



minutes

Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date:	2023-03-09
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.

SECTION 2 – STANDING ITEMS

Item 2.1 Ngā Whakapāha | Attendance, Apologies & Quorate Status

Members Present

1. Marcus Williams (Chair)
2. Kristie Cameron
3. Nora Md Amin
4. Daisy Bentley-Gray
5. Helen Gremillion
6. Hamid Sharifzadeh
7. Arun Deo
8. Duaa Alshadli
9. Lian Wu
10. Cat Mitchell

Total members represented:	10 members
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Apologies

1. Yusef Patel
2. Leon Tan

Total apologies:	2 members
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Absent

1. Robyn Gandell
2. Mitra Etemaddar

Total absent:

2 members

MOTION

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

Moved: Kristie Cameron

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

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

MOTION

That the committee approves the minutes of the 2023-03-09 meeting as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Helen Gremillion

Seconded: Lian Wu

MOTION CARRIED

Item 2.3 Mahia Atu | Matters Arising

Committee member Cat Mitchell is leaving Unitec, and this was her last meeting. The Chair thanked Cat for her contribution to the committee, acknowledging her in particular as someone who does not teach on a degree programme, and who therefore does not receive a time allocation, yet who has achieved highly in research, advocated for and supported other researchers at Unitec.

Agenda Item(s)	Action	Responsible	Outcome
3.1	Advise Linda Aumua of the approval of the appointment of Professor Christian Schröder as an Honorary Research Fellow within the School of Healthcare and Social Practice.	Marcus Williams	Complete
4.1	Ensure the review of the Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan is carried over onto the agenda of the next committee meeting.	Brenda Massey	Complete
5.1	Advise A/P Samantha Heath that if she wishes to communicate the details around any issues that she may be facing as Research Leader in Healthcare in relation to the RPTL, Arun Deo will incorporate these into the RTPL report that goes to TKM.	Marcus Williams / Brenda Massey	Complete

SECTION 3 – MEA HEI WHAKAAE | ITEMS TO APPROVE

Section 3.1 **Nomination for Appointment of an Honorary Research Fellow – Dr Cat Mitchell**

The nomination for the appointment of an Honorary Research Fellow within Ngā Wai a Te Tūi was approved.

MOTION

That the committee approves the appointment of Dr Cat Mitchell as an Honorary Research Fellow within Ngā Wai a Te Tūi.

Moved: Daisy Bentley-Gray

Seconded: Kristie Cameron

MOTION CARRIED

Action: Marcus Williams to advise the nominator, Dr Hinekura Smith, of this outcome.

Section 3.2 **Nomination for Appointment of an Honorary Research Fellow – A/P Dan Blanchon**

The nomination for the appointment of an Honorary Research Fellow within the School of Environmental and Animal Sciences was approved.

MOTION

That the committee approves the appointment of A/P Dan Blanchon as an Honorary Research Fellow within the School of Environmental and Animal Sciences.

Moved: Kristie Cameron

Seconded: Daisy Bentley-Gray

MOTION CARRIED

Action: Marcus Williams to advise the nominator, Prof Peter de Lange, of this outcome.

SECTION 4 - WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO | ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

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

Discussion of this item continued from last month's meeting and is summarised as follows:

- An Action under Priority Two is "Structure the Unitec symposium around Groups". This is not currently happening, and although it seemed like a good idea when the action plan was originally developed, in reality it is not realistic when the symposium now attracts ~150 multi-institutional expressions of interest to present. Presentations are grouped around broad 'themes', as best as they can be, in accordance with the abstracts provided. It was agreed that this action should be removed from the plan.
- Clarification was sought around an Action under Priority Two: "Provide specialist research software for postgraduate students and related PD". Tūāpapa Rangahau offers free access to research software to both students and staff, e.g., NVivo. PD offerings are available to staff

and postgraduate students, e.g., the R Workshops, which Research Leaders are asked to publicise to students via postgraduate programme leaders.

- Clarification was sought around an Action under Priority Three: “Keep schools aware of Research Sandpits...”. This is about encouraging collaboration and focus in research. Sandpits are agreed upon areas of interest and value that Unitec researchers might be able to contribute to in the future, and which could generate momentum that could lead to the establishment of new research groups and/or research centres.
- The library has had its budget cut in the last few years, and resources useful to both staff and postgraduate students have been lost, e.g., SAGE Research Methods. Despite this, there are good resources available, and it was suggested that for Priority Two, under the Action Summary “Support and resource postgraduate student research”, an Action be added that high quality resources are available through the library that support postgraduate students.
- One of Priority Two’s KPIs is around student integrated research. It was queried whether an Action could be added that schools be supported to improve and expand those programmes that have a research component, particularly programmes at Levels 9 and 10. If programmes are not supported, then they do not attract students, and student integrated research cannot be undertaken. The Chair responded that Arun Deo is working with Unitec’s Power BI team to collect data that measures progress towards that KPI. In addition, funding is available to assist staff and students to disseminate their research in a co-authored. It can be sourced through the Research Partners. At this time, Tūāpapa Rangahau lacks the resource to assist with the development of programmes.

Action: Marcus Williams to update the Action Plan by deleting the Action under Priority Two: “Structure the Unitec symposium around Groups” and adding an Action under Priority Two’s Action Summary titled “Support and resource postgraduate student research” along the lines of “high quality resources are available through the library that support postgraduate students”.

Section 4.2 **PBRF Sector Reference Group – Consultation Paper 10**

The committee considered the latest PBRF SRG Consultation Paper which sets out two different options for considering the effects of Covid-19 on particular groups of staff, above and beyond the generic effects that impacted almost everyone:

- **Option 1:** A standalone COVID-19 impact provision.
- **Option 2:** COVID-19 impacts are included within the Researcher Circumstances provision under the new Force Majeure type.

The committee supported Option 1, the rationale being as follows:

- The paper presented compelling examples about the differential impacts of Covid-19 on particular groups of people, e.g. immunocompromised people, people with a disability, people who had extensive childcare responsibilities, people who ended up with long Covid. It makes sense to make provisions for these groups of people, and Option 1 allows for specificity.
- With Option 2, Covid-19 is included amongst a number of other Force Majeure events, e.g., terrorist attacks, weather events etc, meaning that specificity is lost.

Action: Marcus will present the committee’s position on the consultation to the external PBRF SRG discussion forum that he and Arun Deo are part of, along with the following suggestions:

- Keep the process as simple as possible to avoid administrative burden and re-traumatise people.
- Ensure that Assessment Panels are clear that less than three EREs where Covid-19 impacts have been formally acknowledged by TEC, should not then negatively impact the assessment.

Section 4.3 2023 Research Symposium

In previous years, the Directors of Research and Enterprise at Unitec and MIT have been co-key/lead organisers of the annual Research Symposium. MIT's Director has been disestablished and the Unitec Research Office will be restructured in the coming months. Regrettably, under these circumstances, beginning the planning of a 2023 Research Symposium would not be prudent at this time. A summary of the committee's discussion is as follows:

- If EOIs to participate in the symposium were to be issued now, it would set up an expectation for staff that a 2023 Research Symposium will definitely be held. In addition, it would saddle the staff in the newly restructured research office with a workload that they may or may not be equipped to deliver on.
- Whatever decision is made needs to be communicated to staff as soon as possible. Many staff members rely on the symposium as a means to present their research and meet their RPTL obligations, and many incorporate their participation into their IRPs.
- The committee is sympathetic to the researchers who will not have the opportunity to present at a symposium at the end of the year, however not holding a symposium is the only decision that is tenable under the circumstances articulated above.
- The committee acknowledged Marcus' leadership of previous symposiums, and the effort that goes into organising events of this nature and calibre. Past symposiums have provided valuable opportunities for Unitec, and more latterly MIT, researchers.
- Since 2020 there has been a Pacific stream in the symposium, and this has created momentum in this space. Pacific researchers from Unitec and MIT have felt supported and encouraged. It is hoped that this support and encouragement continues, as people are starting to feel more comfortable in the research space.
- As well as the opportunities afforded for staff to present their research, the symposium also provided opportunities for staff to chair sessions, review abstracts, and judge research competitions.

MOTION

That the 2023 Research Symposium is suspended for the time being, and that this decision is communicated to research staff accordingly.

Moved: Marcus Williams

Seconded: Cat Mitchell

MOTION CARRIED

SECTION 5 - NGĀ TUKUNGA | ITEMS TO RECEIVE

Section 5.1 Future Research Management and Administration in Te Pūkenga

The committee received the Chair's update on the future of research and administration in Te Pūkenga as outlined in his covering memo.

Section 5.2 **2022 ECR Contestable Funding Final Reports**

The committee received the final reports from the four recipients of 2022 ECR Contestable funding.

The committee noted that these were excellent projects that produced quality outputs and supported internal and external research collaborations. Two of the project leads went on to submit major bids for MBIE funding. This indicates that the funding mechanism is a useful PD tool, with researchers gaining experience in managing teams, managing budgets and navigating Unitec processes and procedures. A high level of accountability for funds received has been demonstrated, and the committee can be confident that the process of allocating and expending grants is rigorous and robust.

Action: Brenda Massey to draft letters to the four report writers thanking and acknowledging them for their reports and mahi.

SECTION 6 - KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA | CLOSING

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

Tūāpapa Rangahau needs to request that Schools report against their Research Plans, as per the committee's 2023 Work Plan. Arun Deo will progress this once industry funded data and ERI data for last year has been received.

It is important that staff know that their school has a plan, that they are aware of which research groups are operating in their areas, and that they see what contribution they can make to research at Unitec.

Action: Arun Deo to procure school research plan reports in time for the July URC meeting.

Section 6.2 **Komiti Self-Assessment**

An opportunity was given for the committee to reflect on their self-assessment provocations. The committee is reminded that feedback on any aspect of the committee's operation can be emailed to the Chair or the Secretary at any time (in confidence if requested).

Section 6.3 **Karakia Whakamutunga | Closing Karakia**

MEETING CLOSED:	1415 h
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SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Agenda Item(s)	Action	Responsible	Outcome
3.1	Advise Dr Hinekura Smith of the approval of the appointment of Dr Cat Mitchell as an Honorary Research Fellow within Ngā Wai a Te Tūi.	Marcus Williams / Brenda Massey	
3.2	Advise Prof Peter de Lange of the approval of the appointment of A/P Dan Blanchon as an Honorary Research Fellow within the School of Environmental and Animal Sciences.	Marcus Williams / Brenda Massey	
4.1	Update the Research Strategy Action Plan by deleting the Action under Priority Two: “Structure the Unitec symposium around Groups” and adding an Action under Priority Two’s Action Summary titled “Support and resource postgraduate student research” along the lines of “high quality resources are available through the library that support postgraduate students”.	Marcus Williams	
4.2	Present the committee’s position on the consultation to the external PBRF SRG discussion forum.	Marcus Williams	
4.3	Communicate the committee’s decision to suspend the 2023 Research Symposium to research staff.	Marcus Williams	
5.2	Write to the four 2022 ECR Funding recipients thanking and acknowledging them for their final reports.	Brenda Massey	
6.1	Request that Schools report against their Research Plans, as per the committee’s 2023 Work Plan.	Arun Deo	