CONDUCT OF RESEARCH POLICY

1 Purpose

This policy sets standards and provides a framework for the responsible conduct of research under the auspices of Unitec.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all Unitec staff members engaged in research and any contractor, consultant or other person engaged by Unitec to conduct research and research related activity on Unitec's behalf.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the policies and guidelines stipulated herein (see Section 5).

3 Policy Statement(s)

1. Research at Unitec is supported by Tuapapa Rangahau: the Research and Enterprise Office (REO).

2. Research at Unitec shall be conducted according to internationally-accepted principles of responsible research.

3. This policy enacts *Academic Statute* requirements to provide a framework to oversee effective research practice. The intent of this policy is to ensure research is conducted with:

   a. honesty and integrity;

   b. respect for human and animal research participants and the environment;

   c. good stewardship of public resources;

   d. acknowledgement of others' role in research;

   e. responsible communication of research results; and

   f. responsible financial, research, and project management.

4. Adhering to the standards outlined in this policy will help maintain and enhance the academic and commercial integrity of research at Unitec.

   a. Failure to do so has the potential to damage the investigator, their colleagues, Unitec, and could affect the professions, industries, and the communities with which Unitec interacts.

4 Process

This policy will be implemented in a way that honours the following principles of *Te Noho Kotahitanga*, Unitec's declaration of its commitment to the *Treaty of Waitangi/te Tiriti o Waitangi*.

- Rangatiratanga (Authority): Academic quality is governed and managed through appropriate delegation of authority and responsibility.

- Whakaritenga (Legitimacy): Academic decision-making processes legitimise the others' contributions and ensure ethics and integrity inform subsequent actions.

- Kaitiakitanga (Guardianship): Council delegates responsibility of guardianship over academic quality matters and maintenance of the administrative accuracy of this statute to the Academic Board.

- Mahi Kotahitanga (Co-operation): Academic quality systems and processes are developed in co-operation with appropriate partners with the understanding that all such partners share accountability for executing these in a way that supports educational performance and related evaluative questioning, development, and improvement.

- Ngākau Māhaki (Respect): These operating principles are conducive to a high-trust environment, based on: respect; transparency in decision-making; and consultative processes of policy development.

4.1 Research conduct

4.1.1 National and international standards of research conduct

1. Researchers have a duty to maintain the highest standards in research applicable to their discipline, profession, industry, and community. Unitec staff must ensure their conduct and behaviour complies with Unitec's *Code of Conduct – Taatai Tangata* and *Academic Integrity Policy*.

2. It is the investigators' responsibility to comply with national and international laws and standards of research conduct and to obtain the appropriate approvals required when researching internationally.

4.1.2 Human and animal ethics

1. Unitec operates under national and international standards for ethical research.

   a. The New Zealand Health Research Council-accredited Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) is responsible for the review and approval of human ethics applications.

2. Prior to the start of any research project involving or affecting humans, written ethical approval must be obtained from the UREC.

3. Prior to the start of the project, research involving animals must have written ethical approval from an approved animal ethics committee.

4. Where ethics has been approved by an external ethics committee, a copy of the approval letter shall be lodged with the REO and the UREC.

4.1.3 Environmental impact

1. Researchers must consider the impact of their research on the environment and mitigate any risk, ensuring all research is carried out in accordance with Unitec's *One Planet Principles and Environmental Policy*.

4.1.4 Research involving or affecting Māori

1. Research that may involve or affect Māori must be undertaken responsibly through appropriate consultation and ethical approval.

4.1.5 Health and safety

1. Research leaders shall ensure those associated with a project are aware of and understand all health and safety requirements, processes, and procedures.

2. All incidents involving injury, non-injury, and any near-misses must be reported according to Unitec's *Health and Safety Policy* and associated procedures.

3. Investigators involving human participants in research must:

   a. mitigate the risk of psychological and/or physical harm; and

   b. comply with the *Research Ethics Policy* and any ethical requirements stipulated by the granting ethics committee.

4.1.6 Data collection, retention, and security

1. Staff are accountable for managing the retention of their data and other records and for overseeing the same for students for whom they are responsible.

2. Researchers should abide by any specific requirements for data retention specified by:

   a. the conditions of ethical approval; and

   b. as agreed in the research contract.

4.1.7 Research design and methodology

1. Researchers shall consult with peers and engage in constructive debate to ensure the most appropriate research design and methodological approach(es) is/are used.

4.1.8 Accurate representation of research

1. Investigators must use scholarly and scientific rigour in obtaining, analysing and recording information, and in reporting and publishing.

2. Results and methods will be open to scrutiny through appropriate publication or exhibition.

3. Investigators must not:

   a. manipulate the results of the work to meet the perceived needs or requirements of funding agencies or other interested parties; nor

   b. condone such manipulation by others.

4. Investigators must ensure all speculative and interpretive statements in their work are identified as such.

4.1.9 Dissemination, publication, and authorship

1. Researchers have an obligation to disseminate their research and ensure the outcomes of the research reach a wide audience.

2. Dissemination of research and findings must be undertaken in accordance with any contractual agreements.

3. Researchers must acknowledge the substantive contributions of collaborators, including between staff and students and/or Unitec and industry.

4. Researchers should agree on authorship and offer authorship to all contributors.

4.1.10 Duplication of outputs, self-plagiarism, and plagiarism

1. It is expected investigators will follow best-practice in their disciplines in regard to duplication of outputs.

2. It is not acceptable to include the same research findings in several publications, or to submit similar work to more than one publisher without appropriate reference.

    a. Work that is reproduced in whole or in part must be referenced appropriately and must not be misrepresented as new knowledge.

3. Researchers must avoid plagiarism by carefully referencing material in accordance with the protocols accepted by their discipline.

4.1.11 Conflicts of interest

1. Conflicts of interest may be material or perceived and, in all cases, must be reported to the R O for due consideration of any necessary action.

2. A conflict of interest exists where there is a discrepancy between the individual interests of a person and their professional responsibilities; such that the conclusion may be drawn that an individual's professional actions are unduly influenced by their own interests.

3. Conflicts of interest include:

    a. relationships where possible or potential power may be exercised over another; and

    b. issues of gender, sex, ethnicity/race, and/or age.

4.1.12 Intellectual property, commercial sensitivity, and confidential research

1. Issues of commercial sensitivity or requirements for confidentiality of results from research projects will require legal consideration.

2. The project must be subject to a specific agreement covering the exchange of information, publishing of results, or other dissemination.

3. Issues arising from research that relate to intellectual property, will be guided by the *Intellectual Property Policy*.

4. Staff shall consult with the RE O around any real or perceived concerns relating to intellectual property, commercial sensitivity, and/or research confidentiality.

4.1.13 Staff Leaving Unitec

1. In the event of a staff member leaving Unitec's employment during the term of a research project, the staff member concerned must take all reasonable steps to ensure the research project is continued at Unitec to enable fulfilment of any contractual obligations that have been entered into.

4.2 Applying for and managing external research funding

4.2.1 External research funding and contractual obligations

1. Unitec is the contract holder for agreements arising from external research and related income, in the form of grants, contracts, and awards that its staff enter into and is legally accountable for the delivery of contracts.

2. The RE O manages the contractual responsibilities on behalf of Unitec by supporting researchers to fulfil contractual obligations.

3. Staff will alert the REO of their intention to apply for external research funding at the earliest possible opportunity.

4. Staff shall notify the REO of any external research funding that has been awarded to Unitec staff members.

5. PeopleSoft codes for externally-funded research projects must only be initiated with the approval of the Dean: Research and Enterprise.

6. Unitec staff will not engage with contractors or third parties to provide assistance with external funding applications without consulting the REO.

4.2.2 Sign-off and support of funding applications

1. External research activity must be undertaken with the knowledge and support of line management and leadership of the relevant discipline.

2. The external research income process must ensure the relevant organisational engagement and approval where staff and resources are committed; including

   a. support of the proposed activity and subsequent sign-off as per the *Delegations Policy*.

   b. eligibility and availability of resources proposed, including researchers' time, space, administrative support, facilities, and other such resources required to meet the contractual requirements of the project.

3. Where a line manager has approved a staff member's participation in an externally-funded project, their continued participation will be required until the contracted deliverables have been met.

4. Funding applications over $1 million will require a pre-submission appraisal process, including assessment of the impact on Unitec's resources.

   a. The REO, in consultation with the discipline leadership will facilitate this process.

   b. Appropriate lead-in times are required to ensure due-consideration of the appraisal.

4.3 The Research Leader / Principal Investigator

1. Successful management and contract-delivery requires that many stakeholders work together effectively.

2. Effective administration and management begins with the Research Leader or Principal Investigator in conjunction with support from the REO.

3. The Research Leader has the responsibility for the design and conduct of a project. These responsibilities include:

   a. ensuring adequate consultation and compliance with this policy and relevant regulations including those of the funding organisation, Unitec, and other relevant sources;

   b. managing deliverables and meeting the funder's reporting requirements as per contractual arrangements in conjunction with any support required from the REO;

   c. informing and consulting with the REO around changes in research direction and/or project deliverables to ensure contract variations are negotiated within the scope of the original contract and funding stipulations;

d. sound financial management and the proper use of research funds;

e. managing and supervising employees, postdoctoral fellows, and students;

f. ensuring human resource protocols are advised and safe working environments are provided for employees and contractors;

g. ensuring all ethical approvals have been granted and associated conditions have been met; and

h. ensuring all conflicts of interest are disclosed to the REO and managed, including those of research staff and students.

4.4 Tuapapa Rangahau: Research and Enterprise Office (REO)

1. The REO is responsible for:
   a. assuring sound management of research and the resources entrusted to it by its research funders; and
   b. co-ordination of institutional research management capability and infrastructure.

2. The REO has responsibilities in the development of applications and proposals, which include:
   a. assisting with institutional approval through appropriate delegated authorities of all grant and contract research applications submitted to external agencies;
   b. assisting in proposal development, including development of work plans and budgets;
   c. negotiating research contracts and agreements and ensuring the consultation of proper legal advice;
   d. co-ordinating with other Unitec teams during project development and contract negotiation phases to assure any special requirements can be met;

3. The REO also has responsibility to monitor and provide assistance for on-going project and portfolio management to the Research Leader. This includes:
   a. advising staff on funders' requirements and terms and conditions;
   b. advising staff on the management of major and complex projects, including assistance with establishing appropriate project management plans;
   c. ensuring compliance with contractual requirements and, where risks have been identified, acting pro-actively on behalf of the institution; and
   d. managing project changes including contract variations.

4.5 Finance

1. Funds must be housed in a way that is able to be monitored by the REO.

2. Unitec's finance team manages policy, administration, and accounting systems within the institute.

3. To ensure research is conducted in compliance with all applicable financial management and accountability standards, the finance team is responsible for:
   a. providing reliable internal financial statements to investigators and administrators;
   b. advising on the accounting of research funds received by Unitec;
   c. assisting and advising the REO on preparation of financial reports for funding

agencies;

d. assisting with external audits as required; and

e. where required, overseeing financial forecasts and accounts receivable.

4.6 Human resources (HR)

1. In conjunction with support and advice from the RIO, the Research Leader is responsible for ensuring appropriate engagement with HR.

2. Unitec's HR team manages policy and procedures applicable to all Unitec staff and can provide advice on and assist with the following:

    a. informing Research Leaders of their responsibilities in the areas of hiring, compensation and benefits, termination, occupational health, training, and employee relations;

    b. overseeing and supporting the recruitment processes in a timely fashion aligned to the needs of projects and ensuring Unitec's employment standards and conditions are maintained; and

    c. where required, providing advice to researchers and research administrators in HR management areas, including the supply of tools and templates to assist in the fulfilment of HR management functions.

4.7 Research outputs

4.7.1 Documenting research outputs

1. All staff engaged in research and the production of research outputs shall:

    a. record this engagement in the centralised outputs-database; and

    b. provide appropriate evidence for the purpose of research output verification and any statutory audit.

2. Staff are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of records and that all required information is supplied prior to submitting the output for verification.

4.7.2 Verification of research outputs by designated staff

1. Designated staff within disciplines shall have the authority to verify outputs from their area of responsibility as valid and accurate.

2. It is expected that the staff member verifying outputs will notify the RIO of any outputs that appear to be published by predatory publishers or other such publication dissemination repositories that do not adhere to the professional standards of the discipline.

3. Unitec's resources should not be used to engage with predatory publications or with other such publishers who diminish the professionalism of the discipline or do not comply with the policies and guidelines mentioned in this policy.

4.7.3 Output categories

1. The RIO will oversee the output collection process and determine the categories for research and academic outputs.

2. The Dean: Research and Enterprise may approve variations to these categories.

4.7.4 Staff research requirements for teaching Level 7-10 programmes

1. Unitec will comply with the staff research obligations set out in:

    a. the *Education Act* (1989); and

    b. the NZQA's *Programme Approval Guidelines*.

2. Verified research outputs will provide evidence of this requirement.

3. The REO will provide advice, support and assistance to help staff achieve compliance.

4.8 Misconduct in research

1. In the event research misconduct is alleged, contact must, in the first instance, be made with the Dean: Research and Enterprise.

2. The Dean: Research and Enterprise will ensure processes followed to respond to the allegation adhere to those outlined in staff *Disciplinary Policy* and associated procedures.

5 Associated Documents

5.1 Associated policies and procedures

*   *Academic Integrity Policy*;

*   *Academic Statute*;

*   *Academic Workload Policy*;

*   *Code of Conduct – Taatai Tangata*;

*   *Delegations Policy*;

*   Health and safety policies and procedures;

*   HR policies and procedures;

*   *Intellectual Property Policy*;

*   *One Planet Principles and Environmental Policy*;

*   *Research Centre Procedure*;

*   *Research Ethics Policy*; and

*   *Staff Disciplinary Policy* and associated procedures.

5.2 Associated guidelines

*   *Applying for and Managing External Research Funding Guidelines*;

*   *Documenting Research Outputs Guidelines*;

*   NZQA *Programme Approval Guidelines*;

*   *Research Ethics Guidelines*; and

*   *Scholarly Communication Guidelines*.

6 Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
R 🗨	• Supports research across Unitec in accordance with this policy and related policies and procedures. • Undertakes responsibilities detailed in Section 4.4 of this policy.
Researchers Research contractors and/or consultants	• Undertaking research while adhering to this policy and related policies and procedures.
Research Leaders	• Undertaking the responsibilities outlined in Section 4.3 of this policy. • Adhering to all related policies and procedures.
UREC	• Review and approval of human ethics applications.
Finance Department	• Undertake the responsibilities outlined in Section 4.5 of this policy.
Human Resources	• Undertake the responsibilities outlined in Section 4.6 of this policy.

7 Definitions

Unless otherwise specified the definitions in the *Policy Framework Glossary* (to be completed) apply. If a definition is not listed in that resource, ask the Policy Framework Manager to consider adding it.

8 Reference Documents

- *Education Act* (1989)
- *Te Noho Kotahitanga*.

9 Document Details

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