



minutes

Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date:	2024-08-08
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

Marcus Williams chaired today's meeting as Hadley Brown is on leave. The meeting had student representation today, with Christine Fusio, Student President, in attendance. Christine was warmly welcomed to the meeting.

SECTION 2 – STANDING ITEMS

Item 2.1 Ngā Whakapāha | Attendance, Apologies & Quorate Status

Members Present

1. Marcus Williams (Acting Chair)
2. Christine Fusio
3. Arun Deo
4. Nora Md Amin
5. Daisy Bentley-Gray
6. Xinxin Wang
7. Helen Gremillion
8. Kristie Cameron
9. Lian Wu
10. Hamid Sharifzadeh
11. Leon Tan
12. Khaled Ibrahim

Total members represented:	12 members
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Apologies

1. Kambiz Borna
2. Tanya White

Total apologies:

2 members

MOTION

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

Moved: Marcus Williams

Seconded: Kristie Cameron

MOTION CARRIED

Quorate Status

A minimum of seven 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 2024-07-11 meeting as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Arun Deo

Seconded: Nora Md Amin

MOTION CARRIED

Item 2.3 Mahia Atu | Matters Arising

Agenda Item(s)	Action	Responsible	Outcome
2.3a	Seek a memo from Marcus Williams updating the committee on whether there will be a 2024 Unitec Research Symposium.	Hadley Brown / Brenda Massey	Complete – on agenda
2.3b	Consult Hinekura Smith, Daisy Bentley-Gray and Marcus Williams on proposed revisions to the Actions under Priority One of the Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan and then report back to the committee.	Hadley Brown/ Tanya White	Complete – a memo will be presented to the committee next month
4.1	Propose a new exclusion criteria for the RPTL to Te Komiti Mātauranga (TKM): that staff returning from extended medical leave be excluded from the RPTL for a period of one year following the sickness; extended leave being defined as a period of medical leave lasting three months or more. Ensure the RPTL guidelines are explicit that programmes have the <u>option</u> to exclude staff returning from maternity or extended medical leave, as some staff may still produce	Arun Deo	Complete – these matters will be considered by TKM at its meeting next week.

	outputs during these types of leave, and it would therefore be beneficial to include them in the RPTL.		
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SECTION 3 – MEA HEI WHAKAAE | ITEMS TO APPROVE

Section 3.1 2023 Unitec Research Report

This item should have been scheduled in Section 5. The report is meant for the committee to receive not approve, as the report is commissioned by Te Komiti Mātauranga (TKM). It will be going to them for approval next week.

Arun Deo talked the committee through the Executive Summary section of the report, noting that this section is partitioned in line with the three priorities of the Unitec Research Strategy.

Priority One: Research that is aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Highlights include Ngā Wai a Te Tūi contributing 34% of the total external research income (ERI) at Unitec in 2023.

Priority Two: A flourishing, collaborative research culture. Highlights include that 441 research outputs were produced in 2023 (335 of these being quality assured), including 85 where the co-authors with staff were current or recent Unitec students. Eighty eight percent of degree programmes are green-lit, with an average of 2.09 quality assured outputs to FTE of degree teaching staff.

Priority Three: Partnered research and innovation. Highlights include that there were 39 industry-funded projects in 2023 and that ERI totalled \$1.46m. Four Research Centres contributed 82% of Unitec's ERI, while the Schools produced 18%. The inaugural Pacific Research Symposium was another highlight, as well as ePress publishing quality assured research outputs for 50 Unitec staff members and 106 staff members from other ITPs.

The committee reviewed Table 3 which depicts research output counts where the co-authors were current or recent Unitec students. The general trend since data began to be collected in 2020 shows that there has been an increase in the number of student integrated research outputs year on year, although there was a slight drop in 2023 from 2022. Reasons for this could have been changes to Unitec's postgraduate programmes in 2023 and/or that a Research Symposium was not held in 2023 (staff and students often present together).

While there were many highlights in 2023, Unitec continues to experience disruption due to the ongoing reform of the ITP sector, with three of our Research Centres now on hiatus for example. Nevertheless, we can be proud of the ongoing success in our space despite the challenges and some losses.

Action: Arun Deo to distribute the report once it has been approved by TKM as follows: Senior Leadership Team, Heads of School, Research Leaders, Academic Programme Managers. Recipients should be encouraged to distribute it as they see fit, with a note that it is a document produced predominantly for internal purposes.

Marcus Williams thanked Arun for leading the development of the report.

Section 4.1 University Advisory Group: Submissions Sought for Phase 2

The committee was presented with the questions for submission for Phase 2 for the University Advisory Group (UAG).

The consultation questions are targeted at universities, rather than tertiary education organisations in general, so engaging with them as an ITP is challenging. Martin Carroll tasked Marcus Williams with facilitating a consultation session with the Senior Leadership Team specifically seeking feedback on the questions within the context of ‘how could this review impact on our sector’?

For example, for question 8: “How can the university system best respond to the demand for trans-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary research and graduates”? it was pointed out that our sector already responds to the demand for trans-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary research and graduates very well because we are very community and industry partnered. We are responsive to the needs of industry, rather than being bound by hierarchical structures such as those that exist within universities. While the notion of academic disciplines exists in our sector, they’re much more guided and informed by industry and community.

For questions 15 and 16: “Are current arrangements for university governance and management appropriate for ensuring optimal performance, quality assurance, and strategic focus on institutional and national needs”? and “What is the role and scope for academic-led decision-making that is desirable in a university”? Unitec has some really good systems in place in terms of quality assurance.

In terms of question 17 “Are the policy-setting structures and arrangements for higher education optimal? Are there options for improvement”? we could advocate for ITPs to have input into this. At the moment, the questions posed are still very high level.

A summary of some of the best comments that came out of the consultation Marcus held was:

- New Zealand is a very small economy, and its higher education ecosystem is concomitantly small. So, while some competition is good, operating within a highly competitive model is not particularly helpful.
- There should be a joined-up governance approach where the sectors that do what they do best are supported to do that and other sectors that do what they do best are supported to do this. Rather than universities competing for the applied teaching and research space, and ITPs competing for blue sky teaching and research space, there could be better leadership and therefore better funding for specialised aspects of the higher education ecosystem.
- The opportunity to reassert those comments that came through in the Science System Advisory Group (SSAG) review around our levels of community and industry connectiveness was emphasised. We have a very wide regional footprint. We are located in our communities in places like Thames and Kaitia, and we know, and are the people that live in, communities in New Zealand, and this is a strength that the UAG review shouldn’t ignore.

Kristie Cameron is part of the Royal Society’s ECR Forum and is currently drafting a submission to the SSAG review with a focus on ECRs. During this process it has become apparent that universities don’t seem to be navigating what industry partnership relationships they have particularly well. Students often leave university with no idea how to connect with industries or communities. Kristie

is attempting to be as forthright and outspoken as possible about the fact that we've been left out of the consultation, yet we're the best people to be listened to because we've got proof of concept. We are good at this; it is the cornerstone of what we do.

Marcus confirmed that we are articulating our presence clearly and loudly at every opportunity. Jamie Smiler is coordinating feedback to the UAG on behalf of Te Pūkenga. Unitec and MIT may choose to submit feedback separately. All feedback will be divvied up in the most strategic way led by Martin Carroll.

Action: Brenda Massey to summarise the committee's feedback on the UAG's consultation and Marcus Williams to supply it to Martin Carroll and Jamie Smiler.

SECTION 5 - NGĀ TUKUNGA | ITEMS TO RECEIVE

Section 5.1 **2024 ITP Research Symposium**

A paper was presented in response to 2.3a of matters arising "will Unitec be holding a 2024 Research Symposium".

Technically the answer is 'no', however Unitec will be hosting a stream of a national symposium that is being held 2-6 December in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), Ōtautahi (Christchurch) and wānanga ipurangi (online). A Pacific research stream will run on the 2nd and 3rd. The Unitec stream will run face-to-face on the 2nd. There will be an online stream on the 4th. Otago Poly, SIT and Ara will run a stream on the 5th and 6th.

Unitec's offerings will include workshops, one of which is already in the planning stages: seeking and winning external research funding, and others are being encouraged. There will be meetings of the Communities of Practice that exist across the motu, e.g., CITRENZ which spans all disciplines of computing and information technology education. There will also be a Māori research forum.

The week of events is being convened by Jamie Smiler and registrations are flowing in already.

The face-to-face events at Unitec will be hosted by Tūāpapa Rangahau, and the Pacific Centre in the case of the Pacific stream with support from Tūāpapa Rangahau. It is hoped that we will get people from other organisations joining us, particularly from NorthTec and MIT.

Jamie Smiler will be releasing a definitive definition of the type of research output that will be generated from this event shortly. He is currently taking advice from the TEC.

SECTION 6 - KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA | CLOSING

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

Hon. Penny Simmonds visited our divisions in Tāmaki last Friday. It allowed the extended Leadership Teams to hear about the Minister's vision for the sector and ask questions. The sessions were part of Minister Simmonds' tour of regional providers and not part of the VET reforms consultation that was released the day before (the visits were originally planned for last month but needed to be rescheduled). However, the Minister did want to emphasise the key role both MIT and Unitec will play in helping their wider communities engage with the change proposals.

The Minister is proposing that the more financially successful business divisions of Te Pūkenga would revert to standing alone once the dissolution of Te Pūkenga is complete, while the less successful business divisions that are currently struggling with reduced student numbers, the current funding model etc would form a federation that would sit under the auspices of the Open Polytechnic. The federation would strive towards achieving a more financially sustainable model than is currently the case.

The proposal is currently open for consultation, with the outcome expected to be released in November.

In the meantime, in the research space, we have a National Research Director, Jamie Smiler, who now chairs the Rangahau Research Forum (RRF) which has existed for many years and of which Marcus Williams is an active member. Jamie is also leading initiatives such as the 2024 ITP Research Symposium, and the full integration of all the business divisions into the Research Output Management System (ROMS). Marcus and Arun Deo led six other ITPs to join the Unitec ROMS licence some years ago. Now approximately 11 or 12 ITPs are utilising ROMS and once Jamie's piece of work is complete, all the ITPs or federation members will be incorporated into ROMS. This means we will have a common way of measuring our productivity and verifying our research outputs. That's very powerful because then we can start to compare, for example, Social Practice's research performance across the motu, we can start understanding the data by programme, by School, by business division etc, and we can start leading change. This will provide us with much more information in terms of how we use the funding and other levers we have to achieve our goals, one of which is to ensure that most staff teaching on degree programmes are research engaged. While the consultation is happening, we will continue to work together within the RRF in a very collaborative manner, and whatever happens, we can still continue to collaborate and to leverage our collaborative potential together.

During the Minister's visit, assurance was sought that our students wouldn't be left at the mercy of the universities making decisions for us. The Minister's response was that degrees and postgraduate degrees, and research are very much part of VET.

It was queried whether there is the option for any kind of function to stay national or be nationally delivered. It doesn't seem like it from the consultation document. So many opportunities have opened up and new connections have been built over the past few years. If we return to the way we were competing with each other in the PBRF, enrolments, EFTs, the international market etc, then that collegiality might not stay the same.

The answer is we don't know, but it seems that the Executive is supportive of some functions remaining national so the opportunity may not be off the table. It was reiterated that, even if there are no national functions, like research for example, we can continue to operate collaboratively and remain hopeful that we can extract some evidence based logical outcomes from the situation. We are already small fish in a big pond and if we're competing with each other as small fish we limit our potential even further.

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: 1350 h

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Agenda Item(s)	Action	Responsible	Outcome
2.3	Present a memo to the committee next month on proposed revisions to the Actions under Priority One of the Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan.	Hadley Brown	
3.1	Distribute the 2023 Research Report once it has been approved by TKM as follows: Senior Leadership Team, Heads of School, Research Leaders, Academic Programme Managers. Recipients should be encouraged to distribute it as they see fit, with a note that it is a document produced predominantly for internal purposes.	Arun Deo	
4.1	Summarise the committee's feedback on the UAG's consultation and supply it to Martin Carroll and Jamie Smiler.	Brenda Massey / Marcus Williams	