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## RESEARCH FUNDING EXPECTATIONS POLICY

This policy is to outline the expectations that researchers can have of the Earthquake Commission (EQC) and that EQC staff can have of researchers EQC funds.

### 1.0 Introduction

EQC wants to be an active partner with researchers, not just a funder of research. We strive to understand what people are doing with their research so that we can stay up-to-date and informed as an advocate and thought leader in issues related to New Zealand's resilience to natural hazards. This means establishing a supportive and respectful relationship that goes well beyond the life of a contract. We understand that the path to uptake and impact of research can be long and quite complicated but that is why EQC is committed to engaging and supporting research and working across the system to ensure the research it funds is useable, useful, and used.

This policy is a reference to what researchers and EQC can expect from the relationship, and guidance around what EQC funding can be used for. Many of the items here are also outlined in the Terms and Conditions of funding contracts.

Some of this guidance will be in contradiction to existing contracts. If you have an existing arrangement from pre-May 2021 then please refer to your contract. For any arrangements contracted from May 2021 then this information is valid and will be reflected in the contract where appropriate. Some ongoing or rolling contracts will be updated at the time of renewal or via a request for variation of the contract.

### 2.0 Relationship Expectations

#### 2.1 Partnership

EQC expects the collaboration with researchers to go beyond the life of the contract and the research obligations of the contract. EQC intends to work with researchers to ensure that the research outputs reach their intended audience and that the research is used to improve New Zealand's resilience to natural hazards.

EQC intends to provide support and/or opportunities for researchers to upskill especially in the areas of science communication to ensure effective translations of science to policy and/or practice. Principal investigators and other appropriate researchers who are funded by EQC will be invited and encouraged to attend science communications or science to policy/practice workshops when they are available (approximately once a year). These workshops are designed to support researchers in developing communications skills to assist in talking with decision makers or the media.

The science communications workshop will also provide guidance on how to create a communications and engagement plan, dealing with media and preparing communications products.

The science to policy/practice workshops will also include an introduction to policy and the policy cycle. These workshops are also to forge strong relationships or provide guidance on how to forge these relationships so that science is needs led and effectively used.

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EQC intends to work with other research programmes to collate research and translate it to get the outcomes required and ensured impact. Sometimes research has more impact when it is presented or combined with other relevant research – we may ask researchers to work with us and other research groups so that research can be combined to generate greater impact.

## 2.2 No surprises approach

EQC is a Crown entity and reports to a board and Minister who expect to be informed of all activities that will generate public interest or have an impact on the work that EQC is doing. This is the reason EQC expects a “no surprises” approach with all our partners, including the researchers whose research we fund. It is important for researchers to notify EQC of any publications, media or public activities that could result in inquiries by media or public officials to EQC. If you are unsure about whether something you publish will be of interest, just give us a call and have a chat. We can often support you and your institution to get the research heard by the right people in a helpful way. We can do this by writing briefings or updates for Ministers, drafting papers for the EQC Board, or press releases for the media. We can also work with other government departments and agencies to provide consistent messaging and coordinate the response to generate a positive impact.

## 2.3 Media and promotion of research

EQC actively wants to promote the research that it invests in because we believe it can make a difference for the resilience of New Zealand. It is part of our strategy to get the research into the hands and minds of those who can influence change. Researchers can expect EQC to work with them in the promotion of their research. EQC encourages research promotion to a range of audiences, which includes the public through media.

To support this EQC, expects researchers to engage in two social media posts<sup>1</sup> per funded year and collaborate on engagement with the media (see more in 2.4). If you require more guidance on the effective use of social media some will be provided in the science communications workshop (mentioned in 2.1) or you can find some through Science Media Centre or Science Communication Association of New Zealand.

## 2.4 Communication and stakeholder engagement

EQC is keen to support researchers in activities involving stakeholder engagement at any stage throughout the project and beyond. Stakeholder engagement and the clear communication of research outputs results in more effective uptake and impact of research.

To support this EQC expects researchers to collaborate with EQC on one communications/stakeholder engagement activity each year. There are a wide range of activities that are appropriate for various stages of research, such as: media releases, video stories, presentations to a lay audience, presentations to EQC, or workshops with end-users. If you are unsure about what activities are appropriate, please talk to EQC’s Research team.

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<sup>1</sup> Social media posts may be made through any channel relevant to the subject matter and from a user account owned by the researcher (if public), a host institution, or EQC. If the post is from a non-EQC account, the researcher should notify EQC so that EQC can share and/or “like” the post.

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## 3.0 Reporting and Invoicing

### 3.1 Regular reports

EQC expects regular reports on research activities. In general, these reports will cover progress of research against milestones, financial status (if required), updates on any risks realised or disruption to the project, any new partnerships or engagement activity.

The frequency and form of reports depends on the type of funding received but will mostly likely be at a quarterly, 6-monthly (July and January), or annual basis. Please refer to the [EQC Research Reporting Guidelines](#) for more information.

### 3.2 Final reports

EQC expects a final report upon completion of a research grant, such as the Biennial Grants or University Programme. This final report provides EQC with in-depth insights into the outputs of the research. The final report or portions of it will be made publicly available on the EQC website.

EQC may use its discretion to withhold up to 10% of the grant until the final report has been received and approved by EQC.

### 3.3 Publications

EQC expects to receive a copy of any publications related to the funded research, this includes articles published in peer-reviewed journals or in conference proceedings, posters, technical reports, or guidance. EQC is interested in the outputs of research, such as these, even after the funding for the research has finished. EQC is not just a funder but an end-user of the research it funds and therefore is always interested in these publications. Please email them to [Research@eqc.govt.nz](mailto:Research@eqc.govt.nz)

### 3.4 Invoicing

EQC expects host organisations to invoice EQC regularly for funds related to the research project. These timings will be stipulated in the contract but will be no less regular than every 6 months. Infrequent invoicing or leaving invoicing to the end of the project makes it hard for EQC to manage finances and forecast budgets for research funding.

## 4.0 Use of EQC funds

### 4.1 General Expenses

EQC expects the grant to be used for the benefit of the research and the host institution for the sole purpose of conducting the research described in the research proposal.

The researcher and host institution are responsible for monitoring the expenditure throughout the period of the project. EQC is not responsible for budget overruns unless prior written approval has been made, usually resulting in a contract variation. EQC is under no obligation to approve or provide additional or future funding for the project.

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## 4.2 Overheads

Overhead costs can be included in a budget for EQC funding. However, applicants are encouraged where possible to secure co-funding through a discount or waiver of overhead costs. If overhead costs are included, EQC expects overheads to be equivalent to no more than 30% of the cost of staff time allocated to the project

Please note, all existing contracted arrangements will be honoured but all future contracts will be aligned with this policy unless prior arrangement has been made for exceptional circumstances.

## 4.3 Salaries

EQC funding can be used to contribute towards staff time but the limit on overheads (see [Overheads](#)) should be considered. EQC funding should not be used to cover full salaries.

## 4.4 Funding for students, research assistants and summer scholars

EQC funding can be used to cover the funding of students, research assistants and summer scholars. However, this should not be the entire use of the budget considering students will need qualified supervision to produce the high-quality research outputs expected by EQC.

Funding for students can include their stipend and enrolment related costs, especially where they are relevant to the project, such as thesis papers or course work related to skills required to do the research.

## 4.5 Initial project costs

If required, EQC will make an initial payment of up to 25% of the grant to cover costs that are anticipated to occur related to the set-up and commencement of the project. EQC may request additional information to demonstrate that the costs are reasonable and expected.

## 4.6 Travel to conferences

Small research grants, such as Biennial Programme Grants, should not use grant funding for conference travel and/or attendance costs. EQC has a small additional fund for this purpose and discretionary consideration will be given to supporting conference attendance if the researcher is presenting a paper or leading a workshop on the project matter being funded by EQC.

## 4.7 Capital

EQC funding can be used for some capital costs. While capital equipment is the responsibility of the applicant's institution, exceptional requests for EQC funding for capital equipment should be explained and justified in the budget.

Materials and apparatus purchased with research grant monies should be used exclusively for activities related to the EQC funded project during its duration unless the impact of its use for other purposes is immaterial to the progress and quality of the project.

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## 5.0 Extensions and Variations

### 5.1 Extensions and Variations

EQC will consider extensions and variations to contracts on a case-by-case basis. We require you to write a brief case to apply for the variation. The form is available through SmartyGrants or by contacting [Research@eqc.govt.nz](mailto:Research@eqc.govt.nz)

The decision will be based on the following:

- the case presented – what is the variation, why is it required, and any impacts
- any previously granted variations and extensions (both current grant and any previous grants)
- the capacity of EQC’s research portfolio to accommodate the changes

EQC will try to accommodate these requests as best it can but it is under no obligation to accept an application for extension or vary the contract.

## 6.0 Ethics and Scientific Conduct

### 6.1 Ethics

If research EQC funds includes human participants, EQC expects the participants of the research to be treated with respect and researchers to abide by the ethics processes of the host organisation.

Researchers should consider the following guidelines and standards as part of their research plan:

- [Royal Society Code of Professional Standards and Ethics](#)
- [Te Ara Tika Guidelines for Maori Research Ethics](#)
- [Ethical Guidelines for Post-disaster Research](#) - particularly important for scientists researching responses to natural hazard events

### 6.2 Private Data

Research may include working with private or confidential information/data. EQC expects that confidential data will remain secure and only anonymised or aggregate data is disseminated publicly. This is the responsibility of the researchers and their host organisations.

### 6.3 EQC Data

If researchers required data from EQC there is a standard process for all requests. This process includes a data sharing request that will be filled out by an EQC employee and presented to the EQC Data and Information Governance Forum for approval. There may also be additional requirements depending on the nature of the data required, such as, signing a data sharing agreement or filling in an information security questionnaire to ensure the proper controls are in place for storing private data.

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Depending on the data requested this process may take a while (a minimum of 2 weeks) and should be considered as part of the research plan. EQC takes information security very seriously considering the sensitive data it holds. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.

## 7.0 Usability of Research Outputs

### 7.1 Intellectual Property

The researcher and/or host institution shall own all intellectual property rights that arise from or are developed over the course of the project. However, the researcher and host institution shall grant EQC an unrestricted, perpetual, non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty free, irrevocable licence to the results of the project.

### 7.2 Acknowledgement

Researchers should acknowledge the funding received by EQC in any article, publication or presentation that arises from the project. They should also advise the media, or any interested parties of the funding support received by EQC for the project.

### 7.2 Open access publications

EQC encourages open-access publishing to complying journals. EQC expects researchers to consider this in their project budget and include related expenses. For existing funding arrangements please contact EQC if you require additional support for open-access fees. Exceptions can be made, for example if there are no suitable open-access journals or the researcher is aiming for high impact journals such as, Nature Geoscience.

### 7.3 Open access data and tools

All data collected and/or managed using EQC funding should adhere to NZ Government Data and Information Management Principles, FAIR and CARE principles, where appropriate (see [section on Ethics and Scientific Conduct](#)). Where necessary data access may be managed via registration but should be available to all users in some form without cost.

EQC supports open data as it acknowledges that we work in the system that operates most effectively when data is findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable. This ensures effective decision making for risk management.

These principles extend to tools used to access and visualise data.

## 8.0 Information Sharing

### 8.1 NZRIS

The New Zealand Research Information System<sup>2</sup> (NZRIS) is a database and online hub of information about research, science, and innovation in New Zealand. It is the system which is established by government directive

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<sup>2</sup> For additional information <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/science-and-technology/science-and-innovation/research-and-data/nzris/>

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outlined in the Research, Science, and Innovation (RSI) domain plan for organisations that are distributing, receiving, or utilising public funds to undertake RSI activities.

EQC intends to, and may be required to, provide RSI Data<sup>3</sup> to NZRIS to support the understanding of the government's investment in RSI activities. EQC expects researchers to assist EQC (where necessary) to comply with its obligations under NZRIS.

EQC is still working on what protection rules to apply to RSI Data, but researchers should expect to be informed and consent requested to share data prior to submission. Once these details are defined EQC will include the granting of consent as part of any new contracts.

## 8.2 OIA obligations

As a government entity, EQC has obligations under the Official Information Act (OIA) to disclose information regarding its activities and the information it holds in accordance with the Act. If EQC receives an OIA request where the researcher or the research is subject to the OIA then EQC expects the researcher to assist with the request (if required).

## 8.3 Confidentiality

EQC expects all information shared with EQC related to the research activity may be made publicly available unless the researcher marks the information as confidential (see [section on Ethics and Scientific Conduct](#)).

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<sup>3</sup> RSI Data means all data which EQC is required to provide to NZRIS which may include all information in relation to or arising under the funding contract including Key Persons, Proposal, Research Materials, Research Activity, Research Provider, Post Completion Reports, and New IP

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