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Subject: Guide to Unitec academic committees
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Unitec



Guide to Unitec academic committees

Kia ora koutou

I've been asked in various forums to help boost understanding of the academic committees we have at Unitec - what they do, who's on them, and how staff can be more involved with their work.

At the moment, committee functions and responsibilities are not well

understood, but they remain very important for student success, academic quality and our goal of a return to EER Category One. This email sets out the 'basics' of our academic committees, and I'd be very happy to come and talk with staff who'd like more information.

How you can be involved

All **committee meetings** are accessible to the public and all proceedings, agendas and papers are publicly available. Information on all our academic committees is available on the Nest's [Academic Governance Committees page](#). That means you are welcome to attend if you wish.

Serving as a **committee member** is an important part of ensuring the quality of operations at Unitec. If you'd like to be nominated for a committee, ask your manager for info, check with the committee chair, or enquire through the relevant committee secretary (listed on the [Nest](#)).

Many Unitec staff members **submit papers and reports** to academic committees and are often asked to attend and speak to those submissions. Committee Chairs will determine which committee each submission should go to.

Committees and functions

The Education Act 1989 requires that all polytechnics have a **Governing Council** (or in our case, a Commissioner appointed by the Minister of Education). That council appoints a Chief Executive and an Academic Board, and delegates a range of authorities and functions to them.

All policies, strategies and major decisions related to academic matters are approved by the committees described here. That makes these committees a very important part of decision-making at Unitec.

A visual guide to our governance committees [can be found on the Nest](#).

[Academic Board – Te Poari Mātauranga](#)

The Academic Board is our 'top' committee and is responsible for approving what we deliver, and for a 'quality management system' to ensure academic quality and student success. It also provides advice to the Commissioner for his decision-making, makes recommendations and provides reports to the Executive Leadership Team. 'Governance' is the responsibility of academic

committees, while ‘management’ of the Unitec business is the responsibility of ELT. While this is generally a cooperative relationship, it also has important tensions because decisions about academic quality need to be achievable within the resources available to Unitec.

The current Academic Board meets monthly, is chaired by the Director Ako and its membership includes the Chief Executive, Directors for Research and Student Success, the Student President, and a number of Heads of School, APMs and senior academics. Appointments are for two years. All the details of the Academic Board structure and functions are in its [Terms of Reference](#).

The Academic Board has established a number of sub-committees with delegated authority to make decisions on various aspects of Unitec’s work. Each of those committees is able to further delegate its work if required, generally for purposes of efficient operation. Most sub-committees meet every 4-6 weeks, for 2 hours.

Academic Sub-Committees

Quality Alignment Board (QAB) – Te Poari Whai Kounga

QAB has delegated authority from Academic Board for oversight and improvements to our academic quality systems, such as PEPs and NZQA degree monitoring. It meets monthly and reports to Academic Board. Members include Directors for Research and Student Success areas, the Student President, Heads of School, senior academics from each school and the Manager Te Korowai Kahurangi.

Learning and Teaching (AALTC) – Ako Ahimura

Ako Ahimura has delegated authority from Academic Board for our strategic direction and priorities for learning and teaching. Its focus is more on longer-term planning and strategic direction, and on pedagogy, whereas QAB is more focused on oversight of operational matters and quality/compliance. It meets monthly and reports to Academic Board. Like QAB, members include Directors for Research and Student Success, the Student President, Heads of School, senior academics from each school, and Managers from Te Korowai Kahurangi and Te Puna Ako.

Academic Approvals Committee (AAC) – Te Komiti Whakamana Hotaka Hou

AAC ensures that all applications for new or amended programmes that

require external approval (e.g. from NZQA) are of the required standard and are aligned with Unitec strategic and quality requirements. This is very detailed quality work. AAC makes recommendations to Academic Board about programme approvals. It meets when required.

Programme Improvements Committee (PIC) – Portfolio Rōpū

PIC monitors and supports programme teams in making improvements to programmes on behalf of the Academic Approvals Committee.

Programme Academic Quality Committees (PAQCs)

PAQCs are organised for clusters of programmes within the same discipline. They are the 'engine room' of the committees and they deal with a mix of operational and governance aspects of programme quality assurance, with the aim of continuous improvement. At any time there are 20+ PAQCs and they report to QAB. Members include the Head of School, APMs, programme staff and student representatives.

Research Committees

Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) – Te Komiti Tikanga Matatika

The UREC is a Health Research Council (HRC) accredited ethics committee which operates within the bounds of the Unitec Research Ethics Policy. Researchers (students and staff) who are researching human beings, make applications on a range of purpose-specific templates to have their research reviewed by the committee, which is comprised of experts prescribed by the HRC. This process is designed to protect the participants and the researchers from risks such as conflict of interest, exploitation, breach of privacy, health and safety.

Unitec Research Committee (URC) – Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec

The URC provides thought leadership in the research aspect of Unitec's core purpose, operating through the Conduct of Research Policy. It oversees research strategy and policy, providing guidance to Tūāpapa Rangahau (Research and Graduate Office), partnering on research goals, quality, compliance and support. Membership is representative of schools, priority groups, students and industry partnerships.

Postgraduate Research & Scholarships Committee (PGRSC) – Te Komiti Whakahaere a ngā Pia

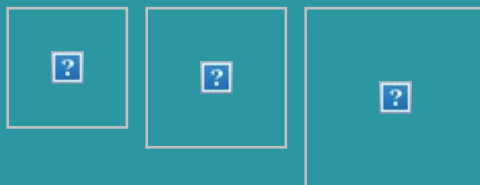
The PGRSC provides oversight of policy and quality of our Level 9 and 10

programmes and their research activities, including approving thesis proposals, appointing examiners, approving thesis grades, and awarding scholarships. Operating within the Conduct of Student Research Policy, membership includes Directors for Research and Student Success areas, postgraduate programme leaders, other academics and a Student Council member.

If you want to better understand where Unitec and its committees fit into the wider tertiary sector, [this is a good guide](#).

Ngā mihi

Simon Nash
Director Ako



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