

# Early Career Researcher Fund 2021

## Guidelines

### About the fund

The Early Career Researcher (ECR) Fund provides annual, contestable funding to emerging and established early career researchers (ECRs) at Unitec in order to develop their capability, capacity and career progression as a Principal Investigator (PI) on a high quality applied research project that meets the evaluation criteria. The scheme is managed by Tūāpapa Rangahau and operates within a matrix of support for ECRs at Unitec. It is anticipated that the ECR Fund will:

- Respond to the [Unitec Research and Enterprise Strategy 2015-2020](#).
- Provide 'seed funding' for the development of high-quality applied research projects.
- Support existing and future interdisciplinary research activities that build collaborations with external partners in, and end-users of, research.
- Encourage research with the potential for impact.
- Support ECRs to produce quality outputs that will help them to build a track-record, aid their career progression and enable their participation in the PBRF.
- Provide professional development for Unitec ECRs through exposure to contestable research processes, i.e. the process of applying for, and managing, a grant.

### Eligibility

Principal investigators must meet the Unitec definition of an ECR:

An ECR at Unitec lies between 'emerging/beginner' and 'senior/advanced'. An ECR is within 10 years of becoming an 'independent' researcher, which is defined as:

1. A researcher who has completed a higher research qualification (often a PhD, but sometimes a Masters); or
2. A researcher who was the first author of a disseminated research output

Researchers at the very beginning of their research activities, such as master's or doctoral<sup>1</sup> candidates, and practitioners and/or teachers making a transition to research activity are not eligible for funding from this scheme.

### Timing of the 2021 round

Registrations of Interest (Rols) open	Friday, 31 July 2020
<b>Rols close</b>	<b>Friday, 4 September 2020</b>
Assessment of Rols	7 September – 16 September 2020
Applicants notified of RoI outcome	Friday, 18 September 2020

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<sup>1</sup> Tūāpapa Rangahau accepts that some independent researchers may also be PhD candidates. Such researchers are eligible for funding if they meet the above definition of an ECR in all other respects.

Mentors assigned (if requested)	Friday, 18 September 2020
Full applications open	Monday, 21 September 2020
<b>Full applications close</b>	<b>Friday, 6 November 2020</b>
Assessment of full applications	9 November – 25 November 2020
Applicants notified of full application outcome	Wednesday, 2 December 2020

## Evaluation criteria

- 1. Research quality.** The research will add to Unitec's profile and credibility as a tertiary institution and research provider. The project will achieve impact through quality assured outputs. The quality of the research will be assessed on the rationale given for the project, its objectives/goals, the research question(s)/hypothesis, the research design and the expected outputs (Section 2 of the application form).
- 2. Impact.** The research will contribute to the resilience, sustainability, wellbeing and/or productivity of stakeholders and end-users. The impact of the research will be assessed on how well the outcomes of the research will be communicated, disseminated and used by New Zealand communities, businesses and/or iwi/hapū. If the research will provide opportunity for innovation and/or commercialisation this should be described. Expected outputs will be assessed to ensure they do not include predatory or vanity publications (Section 3 of the application form).
- 3. Engagement.** It should be clear to the Grants Assessment Committee that the research has been developed in partnership and in response to a need identified by an industry, community, iwi/hapū or government agency (Section 4a - 4c of the application form) and evidence of this external collaborator/end-user engagement must be provided and will be expected to include a commitment of co-funding, preferably cash, but in-kind support is also acceptable. The co-funding must be specifically tagged towards the project for which ECR funding is being sought and must be confirmed before the PI uplifts the ECR grant.
- 4. Capability development.** The PI and their team's ability to deliver the proposed project will be assessed. The PI must meet the definition of an ECR and have provided evidence of their independence as a researcher. The project should contribute to the career development and track record of the PI. It should provide the research team with the opportunity to gain new skills, experience and knowledge (Section 5 of the application form).
- 5. Application quality.** It is intended that the process of applying for a grant will provide professional development for Unitec ECRs through exposure to contestable research processes. Applicants are strongly encouraged to ensure their final submissions are written and proof-read to a reasonable standard, and that recent and high-quality references are cited. Applicants who are invited to submit a full application are expected to complete the "Writing a Successful Grant Application" course on Moodle (it is recommended that this is done in conjunction with writing the full proposal) unless a sufficient rationale for not undertaking this is provided. The course will contribute to increasing the quality of the application.
- 6. Other.** The proposal should have a realistic budget and achievable milestones and it should have adequately addressed whether and how Māori will be involved and/or impacted by the project. It is expected that the applicant has discussed the proposed

time the project will require with their line manager and that this is approved before applying. If the applicant is successful, they will inform their line manager, Research Leader and Head of School.

### **Available funds**

There is no prescribed minimum or maximum grant or number of grants that will be allocated. In 2020 five grants were awarded. The smallest grant was \$3,840, the largest grant was \$22,000 and the average grant was \$10,988. Researchers, including PIs, may be named on more than one application, however they will need to demonstrate that they will be able to participate in more than one project within their research time allocation if each of the applications they are named on are successful.

### **What will be funded**

Research assistants; small student stipends; specialist testing, statistical analysis, sampling etc; translation; transcription; koha; travel (with a clear justification); mileage; research materials, including small items of equipment (the purchase of tablets and smart phones will need a robust rationale); equipment hireage (the purchase of CAPEX equipment that could otherwise be hired is very unlikely to be funded); buy-out of staff time (subject to a very clear rationale and explicit written support from the applicant's line manager); research on teaching practice that leads to quality assured (QA) research outputs.

### **What won't be funded**

Research into pedagogy and the practice of teaching that does not lead to QA research outputs; a project team member's higher degree research; course evaluations; very large projects (this is a seed fund); dissemination costs including conference fees and journal fees (there is a separate research dissemination fund); departmental overheads; contingencies.

### **Application process**

Applicants are required to signal their interest in applying for ECR funding by completing a Registration of Interest (ROI) form. The ROI enables Tūāpapa Rangahau to check the PI meets the definition of an ECR, to assign the PI a mentor (if requested) and to identify the types of assessment expertise that will be required during the later phase of the application process. Full applications will be invited from eligible PIs as per the timeframes listed above.

Full applications will be assessed by a Grants Assessment Committee (GAC), a subcommittee of the Unitec Research Committee. The GAC may include external reviewers where suitable in-house expertise is not available.

### **Mentor (optional)**

Applicants have the option of requesting or naming a mentor on their proposal, where no funding/FTE would be sought for that person. This person would play a role in advising the applicant on various aspects of application development, project management, career guidance and professional development; they would not have a scholarly input into the

proposed research. While CVs are not required for mentors, their expected contribution should be outlined in the Roles and Resources section of the full application form.

If a researcher is to act as a mentor and also plans to have an input into the proposed research, they should be listed as an Associate Investigator or Key Researcher instead. Any mentoring done by an Associate Investigator or Key Researcher should be detailed in the full proposal under the Roles and Resources section along with their other contributions.

### Definition of Principal and Associate Investigators

The **Principal Investigator (PI)** is the primary individual responsible for the preparation, conduct, and administration (e.g. expenditure and reporting) of a research grant, in compliance with applicable laws and regulations and Unitec's policy governing the [conduct of research](#). **Associate Investigators** are key personnel who have responsibilities similar to that of a PI on research projects. While the PI has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of a research project, the AI is also obligated to ensure the project is conducted in compliance with applicable laws and regulations and Unitec's policy governing the conduct of research. **Key Researchers** are team members involved in the research, whose expertise is critical to the success of the project. **Key Individuals** are team members who are not researchers but whose contribution is critical to the success of the project, e.g. implementation.

### Curriculum Vitae

CVs need to be supplied for all Principal Investigators, Associate Investigators and Key Researchers. CVs are not required for Key Individuals.

### Vision Mātauranga

[Vision Mātauranga](#) is a policy about innovation, opportunity and the creation of knowledge that highlights the potential contribution of Māori knowledge, resources and people. There are four themes:

- Indigenous Innovation, which involves contributing to economic growth through *distinctive research and development*;
- Taiao, which is concerned with achieving *environmental sustainability* through iwi and hapū relationships with land and sea;
- Hauora/Oranga, which centres around improving *health and social wellbeing*; and
- Mātauranga, which involves exploring *indigenous knowledge*.

Where research projects are of relevance to Māori or involve Māori, Tūāpapa Rangahau expects that applicants are in consultation with Māori at the planning stage, so as to achieve the best possible outcomes. Unitec's Research Ethics Committee has produced [Guidelines for Māori and Community Social and Cultural Responsiveness](#) to assist researchers who intend undertaking research that may involve Māori participants (through random selection), involve Māori, Māori centered research and kaupapa Māori research. If unsure about the relevance of the proposed study for Māori, researchers should consult Unitec's [Research Partners](#) or [Kaihautu Mātauranga Māori](#).

Examples of relevance could include proposals that involve biomedical research of significance to Māori health, social research, educational research, entrepreneurship, indigenous research, natural hazards, native flora and fauna, anthropology, the environment, sporting and cultural activities, literature, and language (even if the approach to these topics is seemingly irrelevant, such as algorithm development, biochemical pathways or mechanical properties).

For the RoI, applicants indicate whether or not Māori will be directly involved or impacted by the project. At the Full Application stage, if Vision Mātauranga is relevant, applicants should identify which of the four themes apply and how Māori have been involved in the design, and will be involved in the delivery of, the project. If Vision Mātauranga is not relevant, you should explain why not.

Aspects of Vision Mātauranga relating to relevant experience can be included in the “Roles and Resources” section of the Full Application.

### **Conditions of funding**

- Receipt of past internal funding, irrespective of source, will have been declared and appropriately accounted for.
- Successful PIs must engage with the Early Career Researcher Forum.
- All outputs resulting from the funding must be entered into Unitec’s Research Output Management System (ROMS).
- Successful PIs are expected to present their research at the Unitec Research Symposium, participate in articles for publication on [Unitec’s research blog](#), website and the Nest, and upload their research to Unitec’s Research Bank.
- Where applicable, applicants are urged to consider how to incorporate sustainability principles into their research in a comprehensive way while considering the real-world application of these principles, for example to product design and manufacture.
- The PI and all team members will work with their line manager to have the time allocation confirmed and project outputs included in their ADEP plan for 2021.
- The PI will work with the [Tūāpapa Rangahau Partner, Enterprise](#), to consider any commercialisation or IP aspects of the project.
- Tūāpapa Rangahau and the Unitec Research Committee will be monitoring the project’s progress and expenditure. The PI must notify their Research Partner if circumstances change in the ability of team members to undertake the stated amount of FTE work on this project.
- The PI will become a member of [ORCID](#).
- Applicants must have submitted an approved Individual Research Plan to Tūāpapa Rangahau.