that TEOs submit completions for PBRF-eligible postgraduate RDCs through the Single Data Return (SDR) following the agreed business rules that are available on the TEC website: [Measuring research degree completions](#).

TEOs are responsible for submitting and maintaining accurate information about the Funding Category, Ethnicity, and VRF through the SDR and through the Ministry of Education’s STEO site (www.steo.govt.nz). Errors in the data reported can cause significant delays in finalising funding as they affect the calculation of funding entitlement of all participating TEOs.

If existing records need amending, these changes can generally be made through the SDR and STEO. However, if historical records need amending, please contact the TEC by emailing pbrfinfo@tec.govt.nz.

Qualification and course approval

A TEO must submit qualifications and courses to the TEC for approval. TEOs are responsible for entering all qualification and course information through the Ministry of Education's STEO site (www.steo.govt.nz) so that the TEC can process and approve them. The TEC will only include course completions in the RDC component funding calculation if the courses have been identified as PBRF-eligible by the TEO using the applicable field and have been approved by the TEC.

PBRF notification

It is important that TEOs notify the TEC via their SDR of any changes to PBRF status or any new courses that are PBRF eligible. The PBRF eligibility codes available in the SDR are in the table below.

Table 6: PBRF eligibility codes

Qualification type	Eligibility code	NZQF Level
Part-time PhD	C	10
Full-time PhD	D	10
Part-time master's	L	9
Full-time master's	M	9
Part-time postgraduate diploma/honours	L	8
Full-time postgraduate diploma/honours	M	8
Not eligible	X	N/A

The L and M PBRF eligibility codes are also used for postgraduate diploma and honours courses that include more than 0.75 EFTS of externally assessed research. For reporting purposes, these courses can be distinguished from master's courses by using the level of study: doctorates are NZQF Level 10, master's degrees are Level 9, and postgraduate diplomas and honours courses are Level 8.

External Research Income (ERI)

The ERI component allocates funding to participating TEOs based on the total of reported research income received either by the TEO and/or any wholly-owned subsidiary of that TEO. This includes research income that is received by the TEO and/or any 100 percent owned subsidiary.

Of the total funds to be allocated through the PBRF in any one year, 20 percent are allocated based on the ERI component.

ERI is included as a performance measure in the PBRF on the basis that it provides a good proxy for research quality.

The underlying assumption is that external research funders are discriminating in their choice of who to fund and that they allocate their limited resources to those they see as undertaking research of a high quality.

ERI excludes income from TEO employees who receive external research income in their personal capacity (i.e. the external research income is received by them and not their employer). Also excluded is income from controlled trusts, partnerships and joint ventures.

A complete description of ERI inclusions and exclusions is provided in Appendix C.

ERI funding allocations and funding formula

Within the ERI component of PBRF funding, a funding allocation ratio calculated on a three-year rolling average basis determines the amount paid to each TEO annually.

The rolling average is calculated using the following weightings:

- › 50 percent for the ERI reported for the previous year
- › 35 percent for the year before the previous year
- › 15 percent for the year before that.

ERI is reported by four source categories, which are weighted by the TEC when calculating ERI component funding:

Table 7. ERI categories and weightings

Category	Weighting for ERI declared up to 31 December 2022*	Weighting for ERI declared from 1 January 2023
Aotearoa New Zealand government contestable funds	1.0	1.0
Aotearoa New Zealand public sector contract research	1.0	1.0
Overseas research income	1.5	3.5
Aotearoa New Zealand non-government income	2.0	4.0

*Note that ERI information declared in 2022 will relate to the ERI funding received in the 2021 calendar year.

The Government introduced requirements for ERI to be reported in four different categories from 2015 and financial weightings were applied to these categories in the PBRF funding formula from 2017.

In 2021, the Government decided to amend the weightings applied to the different types of ERI. The new weightings on ERI types will inform the calculation of TEO's PBRF funding allocations from the 2024 funding year onwards, when 2022 ERI performance information starts to inform funding. By 2026, all of the ERI component will be allocated based on ERI weighted by source.

TEC will publish information about ERI by funding source in the PBRF performance information.

For example, the 2021 funding allocations are based on the ERI data supplied by TEOs for each of the calendar years 2017, 2018 and 2019. The 2021 funding allocation ratio for each TEO was 15 percent of its ERI figure for 2017, 35 percent of its ERI figure for 2018, and 50 percent of its ERI figure for 2019.

The funding formula for the 2021 ERI component was:

$$\frac{\sum [\text{ERI for TEO2017} \times 0.15] + (\text{ERI for TEO2018} \times 0.35) + (\text{ERI for TEO2019} \times 0.5)}{\sum [\text{Total ERI for TEO2017} \times 0.15] + (\text{Total ERI for TEO2018} \times 0.35) + (\text{ERI for TEO2019} \times 0.5)} \times \text{Total amount of funding available for the ERI component of the PBRF}$$

Further information on calculating and reporting of ERI is provided in Appendix C.

ERI returns

Each participating TEO submits a return to the TEC once a year, by 31 May. This return shows the TEO's total PBRF-eligible ERI for the 12 months ending 31 December of the preceding year (GST exclusive). In addition, in support of each ERI calculation, the TEO must provide an independent audit opinion if the value of ERI is more than \$200,000.

Independent audit opinions of ERI must also be submitted to the TEC by 31 May each year for the Indicative Funding round the following year.

TEOs with ERI less than \$200,000 do not need to submit an independent audit opinion, but must supply independent verification of their ERI in the form of an annual report or copies of working papers to calculate the income.

The TEC will validate the ERI Declarations by checking to ensure that independent audit opinions (where applicable) have been received.

A template will be provisioned through the TEC's Workspace 2 at the start of the year.

Please note that a declaration from the CEO is no longer required. Submitting the ERI data through Workspace 2 and uploading an independent audit opinion (where applicable) is sufficient confirmation that the ERI data is accurate.

Declarations are due 31 May, and should be reported by source using the reporting template supplied via Workspace 2.

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Reporting of PBRF Information

Reporting of PBRF Information

PBRF performance /allocation information

PBRF performance information is published on the [TEC website](#).

The primary purpose of these publications is to:

- › provide TEOs with comparable information on their performance against the three PBRF measures, and
- › ensure transparency by providing a breakdown of funding allocations against these measures.

There are four key sets of data published:

- › final funding allocations by measure and indicative allocations for the year following the reporting period
- › Quality Evaluation ratios
- › postgraduate research degree completions
- › external research income.

Note: funds are reported as GST exclusive.

Key communications regarding the PBRF

Key communications regarding the PBRF can be found on the [TEC website](#), including:

- › general information on the PBRF
- › information on Quality Evaluations
- › PBRF performance information
- › recent PBRF Sector Updates
- › business rules for [Measuring research degree completions](#).

To receive updates about the PBRF, email pbrfinfo@tec.govt.nz with your contact details.

Requests for PBRF information and data

TEOs and other stakeholders are able to email specific PBRF queries to the TEC. Individual researchers can also request their 2003, 2006, 2012 and 2018 results from the TEC.

For all general information requests, requests about funding, and requests for 2003, 2006, 2012 and 2018 Quality Evaluation results, email pbrfinfo@tec.govt.nz.

All other requests for PBRF data must be made in writing to TEC outlining:

- › the PBRF data required
- › the reason why the data is required.

These requests must be submitted to pbrfinfo@tec.govt.nz.

Information received by the TEC relating to the PBRF is confidential. However, as the TEC is subject to the Official Information Act (OIA), the information held can be requested by third parties and the TEC must comply with its obligations under the OIA.

This may result in the TEC disclosing information including:

- › name of funding recipient (the TEO)
- › amount of funding
- › contact details of recipient (the TEO)
- › a general statement of the nature of the activity
- › the outcome of the activity assisted.

If you consider there is information in your PBRF submissions that the TEC should not release under the OIA, e.g. information that is commercially sensitive, please specify this and identify the grounds under the OIA for withholding that information.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: Quality Evaluation Panels and Subject Areas

Table 8. PBRF 2018 Quality Evaluation panels and subject areas

Panel	Subject Area
Biological Sciences	Agriculture and other applied biological sciences
	Ecology, evolution and behaviour
	Molecular, cellular and whole organism biology
Business and Economics	Accounting and finance
	Economics
	Management, human resources, industrial relations, international business and other business
	Marketing and tourism
Creative and Performing Arts	Design
	Music, literary arts and other arts
	Theatre and dance, film and television and multimedia
	Visual arts and crafts
Education	Education
Engineering, Technology and Architecture	Architecture, design, planning, surveying
	Engineering and technology
Health	Dentistry
	Nursing
	Other health studies (including rehabilitation therapies)
	Pharmacy
	Sport and exercise science
	Veterinary studies and large animal science
Humanities and Law	English language and literature
	Foreign languages and linguistics
	History, history of art, classics and curatorial studies
	Law
	Philosophy
	Religious studies and theology
Māori Knowledge and Development*	Māori knowledge and development
Mathematical and Information Sciences and Technology	Computer science, information technology, information sciences
	Pure and applied mathematics
	Statistics
Medicine and Public Health*	Biomedical

	Clinical medicine
	Public health
Pacific Research	Pacific Research (new Panel for the 2018 Quality Evaluation)
Physical Sciences	Chemistry
	Earth sciences
	Physics
Social Sciences and Other Cultural/Social Studies	Anthropology and archaeology
	Communications, journalism and media studies
	Human geography
	Political science, international relations and public policy
	Psychology
	Sociology, social policy, social work, criminology and gender studies

*Note: In the design of Quality Evaluation 2026, the Māori Knowledge and Development panel was renamed the Mātauranga Māori panel and the Medicine and Public Health panel was split into two.

APPENDIX B: Ethnicity Codes

Table 9. PBRF ethnicity codes

Ethnicity	Code	Ethnicity	Code
Pre-2007		From 2007 onwards	
European/Pākehā	1	New Zealand European	111
NZ Māori	20	British and Irish	121
Samoan	31	Dutch	122
Cook Islands Māori	32	Greek	123
Tongan	33	Polish	124
Niuean	34	South Slav	125
Tokelauan	35	Italian	126
Fijian	36	German	127
Other Pacific Island	37	Australian	128
Chinese	51	Other European	129
Indian	52	Māori	211
SE Asian		Samoan	311
Other Asian	68	Cook Islands Māori	321
Other	89	Tongan	331
International Student	98	Niuean	341
Not Known	99	Tokelauan	351
		Fijian	361
		Other Pacific Peoples	371
		Filipino	411
		Cambodian	412
		Vietnamese	413
		Chinese	421
		Indian	431
		Sri Lankan	441
		Japanese	442
		Korean	443
		Other Asian	444
		Middle Eastern	511
		Latin American	521
		African	531
		Other Ethnicity	611
		Not Stated	999

APPENDIX C: Guidance on External Research Income

Purpose

This guidance provides information on calculation and reporting for the External Research Income (ERI) component of the PBRF. ERI declarations should be submitted through Workspace 2 by 31 May for the previous calendar year.

This guidance contains the following topics:

- › Principles behind the ERI component
- › ERI inclusions and exclusions
- › Definitions of income categories
- › Collaborative research agreements
- › Eligibility of income from trusts
- › Recognition of revenue and liabilities
- › ERI categories and weightings
- › Evidence of funding source
- › Responsibilities in calculating ERI
- › Preparing for the collection of ERI information.

Principles behind the ERI component

The principles underpinning the ERI component are:

- › The principles that underpin the whole PBRF.
- › Generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as applied in New Zealand are to be used in the calculation of ERI.
- › The ERI return will be certified by the TEO and subject to audit.
- › Only research funding from outside the tertiary sector, and contestable funding from within the tertiary sector, can be included as ERI.
- › For transfers of funds between TEOs (such as sub-contracting for collaborative research contracts), TEOs must allocate external funds among themselves and must document the arrangements before counting these funds as ERI. Transfers of funds between TEOs and from TEOs to subsidiaries are otherwise not eligible.
- › The primary funding contract for the research undertaken will determine the source of the ERI funding that is received by the TEO and/or any 100 percent owned subsidiary of the TEO, and the weighting to be applied.
- › ERI will have a default weighting of 1.0. TEOs receiving Aotearoa New Zealand non-government or overseas ERI must provide sufficient evidence and assurance to their auditors that a higher weighting can be claimed.
- › The initial weighting on ERI is maintained through any sub-contracting arrangements. This also applies to any funds received back by a TEO due to any specific research arrangement.

- › Where a research contract has multiple funding sources, each individual source will require categorisation for the appropriate ERI weighting for its share of funding to be applied.

ERI inclusions and exclusions

What is included in, and excluded from, the ERI component is determined by:

- › the purpose for which the income is received
- › the nature of the entity receiving the income.

Income included in the ERI must be for purposes of research as defined for the PBRF (see page 9). Note that the definition of research used for the PBRF has been moved from the funding determination to the funding conditions attached to PBRF funding.

Research income can be included in the ERI component if it is received by a TEO and/or the 100 percent owned subsidiaries of a TEO.

For the purposes of the PBRF, the date at which ownership of a subsidiary is to be determined is 31 December of the year preceding the return. For example, for ERI returns for the 2024 year, ownership is determined on 31 December 2023.

Where a subsidiary becomes 100 percent owned during the year, ERI can only be included for the period that a subsidiary has been 100 percent owned.

See also 'Eligibility of income from trusts', below.

ERI inclusions

The following items may be included as ERI:

- › Grants providing a stipend to a research student and/or the cost of a student's research degree (note that the research degree in these cases does not have to comply with the 0.75 EFTS required for the RDC component – but it does require a research component).
- › Funds provided specifically for the purpose of travel when used to enable access to a programme of research (the staff member(s) using the funds should be active in the research programme, rather than being an observer or visitor).
- › Funds supplied for clinical trials, provided the purpose of the trial meets the PBRF Definition of Research.
- › Funds that support any other part of the full costs of a research programme (e.g. support for travel to conferences directly associated with a research programme even where the research programme itself may be otherwise funded internally).
- › Capital grants provided to purchase assets explicitly for the purpose of conducting research (irrespective of whether or not such grants are ultimately applied to operating costs or to the purchase of research equipment).
- › Capital which is provided specifically for research purposes and which is treated as an equity contribution in the TEO's financial statements (e.g. capital grants received for establishing CoREs).
- › Income from CoREs.

ERI exclusions

The following items are excluded from ERI:

- › Delivery on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (DQ) funding.

- › Interest income accruing to research grants and contract research funds already received by the TEO.
- › Goods or services or cash contributions received on condition that the TEO uses them to purchase goods or services from the funder.
- › Grants provided to purchase assets, unless explicitly and exclusively for research purpose.
- › Income which is not earmarked by the donor for research, but which may be spent on research at the discretion of the TEO.
- › Income received for purposes other than research (e.g. profits from workshops or fee-paying courses).
- › Consultancy fees for projects that do not meet the PBRF Definition of Research (see page 9) – this will mean that consultancy agreements which include both research and consultancy elements must be apportioned so that only the research income is included as ERI.
- › Proceeds from the sale of intellectual property, whether or not that property is derived from research.
- › Revenue from activities associated with research (e.g. derived from goods or services that are a by-product of the research).
- › Services provided in kind (i.e. where there has been no monetary payment) such as the free use of a laboratory for research purposes.
- › Funds that originate from the TEO or its 100 percent owned subsidiaries.
- › The GST component in any research funds received.
- › Funding received from the PBRF.

The research income of the following recipients is not eligible for inclusion in the TEO's ERI:

- › TEO staff members who receive ERI in their personal capacity (i.e. the ERI is received by them and not their employer).
- › Subsidiaries and associates that are less than 100 percent owned by the TEO.
- › Controlled trusts (see 'Eligibility of income from trusts', below).
- › Partnerships.
- › Joint ventures.

Definitions of income categories

Aotearoa New Zealand government contestable funding and Aotearoa New Zealand public sector contract research

Income is defined as from Aotearoa New Zealand government, whether defined as Aotearoa New Zealand government contestable funds or public sector contract research, when funding is from entities listed as Aotearoa New Zealand State Sector Organisations at <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/state-sector-organisations> and not domiciled overseas.

'Aotearoa New Zealand government' also comprises all local authorities ('local government'), including council-controlled organisations as well as the State sector above ('central government'). See Figure 1, below (<https://www.ssc.govt.nz/cegma1>).

For reporting purposes, TEOs must categorise Aotearoa New Zealand government funding into one of the two categories described below:

- › Aotearoa New Zealand government contestable funds are generally characterised by an open call for proposals, whether the research is mission-led or investigator-led. The funding is likely to be

characterised by the funder as a public good or a grant. The source government appropriation may also be described as a grant or fund. The vast majority of Aotearoa New Zealand government income is expected to fall into this category.

- › Aotearoa New Zealand public sector contract research is generally categorised by the purchaser's focus on buying or funding specific research for its own purpose, as input into its own activities. It may or may not have been procured via an open tender.

TEOs will in some cases need to make judgements when classifying their ERI into these two categories.

Aotearoa New Zealand non-government income

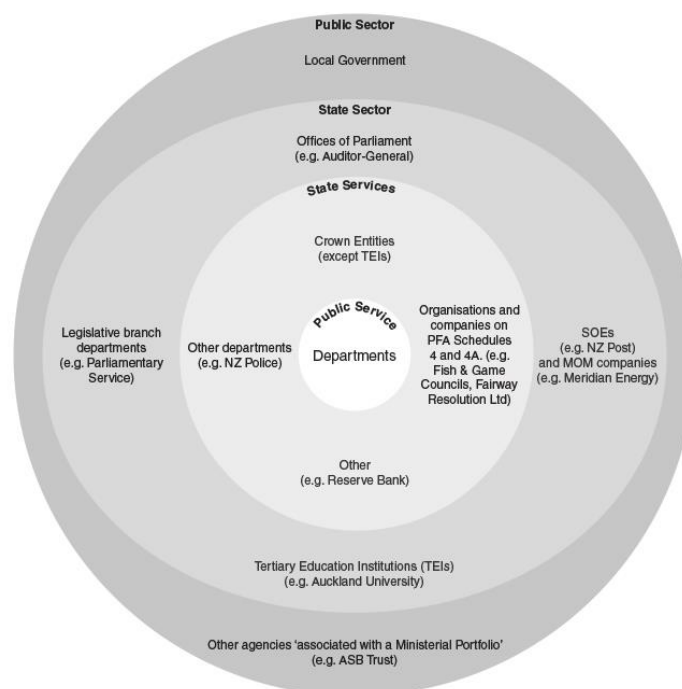
ERI is defined as Aotearoa New Zealand non-government, when the funding is from entities not listed as New Zealand State Sector Organisations as defined at <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/state-sector-organisations> and not domiciled overseas. These entities may include:

- › Aotearoa New Zealand public and private companies.
- › Not-for-profit entities such as charities.
- › Iwi and their subsidiaries.
- › Industry-based bodies.
- › Private individuals and trusts.
- › Co-operatively-owned companies, e.g. Fonterra and Zespri.

Overseas research income

ERI is defined as overseas research income, when:

- › The person or organisation paying for the research or sponsoring the research is wholly based overseas, and/or
- › Funding is from overseas governments, and/or
- › GST is not payable on the funding received, and/or
- › Where the primary source of funding is from overseas even though decisions regarding the use of this funding are made in New Zealand (e.g. Fulbright Scholarships) and other costs directly related to them (e.g. scholarships costs, travel costs etc.), and/or
- › It is research income earned by the TEO's overseas operations.

Figure 1. Public sector map

Collaborative research agreements

Where TEOs are jointly undertaking research, they must determine how any ERI should be apportioned between them.

To the extent that TEOs are not able to agree and the head research contract does not make specific provision for apportionment, the income in question must be excluded from the ERI component.

The onus of establishing that the contract is joint research, and not a sub- contract arrangement, is on the TEOs.

It is anticipated that parties entering into external research contracts on a collaborative basis will explicitly acknowledge the ERI sharing arrangements in the head contract. Sector groups may, however, enter into some collective agreement on the method of apportionment to be used. For example, Universities New Zealand has agreed that PBRF-eligible ERI will be included in the ERI return for the university undertaking sub-contracted work and removed from the ERI return of the university letting the contract.

Where collaborative research occurs with an organisation outside the tertiary sector, the income received by the TEO can be counted as ERI (i.e. it is not necessary to apportion the income under the head research contract as required for collaborative research arrangements between TEOs).

Eligibility of income from Trusts

ERI includes income for research purposes from Trusts where:

EITHER

The Trust is not controlled by the TEO or the TEO is not the settlor, beneficiary, or trustee (e.g. research grants from Community Trust, Wellcome Trust or Lion Foundation are all legitimate ERI if they meet the PBRF Definition of Research)

OR

The Trust is controlled by the TEO and the trust deed specifies that the funds from the Trust are to be used solely for research

OR

The TEO can prove that the funds have been provided to the Trust specifically to support or fund research and that the funds have not been provided to the Trust by the TEO or its 100 percent owned subsidiary.

Interest earned by a Trust where distributions are exclusively for the purpose of research may be counted as ERI once it is distributed to a TEO as research funding. This is because there will be no practical way to establish the source of a donation from an arms-length Trust (such as a Community Trust). Once the funds are available within the TEO, no interest can be recognised if the funds are invested by the TEO.

Recognition of revenue and liabilities

TEOs should not include income for research work in the ERI calculation until that work has been undertaken. Further guidance is offered below on matters of income recognition.

Where a research contract specifies a clear requirement for a condition to be satisfied, and that condition has not been satisfied, then an obligation or liability exists and the research funds cannot be fully recognised as ERI. In some cases, it may be necessary to make an apportionment. This apportionment should reflect the underlying substance of the research contract. In some circumstances, the proportion of total project costs expended may be the appropriate basis. The liability will therefore be the costs to complete as a proportion of total project costs multiplied by the research revenue.

To ensure greater consistency in the treatment of research income, TEOs must use the following criteria for recognition of liabilities.

A liability should only be recognised in the statement of financial position when:

- › It is probable that the future sacrifice of service potential or future economic benefits will be required.

AND

- › The amount of the liability can be measured reliably.

The definition of liability identifies three essential characteristics, all of which should be present for a liability to be recognised. These characteristics are set out in the following table:

Table 10. Essential characteristics of liability

Essential Characteristics	Interpretation
There must be a present obligation – i.e. the TEO must have a duty or responsibility, which has not yet been satisfied, to act or perform in a certain way.	For example, there is a contractual obligation to carry out the research or, more specifically, to deliver some research output.
There must be adverse financial consequences for the entity, in that the entity is obliged to sacrifice service potential or future economic benefits to one or more other entities.	There must be some obligation to repay or refund the research income, in whole or in part.
The transaction or other event which gives rise to the obligation to sacrifice service potential or future economic benefits must have occurred.	It must be clear that at the time of reporting there would be an obligation to repay.

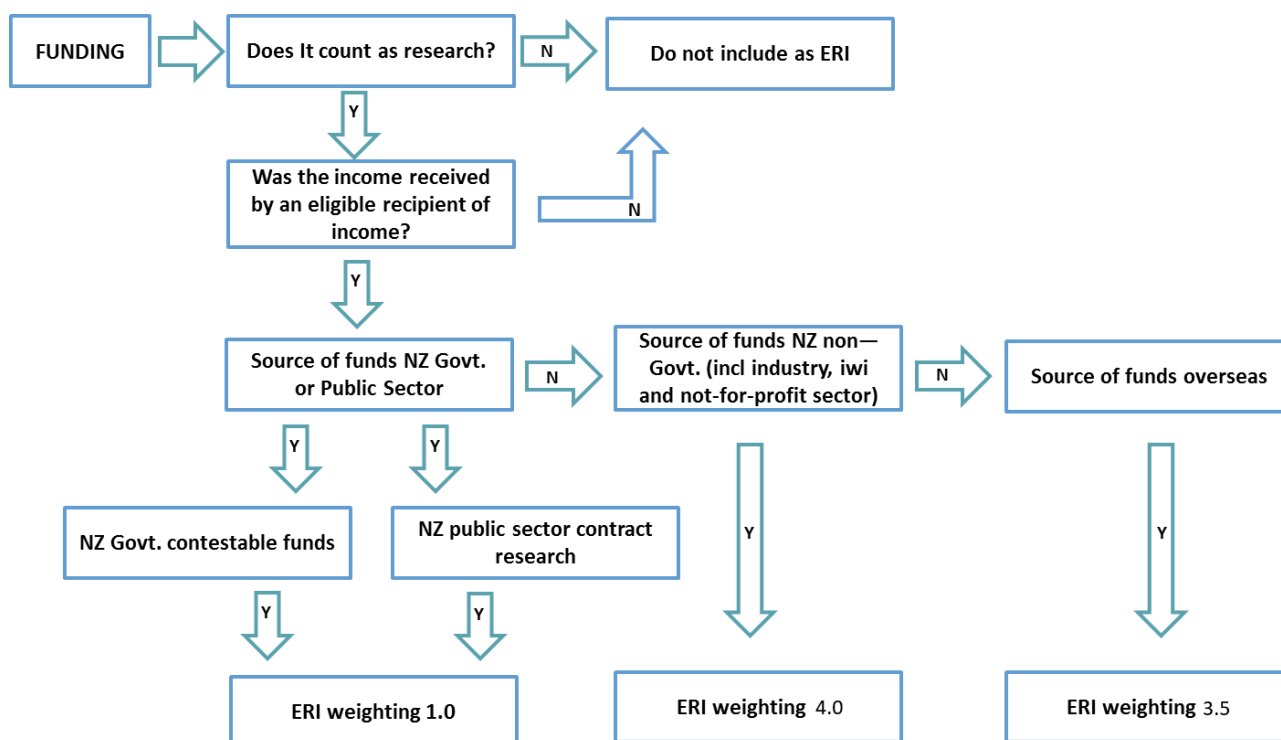
Evidence of funding source

The research contract or agreement is expected to be the primary mechanism for determining the source of funding and correct category for ERI. Wherever possible, any contracts or research agreements declared by TEOs as a source of ERI should identify geographic location of the funding source, and in the event of multiple funders, the breakdown of the ERI sources.

Where any contract or agreement does not have sufficient information to determine the source of funding, it is the responsibility of the TEO to provide sufficient supplementary evidence to their auditors that the source of funding is eligible for any higher weighting claimed.

Where there is no evidence to support the classification of an ERI source as attracting a weighting of 3.5 or 4.0, or if the contracting body is not the source of the funding, it is the responsibility of the TEO to provide sufficient evidence of this to their auditors. This also applies to funds passed through intermediary organisations.

Figure 2. Decision tree for determining income source



Responsibilities in calculating ERI

The following table outlines the responsibilities of TEOs and the TEC in calculating, and collecting information for, the ERI component.

Organisation	Responsibilities
TEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Completes an ERI declaration › Prepares auditable work-papers that support its determination of ERI › Provides an independent audit opinion where ERI is more than \$200,000 – this opinion will attest to the accuracy of the return and the correct application of these ERI requirements › Provides the ERI information and audit opinion within the required timeframes.
TEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Collects ERI information from participating TEOs › Calculates the ERI component in the PBRF formula for each participating TEO › Reports ERI information to the sector, including disclosure of the ERI information that has been collected.

Preparing for the collection of ERI information

TEOs may wish to consider the following questions when preparing to collect ERI information:

- › Have auditable work-papers been prepared that provide evidence of the total ERI?
- › Is the basis for all research funding to be included in the ERI clearly established and documented (i.e. are contracts complete and referenced)?
- › Does the documentation for all ERI to be included align with the PBRF Definition of Research (see page 9)?
- › Where collaborative research is to be included in ERI, have the respective shares of each organisation involved in the research been properly established and agreed? If not, has the income been eliminated from the calculation of ERI?
- › Where consultancy (or other non-research activities) and research are part of the same contract, has an appropriate allocation been made?
- › Where ERI has been received from controlled trusts, is there evidence to prove that the funds were given to the trust for the purpose of research; or is there evidence to demonstrate that the sole purpose of the trust is to fund research?