

**Tertiary Education
Commission**
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua



Performance-Based Research Fund

**Peer Review Panel nomination and
selection process for Quality
Evaluation 2026**

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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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Peer Review Panels

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) invites nominations for people to serve as panellists for the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) Quality Evaluation 2026.

This document provides an overview of the nomination and appointment processes, as well as key information and dates for those interested in being on a panel in Quality Evaluation 2026.

What are Peer Review panels?

As part of running the PBRF, the TEC periodically convenes expert panels to directly assess research quality based on researchers' submitted Evidence Portfolios.

Peer review panels cover defined subject areas, which are drawn from a list of 43 options that have been defined for use in the PBRF. Appointments to panels ensure that they have the appropriate expertise to assess the research that is submitted to each panel.

For the Quality Evaluation 2026, there will be 14 peer review panels, organised as follows:

Panel	Panel Identifier	Subject Area
Biological Sciences	BIOS	Agriculture and other applied biological sciences Ecology, evolution and behaviour Molecular, cellular and whole organism biology
Business and Economics	BEC	Accounting and finance Economics Management, human resources, industrial relations, international business and other business Marketing and tourism
Creative and Performing Arts	CPA	Design Music, literary arts and other arts Theatre and dance, film and television and multimedia Visual arts and crafts
Education	EDU	Education
Engineering, Technology and Architecture	ETA	Architecture, design, planning, surveying Engineering and technology
Health	HEALTH	Dentistry Nursing Other health studies (including rehabilitation therapies) Pharmacy Sport and exercise science

Panel	Panel Identifier	Subject Area
		Veterinary studies and large animal science
Humanities and Law	HAL	English language and literature Foreign languages and linguistics History, history of art, classics and curatorial studies Law Philosophy Religious studies and theology
Mātauranga Māori	MĀORI	Māori knowledge and development
Mathematical and Information Sciences and Technology	MIST	Computer science, information technology, information sciences Pure and applied mathematics Statistics
Medicine	MED	Biomedical Clinical medicine
Pacific Research	PACIFIC	Pacific research
Physical Sciences	PHYSC	Chemistry Earth sciences Physics
Public Health	PUB	Public Health
Social Sciences and Other Cultural/ Social Studies	SSOCSS	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

What is the overall outcome sought?

The two-stage panel selection process will result in the appointment of the Panel Co-Chairs and Panel Members (collectively referred to as “panellists”) of the fourteen peer review panels for Quality Evaluation 2026.

PBRF peer review panellists are appointed for their specific expertise and knowledge, and do not act as representatives of their employer or discipline.

In the appointment of a peer review panel, the goal will be to achieve the highest calibre of panellists, who collectively represent the diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand’s population and research cultures, as well as the full range of subject areas within each panel.

Note that for Quality Evaluation 2026, some important changes have been made to the peer review panels membership criteria, composition expectations, and structure. These changes reflect the new PBRF principles of Partnership, Equity, and Inclusiveness agreed by the government in 2021:

- › Peer review panels will be led by Panel Co-Chairs, at least one of whom will have expertise in Māori knowledge.
- › All panellists will be expected to demonstrate awareness and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the significance of Māori-Crown partnership;
- › All panellists will be expected to demonstrate an appreciation of the diverse range of ontologies, epistemologies, knowledges, and research in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- › Co-Chairs will convene panels which better reflect the diversity of people and research cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Note that for the purposes of convening panels, ‘Māori knowledge’ should be understood broadly, but is distinct from the general requirement that all panellists demonstrate awareness and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the significance of Māori-Crown partnership. The Co-Moderator Māori will play a central role in assessing the relevant expertise of nominees for the role of Co-Chair – Māori in each peer review panel. The full selection criteria for Panel Co-Chairs are set out below in the section *What are the selection criteria for Panel Co-Chairs?* The TEC will report on panels composition when the final panels are announced.

What is the overall process?

There is a two-stage open nomination process for membership of Quality Evaluation 2026 peer review panels. The first stage runs from 25 October 2022 to May 2023. During this stage, the Panel Co-Chairs and initial Panel Members will be appointed. The second stage will start in late 2025, once participating TEOs have indicated their EP submission intentions. During this stage the second cohort of Panel Members will be appointed. Further Panel Members may be appointed as required following TEOs’ submission of EPs in July 2026. There are key activities within the overall nomination and selection process. These activities and the indicative dates are set out in the table below.

Table 1: Activities and time frames for the first stage

Activity	Indicative date
Nomination process opens	25 October 2022
First nomination round closes	13 December 2022
Panel Co-Chairs advised of appointment	March 2023
Panel Co-Chairs announced	Late March 2023
Panel Co-Chairs induction session (1 day)	Late March 2023
Initial Panel Members advised of appointment	April 2023
Initial Panel Members announced	May 2023
Development of draft Panel Specific Guidance	May – August 2023
Draft Panel Specific Guidelines released for consultation	11 August 2023
Consultation closes on Panel Specific Guidelines	22 September 2023
Final Panel Specific Guidelines released	30 November 2023

First stage nomination process

The TEC is currently seeking nominations for the roles of Panel Co-Chairs and initial Panel Members. Nominations are welcome from individuals with recognised research expertise and knowledge, including those with experience of community, practice-based, and applied research, or expertise in engaging with research users and research impact, and who undertake research in non-TEO settings.

Appointment of Panel Co-Chairs

What are the responsibilities of a Panel Co-Chair?

Prior to the Quality Evaluation assessment phase, Panel Co-Chairs will be responsible for:

- › Identifying and appointing initial panel members, using the guidelines and procedures established by the TEC and giving due regard to the advice of the TEC and the Moderation Team;
- › Developing the Panel-Specific Guidelines, with the input of the initial panel members and the advice of the TEC and the Moderation Team; and
- › Appointing further panel members as required once indicative EP numbers are known.

During the assessment phase, Panel Co-Chairs are responsible for ensuring that the Panel assessment process is conducted in a fair, transparent, and timely way according to the Guidelines and other policies and processes set out by the TEC. They will do this by:

- › Assigning each EP to two panel members for pre-meeting assessment and determining which of these panel members will be the lead for that EP;
- › If necessary, deciding whether part of an EP requires cross-referral to another peer review panel, or whether an EP requires transferral to another peer review panel, and liaising with the Co-Chairs of the cross-referred panel to facilitate this process;
- › Advising and mentoring panel members, as required, on the assessment criteria and processes;
- › Chairing meetings of the panel to review and calibrate the scores and to assign EPs to Quality Categories;
- › Ensuring panel decisions are documented and that critical issues necessary for a fair review are appropriately addressed;
- › Ensuring that the panel completes its preparation and evaluation work to agreed timeframes;
- › Ensuring that all panel members have an opportunity to contribute to the process and participate fully in the panel's activities;
- › Taking due regard of the decisions of the Moderation Team and the Moderation Panel;
- › Participating in the Moderation Panel; and
- › Reporting to the TEC Board at the end of the Quality Evaluation.

How are Panel Co-Chairs appointed?

All nominations for Panel Co-Chair will be assessed against the selection criteria below and considered by the Moderation Team for Quality Evaluation 2026.¹ Additional advice may also be sought from appropriate external experts, including but not limited to previous Principal Moderators, Deputy Moderators, and the Sector Reference Group Co-Chairs.

The Moderation Team will make appointment recommendations to the TEC based on the nominations received. The TEC retains the right to supplement nominations through identifying individuals directly, particularly where gaps are identified or specific skills are needed.

¹ Dr Shane Edwards (Co-Moderator Māori), Professor Wendy Larner (Co-Moderator), and Associate Professor Yvonne Underhill-Sem (Deputy Moderator Pacific)

At least one Co-Chair must have expertise in Māori knowledge. In this context, 'Māori knowledge' should be understood broadly, but indicates a level of expertise distinct from the general requirement that all panellists demonstrate awareness and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the significance of Māori-Crown partnership. The Co-Moderator Māori will play a central role in assessing the relevant expertise of nominees for the role of Co-Chair Māori in each peer review panel.

Panel Co-Chairs will be appointed by the TEC by the end of March 2023.

What are the selection criteria for Panel Co-Chairs?

The following criteria will be applied when considering suitable candidates for the role of a Panel Co-Chair.

Panel Co-Chairs will:

- › be recognised experts in one of the subject areas within the relevant Panel (essential);
- › demonstrate awareness and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the significance of Māori-Crown partnership (essential);
- › demonstrate an appreciation of the diverse range of ontologies, epistemologies, knowledges, and research in Aotearoa New Zealand (essential);
- › have expertise in Māori knowledge (at least one Co-Chair);
- › have previous experience as a PBRF panel member or equivalent including international research assessment exercises (at least one Co-Chair);
- › be familiar with quality evaluation processes;
- › have proven chairing skills, particularly previous experience in chairing assessment panels;
- › be from a different subject area and/or TEO to the previous Panel Chair (where applicable/feasible); and
- › be able to commit the necessary time (essential).

It is expected that Panel Co-Chairs would also meet the criteria for Panel Members where they differ from the Co-Chair criteria (see section below).

Appointment of initial Panel Members

What are the responsibilities of panel members?

In the PBRF Quality Evaluation process, individuals are appointed as peer review panellists in their own right, for their specific skills and expertise in both research and the assessment of research. They do not act as representatives of their employer or discipline.

Responsibilities of Panel Members

Panel Members are to participate fully in the evaluation process within their panel.

Specifically, their responsibilities are to:

- › understand the principles, guidelines and procedures of the PBRF Quality Evaluation
- › assess EPs assigned to them by the Panel Co-Chair, primarily by assigning preparatory and preliminary scores as required
- › understand the broad criteria under which the evaluations are to be made, and apply these objectively to the work of the panel
- › be diligent in their preparation for meetings and in completing tasks allocated to them by the Panel Co-Chair (such as undertaking initial assessment of EPs allocated to them in a timely manner)
- › contribute fully, constructively and dispassionately to all panel processes and take collective ownership for the panel decisions
- › maintain confidentiality of both the deliberations and decisions of the panel
- › exercise due skill and care in the performance of their responsibilities
- › identify instances where they may have a conflict of interest and raise this with the Panel Co-Chair prior to the conflict affecting the assessment process.

Panel Members appointed in the first selection process in 2023 are also required to assist with revising and updating Panel-Specific Guidelines.

How are Panel Members appointed?

Panel Members will be selected through a two-stage open nomination process.

First nomination stage (October 2022 to May 2023)

An initial cohort of Panel Members, consisting of at least five members who provide fair representation of all relevant disciplines covered by the panel, will be appointed to each peer review panel. This number excludes the Panel Co-Chairs.

This initial cohort of each panel is responsible for developing the Panel-specific Guidelines that are used by the sector to support the submission of Evidence Portfolios (EPs).

Second nomination stage (dates to be confirmed but likely starting late 2025)

A second nomination process will finalise each panel prior to the Quality Evaluation in 2026 by appointing Panel Members that meet the specific gaps identified by the Panel Co-Chairs, Moderators, and TEC officials. Nominations from the first selection process will be included for consideration by Panel Co-Chairs.

Selection process

Nominations for Panel Members will be open for the same period as nominations for Panel Co-Chairs. Once appointed, Panel Co-Chairs will jointly consider nominations to their panel against the selection criteria and general panel composition expectations below, as well as any panel-specific targets, with support and advice from the Moderation Team and TEC officials. Detailed guidance for Panel Co-Chairs will be provided to support panel member appointments.

Panel Co-Chairs will make panel appointment recommendations to the TEC based on the nominations received. Panel Co-Chairs are also able to directly nominate potential members where they consider this necessary or appropriate. The TEC retains the right to supplement nominations through identifying individuals directly, particularly where gaps are identified or specific skills are needed.

At the first stage, in 2022-23, the Panel Co-Chairs' recommendations to the TEC will include:

- › the preferred candidates for initial Panel membership, along with a list of other candidates identified as suitable for appointment; and
- › information on any gaps in the membership and what steps have been taken to identify alternative Panel Members.

At the second stage, in 2026, the Panel Co-Chairs' recommendations to the TEC will include:

- › the preferred candidates for further Panel membership; and
- › information on any remaining gaps in the membership and what steps have been taken to identify alternative Panel Members.

Panel members will be appointed by the TEC following the recommendations of the Co-Chairs.

Finalising the panel following the submission of Evidence Portfolios

Following the submission of EPs by tertiary education organisations, Panel Co-Chairs may need to appoint a small number of additional members to address certain subject areas or to manage conflicts of interest.

Panel Co-Chairs will select these members from the nominations previously received or through direct nomination of appropriate individuals where they consider this necessary or appropriate.

What are the selection criteria for panel members?

Panel members are ideally expected to:

- › have substantial experience in a peer review or research evaluation role;
- › demonstrate awareness and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the significance of Māori-Crown partnership;
- › demonstrate an appreciation of the diverse range of ontologies, epistemologies, knowledges, and research in Aotearoa New Zealand;
- › have significant and broad research expertise within one of the subject areas within the relevant Panel;
- › have sufficient levels of knowledge and expertise to be able to apply expert judgements about quality against widely recognised standards of excellence;
- › be able to give appropriate consideration to the significance, quality and impact of professional, practice-based, community and applied research (where relevant);
- › have limited conflicts of interest;
- › be committed to operating within the guidelines in an objective, fair and dispassionate manner;

- › be able to operate effectively and productively as a member of a small, multi-disciplinary team over a pressured time period; and,
- › have the confidence of their peers.

What are the Panel composition expectations?

In recommending Panel Members, Panel Co-Chairs are required to convene panels which represent:

- › the gender diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand
- › the disciplines/subject areas represented in the Panel
- › international researchers
- › organisations across the tertiary education sector and other research organisations
- › an appropriate mix of new and previous panel members
- › Māori researchers
- › Pacific researchers
- › the full range of career stages including, where nominees meet the criteria, early career researchers
- › interdisciplinary researchers
- › applied, community, and/or practice-based researchers as appropriate.

Panel Co-Chairs will be required to make every effort to appoint panels that represent all of these groups and will be supported by TEC officials to do so as far as possible. Panel-specific targets and/or representation requirements may be set for some panels, and these will be confirmed prior to the second nomination round. These may be updated by the TEC following TEOs' provision of indicative EP numbers in January 2026.

Panellist nomination process

How do I nominate someone or be nominated?

Any person seeking to be appointed to a panel either as a Panel Co-Chair or Panel Member must be nominated by another person who must submit [the online nomination form](#).

PBRF panellists from previous Quality Evaluations will not be automatically reappointed.

If you have any questions concerning the nomination process, please contact the TEC via pbrfpanels@tec.govt.nz.

If you wish to nominate someone as a panellist, you must:

- › Ask the nominee to agree to the nominee declaration and provide all nominee information required and a current curriculum vitae (CV) that outlines how the nominee meets the selection criteria for the role/s nominated to. The CV must be no more than five single-side A4 pages.
- › Indicate whether the nomination is for the role of Co-Chair, Panel Member, or for both roles. Note that, unless otherwise indicated on the nomination form, all nominations for the role of Co-Chair will also be considered for Panel Member roles.
- › Complete the remaining information and declaration, and submit the completed form with the attached nominee's CV to the TEC.
- › Note that nominations will be assessed against the selection criteria outlined in this document, so it's important that nominees use the form to provide this information.

To ensure appointees have the right capability, skills, and experience, the TEC and/or the Co-Chairs may directly approach appropriate people as required.

Where do I submit this nomination and by when?

Nominations for the first stage of appointments, which will include Panel Co-Chair and an initial cohort of panellists, opens on 25 October 2022 and **closes on 13 December 2022**.

Nominations for the second nomination process are expected to start in late 2025. The TEC will announce the deadline closer to the time.

All nominations for the first round must be completed using [the online form](#).

This first nomination round is to appoint panel Co-Chairs and a capped number of initial panel members. Nominees who are not appointed in the first stage of the nomination process can have their nomination carried over to the second nomination round, to be run from late 2025. Nominees who wish to be considered in the second round can indicate this when using the online form.

When will I know the result?

The TEC will advise each nominee on the outcome of the process. Following the first nomination round, all panel Co-Chair nominees will be advised by late March 2023 and all panel member nominees will be advised by mid-May 2023 if their application has either been successful or unsuccessful.

Finalising appointments

Once the recommendations for initial panel appointments are approved by the TEC, the successful nominees will be advised in writing.

This information will include a letter of appointment to be signed and returned as acceptance of the appointment. It will include a confidentiality agreement and conflict of interest declaration. The appendices in this document provide further information about the terms and conditions.

Panel appointments will be announced on the TEC's website with information on each member to include name, current employer/organisation affiliation, and subject area expertise.

Replacing Panel Co-Chairs or Members

Should a recommended nominee decline an appointment, or resign, the TEC will work with the Moderators and relevant Panel Co-Chairs where applicable, to appoint a replacement. The final decision on appointments will rest with the TEC.

Can I withdraw my nomination?

Nominees can withdraw their nomination at any time by emailing pbrfpanels@tec.govt.nz with their name, contact details and nominated panel name so that the TEC can identify the correct nomination.

What if I have questions?

Any questions can be sent via email to pbrfpanels@tec.govt.nz and we will get back to you directly. Updates on the process will be published on the TEC website.

Appendix 1: Information relating to panel appointments

Honorarium

The honorarium for each role is set out below.

- › Panel Co-Chairs: \$18,170
- › Panel Members (appointed in the initial cohort): \$4,500
- › Panel Members (appointed in the second cohort): \$3,500

All honoraria are exclusive of GST.

Panel Co-Chairs and Members who are employed by a Crown Research Institute or any other agency of the Crown will not receive an honorarium for their PBRF duties if they are also being paid by their employer for the same time.

Panel Co-Chairs and Members who are self-employed or employed within the private sector will be appointed through a contract for service. The payment for services will be negotiated with those individuals.

Tax

If you live permanently in New Zealand and are registered for GST, you must provide the TEC with an invoice for your honorarium (if applicable).

If you are not registered for GST, and you are not claiming through a company or partnership, you must also submit an IR330 Tax Code Declaration Form. The TEC will deduct resident withholding tax from your honorarium prior to payment.

Payments

All payments will be by direct credit to your bank account. Please complete and supply a direct credit authority as specified on the Direct Credit Form included in this letter.

When claiming fees please note that:

- › Overseas-based persons in New Zealand for less than 64 days are exempt from withholding tax.
- › If you are not registered for GST, the fee will be paid through our payroll system and withholding tax will be deducted from the total claimed.
- › If you are claiming as an individual or as a company or partnership registered for GST, or through your organisation, you will need to provide a valid GST invoice within one month of completion of the relevant activity. GST should be added to the total claimed.

If you do not want to have withholding tax deducted, you will need to provide a copy of your certificate of exemption from withholding tax.

Disbursements

All disbursements will be paid in accordance with the TEC's travel, accommodation and expense claim policy, unless otherwise agreed. This policy will be provided to appointees following acceptance of their role.

Term of appointment

The term of appointment will be for the duration of Quality Evaluation 2026; however, for those appointed as part of the initial cohort including Panel Co-Chairs the term will be for a longer period (March 2023 until March 2027).

The TEC may terminate appointments with immediate effect by giving the panellist written notice if they:

- › breach any of the terms and conditions of this appointment; or
- › commit any act amounting to serious misconduct.

The TEC may also terminate an appointment if it determines that the panellist's conflicts of interest are at a level that they may impact on the operation of a fair, impartial and effective evaluation process.

The panellist, or the TEC, may also terminate the appointment (at the panellist's, or our, sole discretion) for any reason by giving 14 days' notice in writing to the other party.

If the appointment terminates, the panellist must promptly deliver all property, documents, records and papers in their possession or under their control associated with the appointment to the TEC.

Time commitment

The role of a panellist is reasonably demanding and includes the comprehensive assessment of Evidence Portfolios (EPs), the detailed review of selected Examples of Research Excellence, extensive liaison with other panellists, preparation for the peer review panel meetings, and a range of administrative tasks. Panel Co-Chairs and initial Panel Members have additional responsibilities as set out in the sections above.

In addition, panellists will normally be expected to attend up to seven days of panel meetings in Wellington comprising:

- › up to two days of panel training in mid-2026; and
- › up to five days of peer review panel meetings in the second half of 2026.

Panel meeting schedule and location

A detailed panel meeting schedule will be confirmed prior to the second panel nomination round and included in the second Call for Nominations, likely to be released in late 2025. The indicative information below is provided to enable nominees to plan their availability at this early stage.

Panellists must attend all the meetings of their panel. All panel meetings will take place in the second half of 2026.

The number of days that each panel will meet is based on estimates of the number of EPs expected (likely between 3 and 5 days). Once the number of EPs is confirmed, slight adjustments may need to be made to the number of days that some panels meet.

Training

Panel Co-Chairs must be available for a two-day training session in Wellington in late March 2023.

Panel Member training will be a combination of online self-directed training and a two-day in-person training session in Wellington for Panel Members based in New Zealand, Australia, or the Pacific islands. Panel Members who are based in other overseas countries will be provided with additional online training materials and support. The panel training schedule will be confirmed prior to the second panel nomination round and included in the second Call for Nominations, likely to be released in late 2025.

Copyright

The TEC will obtain a copyright agreement from Copyright Licensing Limited for the period of the Quality Evaluation 2026. Participating TEOs also have similar copyright agreements in place.

Conflicts of interest

All panellists will be required to declare any conflicts of interest and to comply with the directions of the relevant Panel Co-Chairs in managing these conflicts in accordance with the TEC's policy. While the nomination form calls for nominees to set out any significant conflicts of interest, once appointed Panel Members, will be asked to make a declaration of all actual or potential conflicts of interest. Any changes to conflicts of interest must be updated should they occur.

Confidentiality of information

By accepting the appointment, panellists agree to comply with the TEC's Confidentiality of Information Policy, attached below. The policy sets out the obligations in respect of information that they may receive in their capacity as a panellist.

Public comment

You may not make statements to the media or any other third party about the work of the panel or the PBRF Quality Evaluation process 2026, without the prior consent of the TEC.

Release of names

The names of all appointed panellists, their position/current employer, and subject area expertise will be made public by the TEC.

Appendix 2: Conflict of interest policy

Definition

In the PBRF Quality Evaluation process, individuals are appointed as peer review panellists in their own right, for their specific skills and expertise in both research and the assessment of research.

In this context, a conflict of interest is any situation where a panellist has an interest which conflicts, might conflict or might be perceived to conflict with the interests of the TEC in running a fair, impartial and effective peer review process.

While the conflict of interest itself is unlikely to be improper, it could lead to improper conduct or allegations of such conduct if not declared.

Note: In this context the term 'panellists' should be read to include Panel Co-Chairs, and Panel Members. The same policy applies to the TEC Secretariat and other TEC staff involved in the processes.

Principles

The TEC's policy on conflict of interest for panellists is guided by the following principles:

- all conflicts of interest must be declared and recorded;
- a conflict of interest can be declared at any time during the process but must be done as soon as practicable;
- Panel Co-Chairs have discretion to take decisions on the action required in any situation;
- the action required depends on the nature of the conflict;
- all actions on declared conflicts will be recorded; and
- individual panellists can exclude themselves from panel discussions even if this is not required by the policy.

The policy is also guided by the fact that the Quality Evaluation process, through the use of the Moderation Team, Co-Chairs, panel pairs and wider panel assessment, ensures that no single panellist is responsible for the decision on the final Quality Category given to an EP.

Identifying a conflict of interest

In determining whether a conflict is present or not, there are two questions to ask:

- Would a fair-minded reasonably informed observer have a reasonable apprehension that the panellist's professional judgement would be compromised in evaluating another researcher's evidence portfolio?
- Does the interest create an incentive for the panellist to act in a way that would be contrary to the objectives of a fair, impartial and effective peer review process?

If the answer to these questions is 'yes', then a conflict exists.

Examples of possible conflicts of interest

Examples of possible conflicts of interest can include, *but are not limited to*:

- assessment of one's own Evidence Portfolio (EP)
- assessment of the EP of:
 - a family member/partner or close personal friend;
 - a current colleague within the same small academic unit or research team;
 - a close colleague or someone reporting directly to the panellist or to whom the panellist currently reports;
 - a colleague with whom the panellist has, or has had at any time in the assessment period, a research collaboration and/or direct teaching collaboration; or
 - an academic who is undertaking Doctoral work under the supervision of the panellist.
- assessment of an EP where the panellist may receive a personal financial benefit from a high Quality Category.
- any situation where the panellist considers they might not provide an objective review of another researcher's EP because of a direct, indirect, potential or perceived conflict of interest, or where a reasonable observer would consider the panellist to be conflicted.

Conflict at institutional level

The following activities can be perceived as representing a conflict of interest for panellists:

- involvement in the internal assessment process the TEOs use to determine which EPs to submit to the TEC; and
- the provision by panellists of either general or specific advice or guidance on the preparation of EPs within their TEO.

The provision by panellists of general information and guidance about the assessment process within or outside their employing TEOs is not considered a conflict of interest by the TEC; however to ensure that the peer review process is perceived as fair, impartial and effective the TEC has determined the following principles generally apply to panellists:

- If the panellist is involved in the internal assessment of their TEO's EPs, or they have provided specific advice or guidance on individual EPs at their TEO while serving on a panel, they cannot assess EPs from their TEO at the individual assessment stage and can only contribute to panel discussions at the request of the Panel Co-Chairs.
- If the panellist has no involvement in the internal assessment of their TEO's EPs, they have not provided specific advice or guidance on individual EPs at their TEO while serving on a panel and they have no other conflict of interest, they cannot be a Lead assessor for EPs from their TEO but they may be assigned as a second assessor.

When to declare a conflict of interest

A panellist may declare a conflict of interest at any time during the Quality Evaluation process. Conflicts must be declared as soon as practicable after the person concerned realises that a conflict may exist. However, the TEC would expect any new known or potential conflicts to be declared at the following points in the Quality Evaluation process:

- when first appointed;
- on assignment of EPs;
- at the beginning of peer review panel meetings; and
- when discussing an individual EP at the panel meeting.

Responsibilities

All interests must be recorded within the PBRF IT system, which will create an Interests Register.

All panellists are responsible for registering interests and undertaking any action required by the Panel Co-Chairs.

The TEC's Secretariat is responsible for registering any interests submitted by TEOs, recording any action(s) that may be required, and monitoring the Interests Register.

The Co-Chairs of each panel, on the advice of the TEC Secretariat, are responsible for deciding whether a conflict of interest exists in any instance.

The Co-Chairs of each panel are also responsible for ensuring that:

- all conflicts and any action(s) that may be required have been recorded in the Interests Register;
- appropriate action(s) is taken in respect of the conflict of interest during assignment, assessment and/or panel meetings; and
- the action(s) taken with respect to declared conflicts as part of the panel meeting process is recorded in the panel meeting minutes.

The Moderation Team is responsible for considering conflicts of interest for Co-Chairs and determining the appropriate action to be taken.

The TEC is responsible for undertaking an independent review of the Interests Register and the actions taken.

Actions to take

The nature of any action(s) to be undertaken by a panellist will depend on the extent of the conflict of interest. Most potential conflicts will be managed at the assignment stage of the assessment process, with conflicted panellists not being assigned individual EPs.

Actions may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- not receiving or being able to access an individual or group of EPs.
- having no involvement in the EP assessment at any stage and leaving the room when the EP is being

discussed and decisions made at the panel meeting.

- having no involvement in the EP assessment at the individual assessment stage but remaining in the room when the EP is being discussed by the panel at the panel meeting, and participating in the discussion and/or decision-making if asked by the panel Chair.
- possible involvement in the EP assessment at the individual assessment stage (although not as the Lead assessor) and full participation in the discussion and decision-making on the EP.

The TEC may determine that a panellist's conflicts of interest are at a level that they may impact on the operation of a fair, impartial and effective evaluation process. In such a situation, the TEC reserves the right to stand-down a panellist.

Panel Co-Chair conflicts

Where a Panel Co-Chair has a conflict of interest, this must be declared to the Moderation Team and the TEC's Secretariat assigned to that panel. The decision on what action, if any, should be taken will rest with the Moderation Team.

In these circumstances, the Moderation Team may ask another panellist to act as Panel Co-Chair for the period if it is decided that the Co-Chair is unable to participate.

The TEC's Secretariat will be responsible for recording any action(s) undertaken in the panel meeting minutes.

Assessment of panellist's own EPs

A member of the Moderation Panel, the TEC's Moderation Secretariat, or the TEC's internal auditor will be present during panel meetings when the EP of a panellist is being assessed.

When a panellist's own EP is being assessed by the panel, the panellist will leave the room. Other panellists from the same institution may also be required to leave the room. The Panel Co-Chairs will be responsible for determining an appropriate quorum and seek the Moderation Team's approval of this.

Appendix 3: Confidentiality of Information policy

As a participant in the PBRF Quality Evaluation 2026 assessment process, you will receive information and be a party to discussions and decisions that may be confidential. You are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to maintain the security of the information provided to you and maintaining this confidentiality during your involvement and after it has ended.

Information

Electronic Information

You must retain any electronic information in a secure manner.

You must not treat electronic information in such a way that it could be accessed by others with or without your knowledge.

Storage and destruction of physical information

You are permitted to obtain and retain physical copies of Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) information (or supporting information) provided for meetings. You must keep these papers secure at all times to avoid the accidental disclosure to a third person. You are not permitted to make additional copies of this information unless expressly authorised by the TEC.

You may elect to return any or all physical copies of information you hold to the TEC for disposal at any time during your tenure as a participant in the PBRF Quality Evaluation 2026 assessment process.

At the end of your tenure you must return to the TEC all physical copies of information you hold that have not been publicly released.

No other uses

You are not permitted to use electronic or physical information for any purpose other than that for which it was provided.

Official Information Act 1982 and Privacy Act 2020

Information received by the TEC will be official information in terms of the Official Information Act (OIA) and may be personal information under the Privacy Act 2020, so may be requested by various parties. The TEC will be responsible for dealing with any requests made under the OIA or the Privacy Act.

For the purposes of section 27(1)(c) of the OIA and section 50 of the Privacy Act 2020, this paragraph constitutes a promise that the TEC will keep confidential at all times your notes relating to your assessment of Evidence Portfolios (EPs). However, you acknowledge that if the TEC receives a request for such notes under the OIA or the Privacy Act, the TEC may be under a legal obligation to release such information and such release will not amount to a breach of the terms of this letter by the TEC.

Confidential information

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, EPs, associated evidence of Examples of Research Excellence, and the assessment information related to EPs.

Treatment of confidential information

You must not circulate or communicate confidential information provided to you by the TEC, whether in

hard copy or by electronic means, to another person for any reason.

Physical copies of any electronic confidential information can be made for the purpose of assessment only. You must keep these papers secure at all times to avoid the accidental disclosure to a third person.

You must not treat confidential information in such a way that it could be accessed by others with or without your knowledge.

At the end of your tenure as a participant in the PBRF Quality Evaluation 2026 assessment process you must:

- return to the TEC for disposal, or securely dispose of, any or all physical copies of confidential information you hold; and
- delete any or all electronic copies of confidential information you hold.

No other uses

You are not permitted to use confidential information for any purpose other than that for which it was received.

PBRF meeting discussions

Discussions and communications

You must treat as confidential all discussions and communications between fellow participants (Moderators, Panel Co-Chairs, Panel Members), the TEC Secretariat and other TEC employees.

Outcomes

You must treat as confidential any decisions made by PBRF peer review panels into perpetuity.