Version: 05

Date: November 2026

NEW IDEAS FUNDING POLICY FOR 2026 ROUND

Purpose

The New Ideas Fund provides seed funding to support new strategic directions, collaborations, and research opportunities within Te Whai Ao — Dodd-Walls Centre. The fund is also intended to help researchers develop and strengthen ideas, partnerships, and preliminary work that will position them for future funding applications and contribute to the Centre's broader bid development activities.

The Fund is intended to:

- Support the development of innovative research directions aligned with the Centre's vision and objectivesEncourage new collaborations and connections within New Zealand and internationally
- Support new and emerging researchers and researchers who are new to the Centre
- Generate opportunities that may lead to future externally funded research programmes, commercialisation, or other long-term strategic outcomes
- Prepare for the potential CoRE bid process in 2027 and the development of a NZIAT growth engine
- Applicants must clearly demonstrate how their proposed project or initiative will contribute to a new research direction, capability, partnership, or opportunity for the Centre. Proposals should align with and advance one or more of Te Whai Ao — Dodd-Walls Centre's strategic missions, while fostering innovation, strengthening collaborative networks, and creating pathways for future research and funding opportunities. Applicants should also articulate how the proposed work could contribute to the Centre's long-term research vision and support the development of future funding bids

Who can apply

- Current **Associate Investigators (AIs)** and **Principal Investigators (PIs)** of Te Whai Ao — Dodd-Walls Centre.
- Researchers seeking to become an **Associate Investigator (AI)** of the Centre at the time of application, including both current Affiliate Members and individuals not currently affiliated with the Centre. Applicants in this category must submit their AI application alongside their New Ideas Fund application.
- New and Emerging Researchers of the Te Whai Ao — Dodd-Walls Centre, those who are within the first 7 years following the completion of their PhD (This time frame has been set using the definition provided by the Transition Research Fund).

Where appropriate, applications may include collaborators from outside the Centre, provided the lead applicant meets the eligibility requirements above.

Scope and Value of Grants

The primary purpose of the Fund is to support research activities. Applications for creating and funding initiatives that strengthen the Centre's strategic objectives may also be considered using the Centre's strategic, Māori engagement, and travel funds.

The Fund includes:

- Workshops and symposia
- Conferences
- Summer schools
- Activities that establish or strengthen national and international collaborations
- Initiatives that enhance engagement with communities, industry, iwi, or other stakeholders

The maximum funding available for any individual application is **NZ$40,000**.

The DWC Industry Team will assess the Industry and Commercialisation components of each application. Based on the potential commercial and/or industry engagement impact, additional funding of up to $10,000 may be awarded on top of the standard $40,000 funding cap. To support this assessment, applicants will be required to complete an additional section in the industry engagement paragraph addressing the commercialisation potential of their proposed project to justify the additional funding.

The DWC Community Engagement Team will assess the Outreach and Community components of each application. Based on the potential outreach and community engagement impact, additional funding of up to $10,000 may be awarded on top of the standard $40,000 funding cap. To support this assessment, applicants will be required to complete an additional paragraph in the outreach and community engagement section addressing the potential for the outreach and community engagement of their proposed project to justify the additional funding.

Applicants are expected to seek support from their host department, school, or institution for salary overhead costs wherever possible. The New Ideas Fund will not fund FTE for people with permanent positions. Non-permanent staff are welcome to apply to the New Ideas Fund and simultaneously apply for the Research Boost for salary support.

The DWC Science, Industry, and Community Engagement Committees may choose not to recommend the full amount requested.

Criteria

Applications will be assessed by the DWC Science Committee, and DWC Industry AND/OR Community Engagement Team where relevant.

Projects are not expected to score highly against every criterion. Assessment will consider the overall potential and strategic value of the proposal.

The following factors will be considered:

- Alignment with the strategic goals and missions of Te Whai Ao — Dodd-Walls Centre
- The degree of novelty and the extent to which the proposal represents a new research direction, collaboration, capability, or opportunity for the applicant and/or the Centre
- The potential to foster collaboration across multiple Beacons
- The potential to generate high-quality research leading to future external funding opportunities
- The potential to create new national or international research partnerships
- The potential to contribute to the commercialisation or translation of Te Whai Ao research

- The potential to support new and emerging researchers
- The potential to strengthen connections with:
    - Researchers across New Zealand
    - International research partners
    - Māori communities and organisations
    - Pasifika communities and organisations
    - Industry, government, and community stakeholders where relevant

Reporting Requirements

Recipients of funding will be required to provide a brief report within six weeks of project completion. The report should be completed in the Reporting Template and outline:

- Activities undertaken
- Outcomes achieved
- New collaborations established
- Subsequent funding applications or opportunities generated
- Any publications, presentations, intellectual property, or other outputs arising from the project

Recipients will also be asked to present project outcomes at a Centre event. If no report is submitted, there will not be an opportunity to apply for further funding within the Centre.

Funding

The New Ideas Fund is intended to support projects that would not otherwise be undertaken through existing research funding sources and that have the potential to generate significant future benefit for Te Whai Ao — Dodd-Walls Centre and its research community.

How to Apply

Applications should be submitted to dwc@otago.ac.nz and must include:

- A completed Application Form describing the proposed project or initiative;
- A cover letter addressing the eligibility criteria; and
- A CV for each applicant and/or key project team member

Unless the applicant is a New and Emerging Researcher – based on the definition above, or an existing AI or PI within the Centre, this will also be considered an application for AI status and needs to meet the same application requirements. Please see the policy and requirements here.

Approval Process

Applications will be reviewed by the DWC Science Committee at its next meeting, usually monthly. The recommendations made there will go before the DWC Executive Committee at its next meeting, usually quarterly. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application shortly after the Executive Committee meeting.

Consultation

DWC Science Committee and Executive Committee discussed the details and procedure.

Implementation Process

Person responsible: Programme Manager.

Communication strategy: Policy distributed by email and posted on the DWC website.

Contact

If you have any queries regarding the content of this policy or need further clarification, contact the Business Support Coordinator, dwc@otago.ac.nz.