



2025

**Guidelines for
applicants –
Scholarships**

Applications for Building Research Levy 2025



Ready to make an impact? These guidelines will help you understand how to apply for a BRANZ scholarship funded by the Building Research Levy.

Please make sure you read this together with the [2025 Research Investment Priorities](#).

Quick reference guide

Funding available	Approximately \$174,000 for 2026-2027 financial year.
Project value for Master's	Up to \$22,000 for one year.
Project value for a PhD	Up to \$40,000 per financial year over three years.
Project value for the Building with Science PhD	Up to \$50,000 per financial year over three years. This scholarship is awarded by BRANZ Inc. in recognition of truly outstanding research quality.
Contract start date	1 April 2026.
Registration	There will be a mandatory registration stage for all new prospective scholars. If you have already registered your interest with BRANZ Inc. through previous rounds, you will automatically be sent a link to the web portal-based application in July. If you have not received a link, please review your spam mailbox or contact us at: researchinvestment@branz.org.nz .
Application process	Once registered, the application process has two stages. In stage one you are required to submit a Concept ¹ through a web portal. Successful Concepts will then move to stage two, where you will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. Please do not submit your application via email. There will be no other way to submit applications other than utilising our web portal.
Submitting your Concept	To apply, please submit your Concept through the web portal.
Submitting your Full Proposal	If your Concept is successful, you will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. The Full Proposal template will be provided by BRANZ Research Investment Team.
Assessment	Concepts will be assessed for eligibility by BRANZ's Research Investment Team. If eligible, Concepts will be assessed by a Subject Matter Experts Panel ² . Full Proposals will be assessed by the Research Investment Advisory Group – the RIAG ³ .
Privacy	The information collected from your application will be shared for the sole purpose of assessing your proposal. The sharing of this information will be limited to BRANZ's Research Investment Team and members of the assessment panels. Assessors will sign a confidentiality agreement and conflict of interest register prior to receiving any material.

¹ **Concept template** this is the form that succinctly outlines your research idea/proposal.

² **Subject Matter Experts Panel** is a group of BRANZ internal research experts and external subject matters experts, assessing Concepts specifically matched to their relevant skills and expertise.

³ **Research Investment Advisory Group (RIAG)** is our newly established overarching panel that will review all proposals - BRANZ-led research, collaborator-led research and scholarship. This independent panel will provide expert advice to the BRANZ Inc. Board, based on the Objectives and associated Investment Signals and the assessment criteria



Contact us

If you have any questions, please contact researchinvestment@branz.org.nz as early as possible.

Please make sure your application is complete before submitting it. Once applications have been submitted, it will not be possible to make any changes to them. Late applications will not be considered.

If you need to withdraw your application, please send us an email at researchinvestment@branz.org.nz.

Key Dates

Concepts submission period	Early July until 5 August 2025
Concepts due	12 noon on 5 August 2025
Results from Concept announced	Early September 2025
Full Proposal submission period	Early September until 8 October 2025
Full Proposals due	12 noon on 8 October 2025
Applicants notified of results	Early December 2025
Contracting period	December 2025 – April 2026
Contracts begin	1 April 2026*

*Contracts may commence before 1 April 2026; however, the first payment will be available from 1 April 2026.

Please Note: Dates are subject to change.

What's new this year?

We are excited to introduce some updates to BRANZ Scholarships to better support high-quality research and nurture future leaders in the building and construction sector:

1. We have introduced a Concept template through a web portal. This streamlined, concise first stage helps you present your initial ideas. You must register first to access this.
2. The link to the Concept template cannot be transferred to another individual.
3. We have increased our funding to help students focus on what matters most.
4. We have streamlined how BRANZ scholarships are managed – now contracting directly with scholar's host institutions.
5. We have developed a [Research Investment Strategy](#), our ten-year trajectory for our Building Research Levy investment to align with our Strategy.
6. We have a companion document our [2025 Research Investment Priorities](#). Our annual research investment priorities are in this document which will be updated each year to align with our Strategy.
7. As part of the new Strategy, we have also introduced cross-cutting enablers, key aspects that we will foster and invest in that can apply across the four focus areas. Please read them carefully and consider which ones might be addressed by your research. Applications that can demonstrate relevance and address one or more cross-cutting enabler will be prioritised.
8. We have introduced two new assessment panels: Subject Matter Experts Panel and the Research Investment Advisory Group (RIAG), see definitions of page 1.

Eligibility criteria for scholarships

To be considered for a scholarship under the Building Research Levy Act, your Concept and Full Proposal should meet the following eligibility criteria:

- a. Applications must be written in English and meet professional quality standards (e.g. proof-read, coherent writing and plain language).



- b. Applicants must have New Zealand citizenship or permanent residence and have been accepted by a recognised New Zealand tertiary institution.
- c. The applicant undertaking the research must be based in New Zealand and the research should be carried out in New Zealand.
- d. Successful scholars are expected to study full-time, unless otherwise agreed to by BRANZ Inc.
- e. Funding to an individual scholar for PhD studies is limited to 3 years.
- f. The funding cannot be used for fundamental research or research that produces sensitive data that cannot be shared (unless it relates to culturally sensitive data, like mātauranga Māori).
- g. Your research project must directly address one or more of the Objectives and associated Investment Signals from the 2025 Research Investment Priorities.
- h. Funding will not be provided if your research has already started and/or has been funded by another scholarship.
- i. The research must not commercially profit solely the student and/or the university. In case of doubt, BRANZ's Research Investment Team will discuss with the student the nature of the commercial gain for the proposed research.

Assessment process

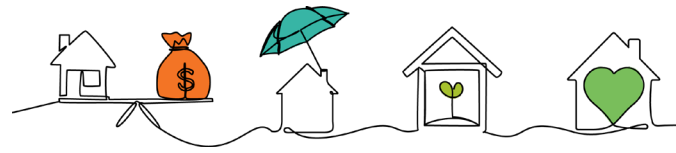
The application and assessment process include the following steps:

1. Applicants register using our web portal.
2. Applicants access a link provided to them after their registration, to submit a Concept utilising new web portal.
3. BRANZ's Research Investment Team assesses eligibility.
4. Eligible Concepts are assessed by the Subject Matter Experts Panel against the assessment criteria. Please refer to the assessment criteria section in this guideline.
5. The Subject Matter Experts Panel meets to moderate assessment and recommend a shortlist of high-quality scholarship Concepts.
6. BRANZ's Research Investment Team considers the final recommendations from the Subject Matter Experts Panel to determine the final list of scholarship Concepts to be invited for Full Proposals.
7. Successful applicants are invited to submit a Full Proposal using the form provided by BRANZ's Research Investment Team.
8. Applicants invited to prepare a Full Proposal can book a meeting with a member of BRANZ's Research Investment Team to receive feedback from the Concept assessment process. For more details refer to Receiving Feedback section in these guidelines.
9. Applicants submit Full Proposals.
10. RIAG receives Full Proposals and assesses them against the assessment and balancing criteria.
11. RIAG meets to moderate assessments, including balancing portfolio and recommend funding.
12. BRANZ Inc. Board receives final recommendations and makes investment decisions. When making these decisions, the BRANZ Inc. Board will:
 - a. Consider the RIAG's reviews and moderation discussions.
 - b. Take into account portfolio balance across the four focus areas, BRANZ's research investment Outcomes, Goals and Objectives in the Research Investment Strategy, and the annual investment priorities from the 2025 Research Investment Priorities.

Your privacy is important to us: BRANZ Inc. is required to store and share your application securely and only use it for the purpose for which it is intended to. Your application will be shared with the relevant assessment panel. All assessors will sign a confidentiality agreement and declare any existing or perceived conflicts of interest prior to receiving any material.

Assessment criteria

- **Strategic alignment** – the research is aligned with Objectives and associated Investment Signals outlined in the 2025 Research Investment Priorities and addresses relevant cross-cutting enablers from BRANZ's Research Investment Strategy.
- **Impact and value of research** – research findings translate into actionable outputs and outcomes with a defined benefits for the sector across Aotearoa New Zealand. There is clear evidence that the research has not been done before or does not duplicate efforts that could be adopted to the Aotearoa New Zealand context.
- **Research excellence** – high quality research fills important knowledge gaps, is well-conducted, innovative, where applicable, and makes significant contributions to our industry.



- **Delivery confidence** – the research team’s capability, capacity and access to research facilities and data needed to conduct the proposed research is evident.
- **Inclusivity** – where applicable, research is conducted in a transdisciplinary way, with diversity of perspectives, considering Aotearoa New Zealand’s unique culture and associated knowledge systems.
- **Drive** – the students’ personal ambition to learn and grow is evident; they explore novel approaches and show commitment to solving the issues of the building and construction sector.

Concept expectations

The Concept template helps you present your research idea in a clear and structured way. It guides you to describe the goals of your project, how you plan to do it, what you expect to achieve, and what difference your research could make in the real world.

To be awarded one of our scholarships, it’s not just about an excellent research idea that aligns with our Objectives and associated Investment Signals, it’s also about you as a person. We want to foster and invest in students that have ambition to drive the future of the building and construction sector.

We expect you to include and upload the following three documents with your proposal:

- A signed letter of support from your supervisor and institution endorsing the proposed research.
- Your official transcript results from your most recent degree. If your transcript is in a language other than English, it has to be translated.
- A summary of your relevant achievements (e.g. awards, professional memberships, volunteer work, etc).

Before you start:

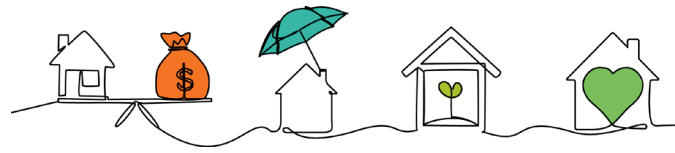
- Read the Research Investment Strategy and 2025 Research Investment Priorities.
- Review this Guidelines for Applicants to ensure eligibility.
- Ensure the Concept aligns with at least one Objective and associated Investment Signal.
- Adhere to character/word limits.
- Do not consider including URLs, as linked content will not be reviewed.
- Investigate whether there are synergies between your idea and the existing research at BRANZ or elsewhere.

What a Concept is not?

- **A Full Proposal:** A Concept is not meant to include every detail of your project. It is a high-level overview, not a comprehensive research plan.
- **A literature review:** While background context is useful, a Concept should focus on your proposed idea and its relevance to our Objectives and associated Investment Signals, not a detailed academic review.
- **A funding application for immediate approval:** The Concept is used to assess the alignment and potential of your idea. Approval to proceed to Full Proposal does not guarantee funding.
- **A sales pitch without substance:** While it’s great to be enthusiastic, strong Concepts are more than just a good pitch—they’re backed by clear goals, thoughtful planning, and achievable outcomes.
- **An informal idea summary:** A Concept is not a casual or rough outline. It should be well-structured, concise, and directly address the assessment criteria.
- **A place for external links or attachments:** Concepts should be self-contained. Do not include URLs or refer to external websites for critical information.

Full Proposal expectations

Your Full Proposal is your chance to clearly articulate what research you plan to undertake, why it matters, and how you will carry it out. Think of it as a persuasive argument for your project,



demonstrating its value and feasibility. It needs to be well-structured and directly align with our 2025 Research Investment Priorities.

- If you are successful, you will need to submit a project plan outlining your proposed milestones, which BRANZ Inc. must approve before your first payment. You will then provide progress updates, certified by your supervisor, against this plan.
- Scholars are expected to communicate the results of their research to the building and construction sector.
- The results of your research must be made public and available for others to use.
- You'll be expected to stay in touch with BRANZ Inc. throughout your scholarship.
- If you are awarded a scholarship, you will agree to follow the BRANZ's terms and conditions outlined in the scholarship funding agreement.

The research question or hypothesis

At the heart of your proposal must be a clearly defined research question or hypothesis. This isn't just a vague idea; it should be:

- **Specific:** Narrow enough to be thoroughly investigated within your project scope.
- **Feasible:** Realistic given your resources, timeline, and capabilities.
- **Impactful:** Focused on a real and significant issue within the building and construction sector.

You'll need to support this with a thorough review of relevant literature and existing data, demonstrating a strong understanding of the current knowledge landscape.

Objectives and methodology

Following your research question or hypothesis, clearly state your research objectives. These should be:

- **Specific:** Precisely what you aim to achieve.
- **Measurable:** How you'll know you've achieved them.
- **Logically aligned:** Ensuring alignment to your research question or hypothesis.

Your methodology needs to be exceptionally well thought out. Describe in detail:

- The techniques, tools, and data sources you will use.
- Why these are appropriate for addressing your research question or hypothesis.
- How your approach is feasible, demonstrating that you (with the help of your supervisor) possess the necessary skills and experience to execute the plan.

Impact and engagement

A crucial element of your proposal is articulating the potential impact of your research. You must explain:

- How your work will fill a knowledge gap.
- Its contribution to innovation, policy, improvements to the building and construction industry, or social outcomes.

Proposals with strong, well-considered pathways to impact will be prioritised. This means you need to go beyond just stating the impact; you must demonstrate how you will work collaboratively and engage with stakeholders. This ensures your research is relevant, actively used, and generates lasting value.

Risks, timeline and outputs

Your proposal should also include:

- A clear timeline outlining key phases and milestones of your project.



- An identification of any potential risks and a detailed outline of how you will mitigate and manage them.

Finally, you must clearly define your outputs (e.g., reports, datasets, publications) and the anticipated outcomes of your work. Describe how you will communicate your findings, including your plans for engaging with stakeholders, communities, or decision-makers.

What we value the most in scholarship proposals?

- **Collaboration:** Engagement with relevant research teams across Aotearoa New Zealand, national and international researchers, iwi, policymakers, and industry.
- **Building on international knowledge:** Research that adapts and applies global insights to the Aotearoa New Zealand context.
- **Strong pathways to impact:** Demonstrating system-wide impact and a clear change lens.
- **Data innovation:** Initiatives that use, develop, and/or innovate data and tools supporting the building and construction industry, adhering to the FAIR Data approach (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reuseable).
- **Mātauranga Māori informed approaches:** If relevant to the project, integrating indigenous knowledge to enrich and diversify research reach and impact.
- **Capability strengthening:** Research and initiatives that enhance current and future capabilities, providing solutions, tools, and support for the sector's workforce and future research leaders.

Receiving feedback on your Concept and Full Proposal

No feedback will be provided to those whose Concepts are not successful.

If you're invited to submit a Full Proposal, we can, if requested, provide more detailed guidance to help you strengthen your Full Proposal.

Everyone who submits a Full Proposal—whether successful or not—can request general feedback.

All feedback is provided in good faith to help improve future applications.

Conflicts of interest

Panel members will operate under a confidentiality agreement. This includes a declaration and management of any conflicts of interest.

Final funding decisions

The RIAG makes recommendations based on the assessment and balancing criteria. Final funding decisions are made by the BRANZ Inc. Board, following our portfolio management approach.

When making these decisions, the BRANZ Inc. Board will:

- Consider the assessors' reviews and moderation discussions.
- Take into account portfolio balance, across the four focus areas, our Research Investment Outcomes, Goals and Objectives in the Research Investment Strategy, and our annual Investment Signals from the 2025 Research Investment Priorities.

Please note that BRANZ Inc. may choose to invest a different amount overall than what was initially indicated for this funding round.

Once the BRANZ Inc. Board has made a final funding decision, all applicants will be notified of the outcome of their Full Proposal.

Decisions made by the BRANZ Inc. Board are definite. BRANZ Inc. will not enter into further discussions about scoring or moderation.



Contact

If you have any questions, please contact us at researchinvestment@branz.org.nz.

FAQs for scholarship applicants

1. What is the difference between BRANZ Inc. and BRANZ Ltd?

The Building Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ) is made up of two different legal entities. BRANZ Inc. is an incorporated society and acts as the parent body. Its main purpose is to be the steward of the Building Research Levy, ensuring that BRANZ's activities remain aligned with the public good and interests of the industry. BRANZ Ltd is a liability company, wholly owned by BRANZ Inc. It is the operating arm that delivers research and services, carrying out research, testing, consulting and product certification. BRANZ is not a regulator, but an independent research organisation.

2. Am I eligible to apply for a BRANZ scholarship?

To be eligible, you must be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident and accepted into a recognised New Zealand tertiary institution. You must also be based in New Zealand during your study.

3. Can international students apply?

Only New Zealand citizens or permanent residents are eligible for scholarships.

4. What level of study does the scholarship support?

The scholarship is only for postgraduate research (e.g. Master's or PhD). Master's are capped at one year and PhD funding is capped at three years.

5. Do I need to study full-time?

Yes, unless BRANZ Inc. agrees otherwise. Part-time study can be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

6. How do I apply?

Applications must be submitted through the web portal. There is a two-stage process: first, a Concept application; if successful, you'll be invited to submit a Full Proposal.

7. What should I include in my Concept application?

Your application should clearly align with at least one or more Objectives and associated Investment Signals. At Full Proposal stage, you'll also need to submit a project plan with milestones, demonstrate how your research benefits the building and construction sector. Additionally, you need to attach three documents: a letter of support from your supervisor, your academic transcript, and a summary of your relevant achievements.

8. What are the key dates?

For a complete timeline of the 2025 funding round, please refer to the last page of BRANZ's 2025 Research Investment Priorities.

9. What happens after I'm awarded a scholarship?

Share the good news with the research office at your respective host institution. We will work with them on a contract.

10. Can I include links in my application?

No. Please do not include URLs or any other links. This content will not be reviewed.

11. Who can I contact if I have questions?

Email BRANZ's Research Investment Team at researchinvestment@branz.org.nz.

12. How much funding is available overall?

For 2026–2027, we expect to award up to NZD \$174,000 in total scholarship funding. BRANZ Inc. may choose to invest a different amount overall.

13. What's the value of each scholarship?

Master's: Up to \$22,000 for one year

PhD: Up to \$40,000 per year for up to three years

Building with Science PhD: Up to \$50,000 per year for up to three years (awarded for exceptional proposals).

14. What are the BRANZ's Research Investment Outcomes, Goals, Objectives, and Investment Signals?



These are strategic priorities that guide BRANZ's funding decisions. For more detail, please see the 2025 Research Investment Priorities.

15. What happens if I miss the application deadline?

Late applications cannot be accepted. Make sure you register early and submit your Concept application before the deadline via the web portal.

16. Can I apply again if I've been unsuccessful in the past?

Yes! Previous applicants are welcome to apply again in the next funding round. If you've registered before, we will send you a direct link to the application form when the funding round opens.

17. What's the assessment process like?

Your Concept application will be reviewed for eligibility. If it meets the criteria, it will be assessed by a Subject Matter Experts Panel. Full Proposals are reviewed by the Research Investment Advisory Group (RIAG). For specific assessment criteria, please go to BRANZ's 2025 Research Investment Priorities.

18. What are my obligations if I receive a scholarship?

You'll need to submit regular progress reports signed by your supervisor, share your findings with the sector, and acknowledge BRANZ in all publications. You'll also be expected to participate in knowledge-sharing activities.

19. What happens with my scholarship if my circumstances change?

You'll need to discuss any changes in your study plans with BRANZ Inc. as soon as possible. Deferrals are considered on a case-by-case basis.

20. What makes a strong application?

Clear alignment with BRANZ's priorities, a well-structured research plan, and a compelling case for how your work will benefit the building and construction sector.

21. How many scholarships will be offered for 2026-2027?

We expect to award up to 5 scholarships for the 2026-2027 funding round (2 Master's and 2-3 PhD).

22. Are there any special considerations to think about when submitting an application with mātauranga Māori?

Any consideration related to mātauranga Māori relate to the license a researcher or research group has to utilise and share culturally sensitive information. It is important that if the research project proposes to partner or engage with Māori communities, the information provided by the communities is protected from potential misuse or appropriation, and the work is conducted in the most appropriate and respectful way. Should a project with mātauranga Māori considerations be selected for funding, Research Investment will discuss with the project team how to protect the cultural assets utilised and/or created in the research.

23. Can a supervisor apply for a scholarship and then find the right candidate to undertake the research?

No. The scholarship application must be submitted by the student that will undertake the research, and they must list who will be their supervisor, who should be supportive of the research to be conducted. For a BRANZ scholarship, the assessment includes the student as a person as well as the research topic and quality of the project.

24. Can an overseas student apply for a scholarship?

Yes, as long as the student has Permanent NZ Residency and is enrolled at a university or tertiary institution in New Zealand.

25. Can a scholarship applicant have a supervisor based overseas?

Yes, as long as the main supervisor is part of the faculty of the university or tertiary institution the prospective scholar is enrolled at. Co-supervisors from overseas institutes, industry and even BRANZ Ltd. are welcome. For the latter, please get in touch with Research Investment to discuss the administrative arrangements needed for a BRANZ co-supervisor.

26. Does the topic of the scholarship need to be based in New Zealand or be a study of overseas cases?

A scholarship study could have components of the research analysing international examples of a similar case. This is part of the due diligence process of testing whether the research has been conducted elsewhere. However, it is important to consider that the research outcomes must primarily benefit New Zealand, and it is key that the benefits from the research are based on New Zealand context to ensure uptake or adoption.



27. Can a student that has a scholarship underway apply for a BRANZ scholarship to supplement the ongoing study?

No, our BRANZ scholarship cannot be used to top-up another scholarship. If the scholar just started the scholarship (less than 5 months into the PhD) it would be worthwhile checking eligibility with Research Investment. However, if a PhD student does not have a current scholarship (e.g. self-funded), has only just started the research (less than 5 months into the PhD), and is willing to pivot its research question to align with BRANZ priorities, it might be possible to discuss this on a case-by-case basis.

28. How are research offices going to be advised of Scholarship Concepts being submitted by applicants?

The Research Investment team will communicate to research offices the successful Concepts. This is for their awareness in case a successful Full Proposal is granted, and they need to work with BRANZ on a funding agreement.

29. How is BRANZ managing potential conflicts of interest from members of the assessment panel considering Concepts put forward?

Members of our Subject Matter Experts panel will provide a conflict of interest declaration before they receive Concepts for assessment. If an applicant prefers a Subject Matter Expert panellist to refrain from assessing their proposal due to a conflicting alignment with certain school of thought, they can disclose that information on the Concept form. Research Investment will always endeavour to find the most appropriate assessors which can ensure impartiality and fairness at the time of assessing the applicant's Concept.

30. Is there a number of Concepts that BRANZ is thinking of putting forward as Full Proposals?

No, at this stage there is not a minimum or maximum number of Concepts that will be put forward to the next stage. Each Concept will be assessed on its merit and quality. At the time of final funding decisions by the BRANZ Inc. Board, the available budget will also play a role in the final number of proposals funded.

31. What's the difference between a cross-cutting enabler and the eligibility criteria?

Cross-cutting enablers are 'the what' for your research proposal. Those are not mandatory and will have different levels of relevance depending on your research, or not be relevant at all. Assessment criteria, on the other hand, are critical for your research project. The eligibility and assessment criteria elements, being 'the how' the research will be undertaken, must all be considered and addressed in your application.

32. Can only Māori researchers apply for the Mātauranga Māori Masters scholarship?

No, a student with the right cultural competencies will be able to access this scholarship. It is important to note that students cannot directly apply for this scholarship. BRANZ, with the help of our assessment panels, will be the one assigning the mātauranga scholarship to an outstanding Master's scholarship applicant with solid understanding of te ao Māori and kaupapa Māori.

33. How likely are the key topics for this call for research proposal are to be repeated next year, considering the 10-years horizon of the BRANZ and Research Investment Strategies?

Our priority areas are carefully selected after a rigorous selection process, including discussions with industry leaders, BRANZ staff and regulators, as well as conversations with our Board who sets the ultimate direction. At this stage we cannot guarantee what priorities will be selected for next year's funding round.

34. I've got an idea but is not aligned strongly with the call for research for collaborators. Instead, it aligns with the call for research for BRANZ-led research. How do I contact the right people to see any potential partnerships or collaborations?

Please get in touch with Research Investment and we will connect you with the right people at BRANZ. If the research is multidisciplinary then it might be more than one researcher that needs to be informed, and we will do our best to connect you with the right research team. Please bear in mind that this is subject to the current strategic direction of our BRANZ researchers, and it doesn't mean that all ideas can be adopted or pursued.