



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

General information about the grant

Overview

The Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) was established by the government in 2003 and 84 projects have been funded to date. The funding for the 2010 round is \$1.75 million (including GST).

The TLRI Co-ordination Team continually reviews the TLRI, seeking ways to build the overall programme and maximise the way the initiative is meeting its aims (see overview document). In 2007 a formal review of the TLRI was undertaken with the primary purpose being to examine the operation, processes, products, and progress of the TLRI since its introduction and to make suggestions for its future development. The full review can be accessed at www.tlri.org.nz/pdfs/discussion-paper-pdfs/reviewofthe-TLRI.pdf

As a result of this ongoing review a number of modifications have been made. The focus remains on developing new knowledge about teaching and learning that is useful to practice, and raising research capacity and capability in all sectors. The redesign provided more support for proposers around research content and process and aimed to ensure that while partnerships are central to TLRI project design they are not *the* key driver for the design of the research question(s) and methodology. These ideas were developed more fully in a paper that is on the TLRI website: <http://www.tlri.org.nz/pdfs/discussion-paper-pdfs/developing-new-knowledge.pdf>

Partnerships between researchers and teachers

To be eligible for the fund, proposals need to come from partnerships involving teachers and researchers. In the context of the TLRI, teachers are defined as education and training practitioners. The category of education and training practitioners may include, but is not limited to: teachers in kindergartens, early childhood centres, kōhanga reo, and Pasifika language nests; teachers in kura, primary, intermediate, and secondary schools; and lecturers, tutors, and trainers working in postschool settings such as universities, wānanga, polytechnics, private training establishments (PTEs), industry training organisations (ITOs), and workplace settings. The TLRI is open to researchers working in organisations (e.g., tertiary institutions) or working independently. However, the TLRI will not enter into contracts with individuals, requiring that contracts be with incorporated societies or similar legal entities. Staff members of the Ministry of Education or other government departments are not eligible to apply.

Management and co-ordination of the TLRI

A TLRI Advisory Board, consisting of sector representatives, has been convened by the Ministry of Education. The advisory board provides strategic leadership to the TLRI and makes recommendations to the Minister of Education about research priorities. The Ministry of Education, on behalf of the advisory board, has contracted the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) to co-ordinate and administer the fund. NZCER has set up its own TLRI Co-ordination Team to:

- provide leadership and operational implementation
- build awareness of the TLRI and its research programmes and results
- develop quality-assurance policies and processes for the TLRI
- create opportunities for building research capability in teaching and learning for researchers and practitioners.

Types of projects and levels of funding

There are two types of research projects: **Type I** and **Type II**. The requirements for Expressions of Interest and the selection criteria are slightly different for each type. These are detailed in the notes included in the relevant sections.

Type I: *Research projects: Building knowledge about teaching and learning*

Type I projects will have **two** categories—**A** and **B**.

Category A will be large-scale projects of **three years**. Each of the major projects in 2010 will be eligible for up to \$450,000, with a maximum of \$150,000 available in any one year.

Category B will be medium-sized projects of **up to two years**. A maximum of \$200,000 will be available for any one project, with no more than \$100,000 granted in any one year.

These research projects are to be designed to explicitly build on the TLRI aims: to build cumulative knowledge about teaching and learning; and to build research capability. They are to build knowledge by clearly drawing on existing evidence to take the particular field forward and by taking account of learning from completed TLRI projects and other relevant New Zealand-based research initiatives. To assist project teams to select a fruitful area for investigation refer to the document *TLRI 2010: Building knowledge about teaching and learning*, included in this package.

The research projects are to have a very clear research design with specific questions that come from an exploration grounded in the literature. They are to be led or co-led by an experienced principal investigator and be designed in a way that explicitly offers opportunities for emerging researchers to develop their skills (so that in time they might develop the expertise required of a principal investigator). Researcher–practitioner partnerships are to be integral to the design of the project. The partnership, however, is to guide the research question(s) but not drive the project. To this end there is to be a focus on the individuals in the team using their *collective* expertise rather than on explicitly developing the research skills of the practitioner members of the project team. It is, however, pivotal that all team members have the opportunity to learn. In this collaboration, practitioners might take the role of advisory board, data gatherers, informants, etc. and not necessarily be integral to *all* aspects of the thinking inside the partnership. It is, of course, necessary that the researchers have clear and consistent regard for practice and practitioners and that the practitioners have clear and consistent regard for research and researchers.

Type II Research projects: Exploratory studies

Type II (**Category C**) projects are to be smaller scale projects of **up to two years**. A maximum of \$130,000 will be available for any one project, with no more than \$65,000 granted in any one year.

These studies are to be more innovative, with both practice and research valued together. Drawing on the idea that imagining new possibilities requires a team with diverse expertise and interests—so expanding the thinking and solution space—the projects are to focus on questions where both researchers and teachers are exploring new ideas together, possibly examining uncharted territory. Projects are to be constructed in a way that explicitly draws on the questions of the whole project team and be focused not on teachers themselves (as this makes them the subject), but on emerging issues in curriculum, on student learning and/or student voice, or any other important area that researchers and teachers can examine *together*. It is expected that these projects will mostly be in areas where there is much less research known, perhaps where innovative research designs or topics might be central. In this model it is important that the teachers and the researchers are thought partners together, where the learning of each is augmented by the partnership.

Two-stage selection process

There is a two-stage process for submitting proposals. Stage 1 is an Expression of Interest proposal and Stage 2 is a Full Proposal. Expression of Interest proposals are now being sought and must be made by **Wednesday 12 May 2010**. The purpose of requesting expressions of interest is to establish a shortlist of applicants who will be invited to submit Full Proposals. The two-stage process acknowledges both the competing demands on researchers and practitioners and the effort that is required to put together a high-quality proposal. At the Full Proposal stage, applicants will be required to demonstrate that there is a partnership agreement in place between researchers and practitioners. The two-stage process provides time for such agreements to be established.

There is no limit on the number of Expression of Interest proposals that can be submitted by individuals or organisations. At any one time a person can be named as principal investigator for only one project unless otherwise negotiated with the TLRI co-ordination team.

Use of funds

The TLRI seeks to obtain the best value for its funds. This means that purchases of large-scale capital items such as computers will not be funded, nor will overseas travel.

Format of initial Expression of Interest proposals

To assist with the selection process, each initial proposal must follow the format outlined in this information pack and be accompanied by a completed cover sheet. Please refer to the enclosed guidelines.

Conditions of funding

The following conditions will apply to those who are successful at the Full Proposal stage:

Funding beyond one year is conditional upon continued government funding of the TLRI and satisfactory performance in the first funding cycle.

The TLRI must be acknowledged as the funding source in any publications, presentations, or similar materials that result from the project.

Funding period

Funding for the successful projects in 2010 will commence on 1 January 2011, subject to contracts being signed. It is expected that research projects will start from the date of commencement stated in the successful applicants' contracts.

Reporting

All projects will be required to provide quarterly progress and financial reports. Specific requirements will be stipulated in the contract.

Eligibility of NZCER for funding

NZCER has established a management team to co-ordinate the implementation of the TLRI. NZCER staff members involved with co-ordination are not eligible to apply for funding from the TLRI or to be members of project teams applying for funding. However, it has been agreed with the TLRI Advisory Board that NZCER staff not involved in the co-ordination role will be eligible to put forward proposals for funding and/or to be members of collaborative teams applying for funding. They must adhere to the conflict of interest guidelines for programme co-ordination. These are available on request.

Appeals and complaints procedure

NZCER has established procedures to minimise the likelihood of conflicts of interest or breaches of privacy during the handling and selection of the TLRI project proposals. It is important that the New Zealand educational research community sees the administration and selection processes involved with the TLRI as sound, robust, fair, and transparent. For these reasons, NZCER has set up a process for dealing with appeals against funding decisions and for dealing with complaints.

To safeguard the integrity and transparency of the TLRI, NZCER has established an appeals and complaints procedure. The appeals procedure is for appeals against decisions taken in relation to shortlisting and funding. The complaints procedure can be invoked in situations where an organisation or individual has reason to believe that they have not been appropriately dealt with, or that NZCER has not acted properly in its role as co-ordinator.

Where an organisation or individual is aggrieved and believes grounds exist for an appeal or complaint, they should signal their intent in writing to the advisory board of the TLRI within 10 working days of receipt of the funding decision or of becoming aware of the problem. Alternatively, they can approach the director of NZCER with their appeal/complaint. If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, the aggrieved party should proceed with a written complaint. The advisory board will then appoint two members to deal with the appeal or complaint.

Submission of Expressions of Interest

The closing date for receipt of submissions of Expression of Interest proposals is 5 pm on Wednesday 12 May 2010.

Four unbound hard copies should be sent to:

Teaching and Learning Research Initiative

C/- NZCER

Level 10, Education House

178–182 Willis Street

P.O. Box 3237

WELLINGTON 6140

Selection criteria and process

Expressions of Interest will be shortlisted by a selection panel using the criteria set out in the enclosed criteria for selection document. The selection panel comprises members of the TLRI Co-ordination team.

As part of the selection process, proposers may be contacted and asked to provide additional information or to discuss the proposal. The co-ordination team reserves the right to recommend consultation and/or collaboration if the selection panel believes this will enhance the contribution of the proposed projects to the overall aims of the TLRI.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit Full Proposals. These will be assessed using the specified criteria, taking into account the aims, principles, and priorities of the TLRI. The selection panel at this second stage comprises leading researchers who have expertise in research methodology, and research into teaching and learning. Only those people who are not involved in submitting a bid themselves may undertake this role. The decisions made by the selectors at this stage are independent of the TLRI Co-ordination Team. The selection panel will make recommendations to the TLRI Advisory Board who will make the final decisions about project funding. The overall shortlisting process at each stage will be subject to independent audit.

The TLRI Co-ordination Team will negotiate research contracts with the successful applicants. Feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants in order to enhance the likelihood of success in a future funding round.

Key dates

Call for Expressions of Interest	Monday March 2010
Closing date for Expressions of Interest	Wednesday 12 May 2010
Notification of shortlisting and invitation to submit Full Proposal	Wednesday 30 June 2010
Closing date for Full Proposals	Friday 27 August 2010
Notification of decisions: successful and unsuccessful proposals	Tuesday 5 October 2010
Feedback on unsuccessful Full Proposals	Tuesday 5 October 2010
TLRI funding commences for 2010 funding recipients	January 2011, or as in contract
