



# minutes

## Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date:	2022-03-10
Scheduled Start:	1300h
Scheduled End:	1500h
Location:	Microsoft Teams

MEETING OPENED:	1300h
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### SECTION 1 – NGĀ KUPU ARATAKI | PRELIMINARIES

#### **Item 1.1 Karakia Tīmatanga | Opening Prayer**

#### **Item 1.2 Mihi Whakatau | Welcome from the Chair**

The Chair warmly welcomed members of the committee to the meeting, including new member Duaa Alshadli (representing the School of Building Construction), Falaniko Tominiko (proxy for Daisy Bentley-Gray) and Nora Md Amin (Subject Librarian).

### SECTION 2 – STANDING ITEMS

#### **Item 2.1 Ngā Whakapāha | Attendance, Apologies & Quorate Status**

##### **Members Present**

1. Marcus Williams (Chair)
2. Kristie Cameron
3. Helen Gremillion
4. Norasieh Md Amin
5. Duaa Alshadli
6. Cat Mitchell
7. Falaniko Tominiko (proxy for Daisy Bentley-Gray)
8. Lian Wu
9. Robyn Gandell
10. Hamid Sharifzadeh
11. Leon Tan

Total members represented: 11 members

##### **Apologies**

1. Daisy Bentley-Gray
2. Yusef Patel
3. Kristie Cameron (for early departure, 2pm)

Total apologies: 3 members

#### **Absent**

Arun Deo

#### **MOTION**

**That the committee accepts the apologies for today's meeting.**

**Moved: Lian Wu**

**Seconded: Hamid Sharifzadeh**

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### **Quorate Status**

A minimum of 9 representatives is required; the meeting was quorate.

#### **Hunga Mahi | Staff in Attendance**

1. Brenda Massey, Acting Secretary
2. Dan Blanchon (at 2pm for item 5.4)

#### **Item 2.2 Pitopito Kōrero o Ngā Hui | Minutes of Previous Meeting**

#### **MOTION**

**That the committee approves the minutes of the 2022-02-10 meeting as a true and accurate record.**

**Moved: Leon Tan**

**Seconded: Lian Wu**

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### **Item 2.3 Mahia Atu | Matters Arising**

The Chair informed the committee of the resignation of Susan Eady, who has left Unitec, from its membership. Unless/until a permanent replacement is appointed, other Subject Librarians from Learning and Achievement will endeavour to attend committee meetings. Today Norasieh Md Amin was in attendance.

**Action:** Marcus Williams to send Susan Eady a formal letter of gratitude thanking her for her services to the committee.

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
2.3	Send Roger Birchmore and Maryam Mirzaei formal letters of gratitude thanking them for their services to the committee.	Brenda Massey/ Marcus Williams	Complete
4.1	Ensure the committee's feedback on the PBRF Sector Reference Group (SRG) – Consultation Paper 2 is incorporated into Marcus Williams' response to the Rangahau Research Forum's intended submission.	Marcus Williams	Complete

5.1	The outcome of the classification of this year's agenda items should be communicated to Te Komiti Mātauranga at the end of the year. This should be noted in the committee's 2022 Work Plan.	Brenda Massey	Complete
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### SECTION 3 – MEA HEI WHAKAAE | ITEMS TO APPROVE

There were no items to approve this month.

### SECTION 4 - WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO | ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

#### **Section 4.1                      Review of the Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan**

The committee is required, according to its Work Plan, to review the Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan annually to ensure it is appropriately responding to the Unitec Research Strategy 2020 - 2024.

The review was undertaken as follows:

- Regarding **Priority 2, Action Summary 6**: 'develop research centres...'. Unitec has four research centres. There is a formal process for application for approval as a research centre. Details are available on the Nest or via the Chair.
- Regarding **Priority 2, Action Summary 5**: 'structure the Unitec symposium around groups'. This is considered when streams are formed but is dependent on the submissions received.
- Regarding **Priority 2, Action Summary 1**: 'Offer developmental research funding for emerging researchers'. The Chair advised that 1) during assessment of applications for many of Unitec's internally funded support products, e.g., ECR funding, weighting is given to proposals that include emerging researchers on the team 2) there has previously been a dedicated emerging researcher start up fund, however it was poorly subscribed to and was recently put on hold.
- Regarding **Priority 2, Action Summary 5**: 'develop research groups in every school offering degree programmes'. Is there scope to support research groups who aren't affiliated with a particular school. E.g., there is a group of researchers at Unitec in the Pacific space, many of whom aren't affiliated with schools. **Action**: Marcus Williams to discuss with the Research Partners how groups of researchers who belong to non-degree schools (e.g., Maia, the Pacific Centre, UPC, Bridgepoint, Learning and Achievement), but who are engaged in research, can be supported and how this can be actioned.
- Regarding **Priority 2**: '...Unitec will grow a productive, diverse, student integrated, engaged and sustainable research workforce...'. Can we broaden the idea of what putting students at the centre of research means? As well as supporting student engaged research, we should be supporting research that responds to students' needs, especially those of our priority learners.
- Regarding **Priority 1**: "...We will resource and grow the numbers and capability of Māori researchers, including Māori supervisors...". It was felt that this priority could be more strongly reflected in **Action Summary 3** and its concomitant Actions. 'Increase Māori postgraduate supervisors and student scholarships' isn't quite the same as growing the numbers and capability of Māori researchers, who may or may not also be supervisors. There is no real reference in the actions to increasing the number of Māori researchers. **Action**: Marcus Williams and Cat Mitchell to meet to discuss how the Action Summary

and/or Actions could better address the Priority and bring any suggestions back to the committee for discussion.

Additional actions arising from this discussion:

**Action:** Marcus Williams to ensure that there are representatives from Learning and Achievement, Student Success and sub-degree Schools on the Research Leaders email distribution list.

**Action:** Marcus Williams to check whether any staff member at Unitec who is producing research outputs can be given a ROMS account.

**Action:** Marcus Williams to update the guidelines for internally funded research support products if any changes are made to the eligibility for support mechanisms for researchers outside of schools offering degrees (e.g., if support will be offered to research groups operating outside of schools offering degree programmes).

Additional feedback on the Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan can be provided by the committee through the Chair, until **COB Thursday, 17 March**.

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## SECTION 5 - NGĀ TUKUNGA | ITEMS TO RECEIVE

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### **Section 5.1                      Update on progress of the internal PBRF QE Review**

The committee received the Chair's update on the progress of the internal PBRF QE (Quality Evaluation) review, the timing of which has been affected by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Portfolios have been allocated to Portfolio Assessors today. A moderation process will be undertaken in the coming weeks with feedback and ratings sent to participating staff mid-May.

The committee thanked the Chair and Tūāpapa Rangahau for the development of a robust review process and the provision of excellent support to staff throughout.

It was clarified that staff who haven't participated in the internal review process can request feedback on their draft portfolios at any time leading up to the QE. Staff that have not participated in the internal review process can still participate in the PBRF.

Some committee members found, and have received feedback from others, that if work isn't regularly saved in ROMS, and if some fields are left blank, the system may 'time out' and/or not save updates that have been made. **Action:** Marcus Williams to ensure the ROMS guidelines are updated to ensure the parameters around entering text and/or saving work are very clear.

It was queried how many portfolios have been submitted for internal review, and how many were submitted by ECRs. **Action:** Marcus Williams to report back to committee on this, if privacy considerations permit.

### **Section 5.4                      Presentation from A/P Dan Blanchon, Director Applied Molecular Solutions (AMS) Research Centre**

This item was presented at 2pm ahead of items 5.2 and 5.3.

The Chair warmly welcomed A/P Dan Blanchon, Director of AMS and Head of Environmental and Animal Sciences (EAS) to the meeting.

AMS was founded as a focus area in 2016 and approved by the committee as a research centre in 2020. AMS applies technologies and techniques to anything that has DNA including fungi, plants and animals. The AMS team is comprised of lecturers from EAS, researchers employed directly in the centre and staff from other Unitec research centres. Prof Pete Lockhart from Massey University, who is a Unitec Adjunct Professor, also works with the centre and provides mentorship.

AMS aims to harness the potential of existing and novel molecular approaches for better informed decisions with regards to biodiversity, biosecurity, disease risks and animal health and welfare. Its aims are as follows:

1. To develop and apply appropriate technologies and analytical approaches to provide solutions for real problems in biodiversity, biosecurity, agriculture, animal welfare and health generated by industry and/or the community.
2. To be a catalyst for the development of cross-campus interdisciplinary teams applying molecular solutions to multifaceted research problems.
3. To promote public awareness, increase knowledge and build capability in molecular biology and the issues around biotechnology. Provide a pathway to train the next generation of molecular scientists through collaborative projects that both advance the other research aims and enhance the learning of Unitec students.
4. To raise the profile and reputation of Unitec as an applied research institution.

Key externally funded projects include:

- Asbestos bioremediation, in collaboration with ESRC.
- Biological controls: using microbes to solve big environmental problems.
- The taxonomy of various New Zealand flora and fauna.
- Indoor air quality, in collaboration with ESRC.
- Conservation threat classification of NZ lichens.
- Comparison of the oral microbiome of patients receiving different types of mouthwash.

AMS collaborates nationally and internationally with other research centres, universities, CRIs, iwi/hapū, environmental consultancy firms, museums, and botanic gardens. They are also part of a UNESCO UNITWIN network with Massey University, University of the South Pacific (USP) and National University of Samoa (NUS), supporting molecular biology expertise to grow in the Pacific.

Future goals include:

- Greater collaboration within Unitec and across Te Pūkenga
- Deeper collaboration with mana whenua
- More involvement with UNITWIN network and NUS and USP
- Extending the asbestos project

The committee posed the following question to Dan following his presentation:

- What impact has Covid-19 had on the centre's projects, particularly those based in the Pacific? Massey University leads the Pacific-based projects and has managed to keep the momentum going during border closures and lockdowns. Work includes supporting Masters and PhD students to complete their degrees at USP. There are a couple of large externally funded research projects on the horizon. They will be about capacity building - using advanced molecular techniques that have been made portable/bringing portable technology to the Pacific.

The committee thanked Dan for his informative presentation.

The Chair reminded the committee that the aim of encouraging research groups at Unitec is to create critical mass that would lead to meeting the criteria to establish a research centre. Dan noted that AMS was well supported during its establishment and is now in a position where it can apply for more and bigger grants with the aim of moving towards financial independence.

## **Section 5.2                      Update on recently submitted applications for external funding**

The Chair updated the committee on two large applications recently submitted for MBIE Endeavour Fund Research Programme funding led by researchers from Ngā Wai a Te Tūi Māori and Indigenous Research Centre and ESRC.

## **Section 5.3                      Update on access to information on Unitec's internally funded research support products**

The Chair reported that the link to the Teams repository of information on Unitec's internally funded research support products is now live on the Nest.

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## **SECTION 6 - KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA | CLOSING**

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### **Section 6.1                      Ētahi Kaupapa Anō | Any Other Business**

Marcus Williams tabled PBRF Sector Reference Group (SRG) – Consultation Paper 3, which was released after the agenda for this meeting had been circulated. Feedback is due on 4 April (i.e., before the next committee meeting). The consultation document seeks feedback on what the Evidence Portfolios (EP) produced for the PBRF Quality Evaluation should look like.

Marcus is going to stage an event for all interested staff to participate in a consultation process on the paper. All committee members are encouraged to attend. The event will be publicised through the Research Leaders network, this committee and through HOSs.

Today's discussion focussed on reviewing, unpicking and discussing some of the options in the consultation paper. Discussion mainly focussed on options for the design of the ERE (Evidence of Research Excellence) component of the EP, due to time constraints.

Cabinet's decisions to replace NRO (Nominated Research Output) and ORO (Other Research Output) sections with new ERE (Examples of Research Excellence) and OERE (Other Examples of Research Excellence) sections, and to retain the maximum of four EREs per EP, must be implemented. The direction to include a narrative element in the ERE settings and to determine a minimum number of EREs per EP must also be given effect to. Individual issues for the design of EPs arising from Cabinet's decisions, and options the SRG has developed for implementing the required changes are presented in the consultation paper. A summary of the committee's feedback on the various options presented is as follows:

- The committee was unclear what was meant by 'list' in 43.2: "In addition, an ERE may include a list of up to four supplementary research outputs and/or activities" or what was meant by 'metadata' in 43.2.1: "metadata must be provided to enable audit".

- The committee liked the format of the portfolios ROMS produced for the internal PBRF review.
- No option is presented in the consultation paper for a researcher to choose their own EP design, e.g., choose not to have any OERs listed but incorporate them instead into their EREs or have EREs and then list OERs (i.e., perhaps not referencing OERs with the EREs).
- There appears to be an assumption that there is one core idea, or overarching theme, to people's research. For ECRs in particular, it may be that their research incorporates a number of different areas. There might not be one core theme that runs through their research, and it could therefore be difficult to craft a particular story. ECRs might benefit from being able to either append or include their research activities to an ERE, or to be able to list them as OERs. Then if there are little or different things that have been done that don't necessarily tie so strongly to the key research output, they will still feature prominently in the portfolio. Where OERs aren't tied to the main research output, will that mean portfolios won't be evaluated as highly?
- Other parts of the paper seem to infer that the SRG is not recommending a singular focus to be represented in one's portfolio. It will be important to examine the differences between Option 2 and 3. Do either of these options circumvent the potential for diversity? Or can you frame up a narrative in the way that suits your research trajectory?
- The PBRF has always had a requirement to list four NROs, but there seems to be a shift away from listing outputs to providing a broader story about the research.
- Neither option appears to preclude people from having a diversity of outputs and activities. As long as the research platform narrative is still going to be part of the portfolio then there should be an expectation that whatever is in the portfolio matches well with that foundational narrative. That narrative can then be as broad or as narrow as the research activities. The crafting of the foundational narrative will continue to be important. For example, if you have portfolio of activities that gives expression to a search for serendipity in research, that could be the platform and that platform would validate a portfolio of activities along those lines.

## **Section 6.2**      **Komiti Self-Assessment**

The Chair reflected on the above discussion of the SRG consultation paper. It was an engaging conversation, and while a definitive position from the committee was not achieved due to time constraints, the discussion points will provide a good basis for the wider Unitec consultation on the document which will take place early next week.

## **Section 6.3**      **Karakia Whakamutunga | Closing Karakia**

**MEETING CLOSED:**      1505 h

### **SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
2.3	Send Susan Eady a formal letter of gratitude thanking her for her services to the committee.	Brenda Massey/ Marcus Williams	
4.1	Discuss with the Research Partners how groups of researchers who belong to non-degree schools (e.g., Maia, the Pacific Centre, UPC, Bridgepoint, Learning and Achievement), but who are	Marcus Williams	

	engaged in research, can be supported and how this could be actioned.		
4.1	Meet to discuss how Action Summary 3 and/or the concomitant Actions could better address Priority 1 of the Research Strategy Action Plan (the section that talks to growing the number of Māori researchers) and bring any suggestions back to the committee for discussion.	Marcus Williams/ Cat Mitchell	
4.1	Ensure that there are representatives from Learning and Achievement, Student Success and sub-degree Schools on the Research Leaders email distribution list.	Marcus Williams	
4.1	Check whether any staff member at Unitec who is producing research outputs can be given a ROMS account.	Marcus Williams	
4.1	Update the guidelines for internally funded research support products if any changes are made to the eligibility for support mechanisms for researchers outside of Schools offering degrees (e.g., if support will be offered to research groups operating outside of schools offering degree programmes).	Marcus Williams	
4.1	Provide any additional feedback on the review of the Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan to the Chair before COB Thursday, 17 March.	All	
5.1	Ensure the ROMS guidelines are updated to ensure the parameters around entering text and/or saving work are very clear.	Marcus Williams	
5.1	If privacy considerations permit, report to the committee how many portfolios have been submitted for internal review, including how many were submitted by ECRs.	Marcus Williams	