

**Tertiary Education
Commission**
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua



PBRF Sector Reference Group – Consultation paper 4

**Roles and person specifications
for the Moderation Team**

| Name | Status | Distribution |
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| PBRF Sector Reference Group – Consultation Paper 4 Roles and person specifications for the Moderation Team | CONSULTATION PAPER | Public Direct feedback to: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HMNNCNG Feedback due 5pm, 27 April 2022 |

Purpose

- 1 This paper sets out a proposal developed by the PBRF Sector Reference Group (SRG) for changes to the Moderation Team roles and person specifications for Quality Evaluation 2025, and invites feedback from the tertiary education sector and other stakeholders. Specifically it:
 - › Sets out background information on the Moderation Team roles in Quality Evaluation 2018;
 - › Provides the rationale for the proposed changes based on feedback from previous Quality Evaluation participants, and TEC officials' analysis;
 - › Sets out the details of the proposal which the SRG has developed; and
 - › Invites feedback on the proposal set out in this paper.
- 2 The Moderation Team roles and person specifications issue has been brought forward from the Panels: Membership and Working Methods consultation paper to ensure timely appointment of the Moderation Team.
- 3 The TEC will commence the Moderation Team appointment process following the SRG's recommendations.

Background

Purpose of moderation for Quality Evaluation 2018

- 4 The PBRF Quality Evaluation moderation process followed for Quality Evaluation 2018 was designed to promote systematic reflection on the issues of consistency, standards, and cross-panel calibration by:
 - › Creating an environment in which the judgements of the peer review panels generate consistency on a cross-panel basis, while at the same time not reducing the panel judgements to a mechanistic application of the assessment criteria;
 - › Providing independent review of the standards and processes being applied by panels;
 - › Ensuring the consistent application of extraordinary circumstances provisions and the consistent assessment of new and emerging researchers;
 - › Establishing mechanisms and processes by which material differences or apparent inconsistencies in standards and processes can be addressed by panels; and
 - › Advising the TEC Board on any issues regarding consistency of standards across panels.
- 5 The Quality Evaluation moderation process is carried out by the Moderation Team. For the Quality Evaluation 2018, the Moderation Team carried out this role by:

- › Participating in the selection process for peer review Panel Chairs;
- › Advising Panel Chairs and the TEC on panel composition;
- › Advising Panel Chairs and the TEC on the development of the Panel-Specific Guidance;
- › Advising on the interpretation of Guidelines, in conjunction with the SRG prior to its dissolution, as required;
- › Monitoring the individual assessment process;
- › Participating in the Moderation Panel meetings to review initial and final scoring;
- › Contributing to the Moderation Panel report; and
- › Supporting the presentation of results to the sector with the TEC as required.

The Moderation Team

- 6 Like the peer review panel membership, the Moderation Team is drawn from the sector, in line with the fundamental principle that the Quality Evaluation is an expert peer-review exercise. In Quality Evaluation 2003, there was a single Moderator. For all subsequent Quality Evaluations, the Moderation Team has comprised a Principal Moderator who is supported by two Deputy Moderators.
- 7 The Deputy Moderators helped ensure that there were a range of skills, expertise and knowledge being applied to the moderation process. The Deputy Moderators also provided support to the Principal Moderator over the period of assessment and peer review panel meetings, including deputising for the Principal Moderator as necessary.

Moderation Team person criteria

- 8 In Quality Evaluation 2018, the following criteria were specified for the Principal and Deputy Moderator roles:
 - › An individual of appropriately senior standing within the academic community who holds the confidence of the sector
 - › Detailed understanding of the Quality Evaluation process
 - › Previous experience as a Panel Chair or Deputy Chair
 - › The ability to commit the time required to the process, including a period of intensive engagement for the panel assessment phase

These criteria were adopted to ensure that the team had the necessary capacity to fully engage with the process, as well as detailed understanding of the Quality Evaluation process.

Rationale for change to Moderation Team roles and appointment criteria

- 10 The person specification for the Quality Evaluation 2018 for appointing the Moderation Team did not include any specific provision for ensuring the team had the skills and expertise to moderate Māori research. The SRG and the TEC consider that there are a number of principled and practical reasons why the Moderation Team roles and criteria should be revised to address this and other issues for Quality Evaluation 2025, as set out below.
- 11 The person specifications and roles should better reflect the new PBRF Principles. In particular, they should reflect the new principle of Partnership and the TEC commitment under the Education and Training Act 2020 to honour its obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to uphold Māori-Crown partnership.
- 12 The person specifications and roles should also reflect the new principles of Equity and Inclusivity, ensuring that approaches lead to equitable outcomes, and that the PBRF encourages and recognises the full diversity of epistemologies, knowledges, and methodologies in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 13 A specific recommendation of the Quality Evaluation 2018 *Report of the Moderation Panel and Peer Review Panel* was that alongside providing additional guidance on the criteria for cross-referrals to the Māori Knowledge and Development (MKD) panel and ensuring better Māori representation on panels, the TEC should consider appointing a Māori Moderator. The report noted that panels would have benefitted from better advice on interpreting and assessing research of relevance to Māori.
- 14 In 2018, a number of EPs were nominated by TEOs for cross-referral to the MKD panel, and those nominations then supported by the primary panels submitted to. A large proportion of these cross-referrals were rejected by the MKD Panel. A Moderation Team with appropriate expertise in Māori research would ensure that there was cross-panel oversight and understanding of how and in which panels to best assess Māori research and research relevant to Māori.

Sector Reference Group process

- 15 The Moderation Team is appointed by the TEC. The TEC has asked the SRG to develop options, consult with the sector, and provide advice to the TEC on the roles and person specification needed for the Moderation Team which meets the requirements set out in the previous section.
- 16 In developing and considering options, the SRG has taken into account whether they:
 - a. Are consistent with Cabinet's instructions to make operational design changes to other elements of the Quality Evaluation;
 - b. Address the concerns and aspirations identified in the *Report of the PBRF Review Panel* and the *Report of the Moderation and Peer Review Panels*;

- c. Deliver fair and equitable outcomes for all participating TEOs and their staff;
- d. Uphold the unique nature of research produced in Aotearoa New Zealand and reflect what is distinctive about our national research environment;
- e. Are consistent with the PBRF Guiding Principles, including the three new Principles of partnership, equity, and inclusiveness; and
- f. Meet the moderation needs of Quality Evaluation 2025 including the moderation purpose set out in paragraph 4.

Proposal for Moderation Team roles and person specifications

17 Below is set out a proposal for changes to the Moderation Team roles and person criteria on which the SRG has decided to consult. The SRG considered a number of approaches, but concluded that the proposal below is the best approach to achieving the aims set out above. However, the SRG is keen to hear the sector's views on any other models that may be appropriate.

18 **Proposal:** The moderation team consists of two Co-Moderators. The person specifications will specify that both Co-Moderators will:

- › be of senior academic standing;
- › have an understanding of the diverse range of epistemologies, knowledges, and research in Aotearoa New Zealand;
- › be familiar with the Quality Evaluation process; and
- › be able to commit the necessary time.

One Moderator will be a recognised expert in Mātauranga Māori. Recognising the smaller community of Māori researchers, in order to ensure that individual has the necessary expertise in Māori research, they will not necessarily need to have had previous PBRF experience as a Panel or Deputy Chair or equivalent. The other Moderator will ideally have been a PBRF Panel or Deputy Chair or equivalent.

The Co-Moderators will have equal standing, and both will carry out the roles described in paragraph five above. The Māori Moderator will advise the MKD Panel Chair and its initial panellists when they develop the panel-specific guidance. They will additionally work with the MKD Panel Chair to advise other Panel Chairs on how elements of the MKD panel-specific guidance may apply across other panels (in order to ensure consistent assessment of EPs drawing on Māori research submitted in other panels), and will oversee and moderate the MKD panel cross-referrals process. This work will be taken into consideration by the TEC and the Co-Moderators in undertaking the other elements of the moderation role, to ensure the work is shared equitably.

Next steps and consultation feedback

19 Feedback is sought on the following:

1. Do you support the proposal for the Moderation Team? If not, do you support another model?
 2. Do you have any suggested changes which you believe would improve the proposal?
 3. We welcome any other comments you have about the Moderation Team roles and person specifications for Quality Evaluation 2025.
- 20 Feedback can be provided to the TEC via the online survey here:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HMNNCNG>. Responses must be submitted by 5pm, 27 April 2022.
- 21 Following the end of the consultation period, the SRG will consider the feedback, and make a recommendation to the TEC on the Moderation Team roles and criteria. The TEC will commence the Moderation Team appointment process once the recommendation has been made and accepted.