

Top tips for managing research projects

This quick reference guide provides a few top tips for managing and delivering research projects at Unitec, once the external research contract or Unitec Terms and Conditions document has been signed. Managing a research project is a detailed and at times challenging task. Tūāpapa Rangahau, the Research & Enterprise Office, is here to help you successfully manage your research, so please contact the Research Administration team for assistance: Helen Au Yeung and Sandy Ngov

We also encourage you to complete the 'Managing a Research contract' online course prior to starting your research project:

http://thenest.unitec.ac.nz/teaching-and-research/tuapapa_rangahau-and-postgraduate-studies/about-us_home.cfm

At project setup stage:

Understand your research contract

1. Read through the research contract and ensure you are aware of what is required of you. Tūāpapa Rangahau will take the lead on negotiating any contract with external organisations, but some key areas for you to focus on are: the project scope, reporting requirements, the publication approval process and any confidentiality obligations.
2. Intellectual property matters should be guided by the Intellectual Property Policy. Tūāpapa Rangahau will support any IP negotiations with external parties. Please consult with the Research Administration team if you have any questions regarding IP.

Ethics

Research involving human or animal subjects can commence only after appropriate ethics approval has been obtained as per the Research Ethics Policy. For assistance on preparing ethics approval applications, please contact the Research Administrator – Ethics (ethics@unitec.ac.nz) at Tūāpapa Rangahau.

Health and Safety Risk and Hazard Assessment

Prior to the commencement of any research projects at Unitec, a health and safety risk management assessment, which covers the consideration, planning and mitigation of health and safety hazards and risks, must be completed. The form can be obtained from the Research Administrators.

Research funding and finalising your budget

1. Once your contract has been signed and research funding has been approved, the Research Administration team will set up a **new project code** that will be used to manage all income and expenditure for your project. Please make note of this project code and use it for all expenditure requests.
2. You will also need to finalise a detailed operational budget to help get your project up and running. We recommend that you work with the Research Administration team to review your budget and determine exactly what your research project needs are; e.g. staff hours and employment arrangements required, the model and quote for any equipment needed, detailed travel requirements and quote, transcription costs etc.
3. The Research Administration team has a lot of experience creating and tracking project budgets for research project leaders, and depending on the situation, may advise different approaches for faster and smoother processing within Unitec's system.

Existing staff and Hiring Research Assistant(s)

1. If your project involves research assistants, decide how long you want to hire the research assistant for and how much you want to pay. If a research assistant needs to be formally employed, consider whether s/he needs a contract for services, a fixed term or a casual employment contract. A very short employment period (e.g. a few days) and a payment under \$1500 does not necessarily require a formal contract. Please contact the Research Administration team for advice and to initiate these employment arrangements for you. Tūāpapa Rangahau might also be able to recommend suitable research personnel to project team if needed.
2. If your project budget includes funding for existing Unitec staff time, please discuss the details with the Research Administration team who will initiate any arrangements on your behalf. In some instances, the team will seek approvals as needed from the relevant HOPP.

Reaching agreement with subcontractors/collaborators/external consultants

1. If your project requires subcontractors/collaborators/external consultants, negotiate the work requirements and remuneration (if any) with them, ensuring there is written agreement on the content and time frame of the work they will be delivering for you. The Research Administration team can support these negotiations and generate or review contracts where needed. Please keep the team apprised of any research related agreements made with external parties to ensure administrative processes can take place in a timely manner.
2. For any contracts you receive from external parties, please pass these on to the Research Administration team to seek legal advice from the Unitec Legal Team and seek signatures on your behalf, before raising a Purchase Order.

At project delivery stage:

Financial administration

The Research Administration team at Tūāpapa Rangahau are the financial administrators for your project. Some top tips are:

1. The Research Administration team can recommend research services providers (e.g. transcription, data entry, and project auditing services etc) for the project team if needed.
2. A purchase Order (PO) needs to be used to purchase goods/services from existing suppliers or pay for relatively costly goods/services. New suppliers may need to be set up in PeopleSoft FMS before we can raise POs.
3. Staff should use the online expense claim system only to reimburse the costs of goods/services which are not supplied by the existing suppliers, or to reimburse mileage costs for local research travel (for other research travel related claims like flights and accommodation, please refer to the 'Travel (excluding mileage claims)' section below). A copy of the receipts and other supporting documents (e.g. the budget in the approved research contract) must be attached and the original receipts should be kept for future auditing purposes. For online payment claims, a bank statement also needs to be attached.
4. Staff can claim petty cash if the purchase is under \$50.
5. A P card can be used to make a one-off online payment to a non-existing (local) supplier or overseas supplier.
6. A Professional Services Form can be used to make a one-off payment to a non-existing (local) supplier provided that the payment is under \$1500 and the supplier will not be used again within 1 year.
7. Any change in the project budget plan needs to be approved by Tūāpapa Rangahau before the spending happens.

Paying staff, Research Assistants, students and external parties

1. If an existing Unitec staff member needs to be paid to work on a research project(s) in addition to their workload, a one-off additional payment may be used, with HOPP approval. If the work is done within their existing FTE, a discussion with Tūāpapa Rangahau and the HOPP may be required regarding payment.
2. For casual employees submitting timesheets, please send the approved timesheets to the Research Administration team for payment. Any new fixed term employees will be paid directly from the project code.
3. A studentship (tax free) can be paid to a current Unitec student to carry out research work as per the project's terms and conditions (contract).
4. An existing (active) supplier/contractor in PeopleSoft FMS can possibly be hired to work on your research project by requesting a 'variation to an existing contract'. The Research Administration team can check these details for you, and make the request.

Travel (excluding mileage claims)

1. For flights and accommodation, submit the Application to Travel form (and Application for Overseas Travel Insurance form for overseas travel) along with the project's terms and conditions (contract), travel quote and other supporting documents to Helen Au Yeung at Tūāpapa Rangahau. Helen will ask the Dean of Research and Enterprise to approve the form. Once the form has been approved, travel bookings, including flights and accommodation, can be made via your Business Administrator.
2. Travel can be approved only if it is as per the project's contract/terms and conditions and within the project budget.
3. To reimburse the costs associated with the research travel (e.g. meals and taxi), please submit an expense claim via the online system with a copy of the receipts and other supporting documents (e.g. approved Application to Travel form) attached. The Dean of Research and Enterprise will approve the claims provided that there is sufficient justification. For reimbursing any costs in a foreign currency, please state both the original currency and New Zealand dollar values on the expense claim and eliminate GST. Evidence of the relevant exchange rate should also be provided.

Reporting on your research project

1. Contact the Research Administration team to generate or check any financial reports required when preparing your project interim/progress or final reports.
2. Ensure the Research Administration team has a copy of all progress reports and final reports submitted for either externally or internally funded research projects.
3. Notify the Research Administration team of any significant changes to your planned research (e.g. project delays) as a contract variation with a funder may be required.

Research Outputs

1. All research projects should result in research outputs that need to be entered into ROMS. Nevertheless, the agreed publication process and confidentiality obligations in the contract must always be followed prior to any publication/presentation. The Research Administration team can advise where needed.
2. Authorship needs to be determined prior to the outputs being completed and/or published, in accordance with the Conduct of Research Policy.
3. The research funder and/or Unitec Institute of Technology need to be appropriately acknowledged in any outputs resulting from your research.