



minutes

Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date:	2025-03-13
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 Nikolay Popov (proxy for Xinxin Wang) and new student representative Kathryn George who is currently undertaking a Masters in Creative Practice.

SECTION 2 – STANDING ITEMS

Item 2.1 Ngā Whakapāha | Attendance, Apologies & Quorate Status

Members Present

1. Hadley Brown (Chair)
2. Kristie Cameron
3. Norasieh Md Amin
4. Hinewaimarama Reihana-White
5. Hamid Sharifzadeh
6. Helen Gremillion
7. Leon Tan
8. Khaled Ibrahim (until 2pm)
9. Kambiz Borna
10. Nikolay Popov (proxy for Xinxin Wang)
11. Lian Wu
12. Daisy Bentley-Gray
13. Kathryn George
14. Arun Deo (from 1.15pm)

Total members represented: 14 members

Apologies

1. Xinxin Wang
2. Mel Wong

Total apologies: 1 member + 1 invited guest

MOTION

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

Moved: Helen Gremillion

Seconded: Lian Wu

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
2. Marcus Williams, Director Research & Enterprise (from 1.10pm)
3. Aiono Manu Fa'aea, MIT Research Committee (from 2.10pm)

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

MOTION

That the committee approves the minutes of the 2025-01-30 meeting as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Kristie Cameron

Seconded: Hinewai Reihana-White

MOTION CARRIED

Item 2.3 Mahia Atu | Matters Arising

Agenda Item(s)	Action	Responsible	Outcome
1.2	Update all URC documentation to reflect Hinewaimarama Reihana-White's new name.	Brenda Massey	Complete
2.3	Establish a working group to scope the mahi required to update the current Unitec Scholarly Communication Guidelines. Present the results of the scoping work to the committee mid-2025.	Nora Md Amin / Arun Deo / Hamid Sharifzadeh	In progress. Nora and Arun have started to look at the updates required but need to consult with Ngā Wai a Te Tūi (NWT) on Section 4.7 of the guidelines "Māori culture and identity". NWT has expressed a desire to make this section more relevant.
2.3	Invite Jamie Smiler, National Research Director,	Hadley Brown / Brenda Massey	Complete. Unfortunately, Jamie was unable to attend today's meeting but

	to attend the URC's next meeting.		will endeavour to attend the April meeting.
3.1	Advise the nominators of the approval of Dr Mary Yan and Dr Jacques de Satge as Unitec Honorary Research Fellows.	Brenda Massey	Complete
3.3	Present the finalised definition of a Presentation (non-conference) at the committee's next meeting 'for information'.	Arun Deo	Complete, refer to section 5.3
6.1	Call for nominations from the committee for a student rep.	Brenda Massey	Complete. Kathryn George has been recruited as the new student rep.

The Science System Advisory Group (SSAG) is seeking submissions for Phase 2. Submissions will consider questions relating to the funding tools and mechanism and broader aspects of the science, technology, and innovation system (e.g., workforce and infrastructure).

Action: Committee members will be invited to attend a workshop to discuss and respond to the submission questions, in order that we can pass our feedback on to Prof Martin Carroll and Jamie Smiler. If anyone is unable to attend the workshop, but wishes to share some feedback, please email this to Brenda Massey and Hadley Brown, before COB Wednesday 19 March.

SECTION 3 – MEA HEI WHAKAAE | ITEMS TO APPROVE

Section 3.1 Honorary Research Fellowship Nomination – Artem Tolstykh, School of Computing, Electrical and Applied Technology

The nomination for the appointment of Artem Tolstykh as an Honorary Research Fellow was approved.

MOTION

That the committee approves the appointment of Artem Tolstykh as an Honorary Research Fellow within the School of Computing, Electrical and Applied Technology.

Moved: Leon Tan

Seconded: Kristie Cameron

MOTION CARRIED

Action: Brenda Massey to advise the nominator, Dr Masoud Shakiba, of this outcome.

SECTION 4 - WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO | ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Section 4.1 Unitec Research Groups

Marcus Williams was present at the meeting to speak to this item.

There is a requirement to identify Research Groups in School Research Plans. Research Leaders (RLs) were asked to lead a review of their school's research plans in partnership with their Head of School (HoS) at the end of last year. The reviewed plans have been received by the Research Advisor, who has since updated the visual schematic of all Research Groups at Unitec.

This review was an effort to enliven Research Groups. Section 454 (3) (a) of the Education and Training Act 2020 requires that degrees must be "taught mainly by people engaged in research". Our Research Productivity Traffic Light provides data that enables Tūāpapa Rangahau to support schools in a targeted way, ensuring that our degree programmes are in good health in terms of research productivity. The Act also says that the type of research people engage in should be relevant to the nature of the degree they teach on. The Research Group schematic gives visibility to the type of research that's occurring at Unitec.

Research Groups are a means to encourage collaboration, bringing critical mass to our activities. People work together and help each other, and it makes it easier to achieve our goals. More experienced researchers can support emerging and early career researchers. Research groups provide efficiencies in an environment where we have limited resource to undertake research.

In response to RLs' ideas, research retreat provision has been doubled. There's now the opportunity for Research Groups to apply for a space to retreat for a number of days so they can talk about group strategy, co-author papers, and work on grant applications together. Externals can also be invited and funded, e.g., industry partners, staff from other ITPs etc. In addition, some funding is now available for hospitality for groups who prefer to meet at Unitec.

There have also been changes to Individual Research Plans. Staff are now asked which group they're in and who their group leader is. Tūāpapa Rangahau has asked that schools identify group leaders, and professional development will be offered for them. Tūāpapa Rangahau has also added a criterion to schools' research dissemination funding prioritisation lists. The criteria up to this point has largely been around contributing to a nationally significant research portfolio that could be rated and around helping a programme to maintain its green-lit status. The new criteria is 'how does this research output contribute to your research group'?

It was queried whether it is possible to have day retreats for those not in a position to retreat overnight. Marcus responded that in such instances an interested party could communicate and negotiate with the retreat coordinator. Staff are encouraged to contact Research Professional Development Liaison Helen Gremillion in this regard.

It was queried whether there is any guideline around the makeup of Research Group membership. If one of the goals is for groups to allow for mentorship of emerging and early career researchers, it would be good to have guidance around this. I.e., it could be a requirement that research groups need a research leader and should include a mix of experienced and emerging researchers.

Marcus responded that Tūāpapa Rangahau is implementing this initiative at a time of continued disruption and when many of our schools are under enormous pressure. The aim is to move forward with changes in a mana enhancing and gentle way. Unitec has lost a lot of its top researchers in the midst of this disruption. In addition, research career paths often involve the achievement of higher degrees, culminating in a PhD, which requires a high level of specialisation. That high level of specialisation sometimes means some lateral thinking is required as to how such specialisation can function in a group of people with other interests. We need to allow space for a transition to group-based research to happen organically. Some groups will form easily, and indeed there are many groups operating effectively already, but other staff will have had very successful research careers,

may have been highly ranked in the PBRF, but might not see how they fit into this new environment. So, for those two reasons Tūāpapa Rangahau is treading carefully, and will look to integrating this feedback into the change agenda over time.

It was also suggested that, because there are only a small number of Pacific researchers at Unitec, there could be scope to create a specific Pacific Research Group that could incorporate those research groups in schools that have a Pacific focus. Hinewai Reihana-White informed the committee that A/P Dion Enari started at Unitec this week. His involvement in a Pacific Research Group would be invaluable.

Marcus responded that with the requirement that those engaged in teaching in degree programmes be actively researching in areas relevant to the nature of the degree that they teach on, all initiatives being implemented by Tūāpapa Rangahau are focussed on that. However, that doesn't mean we can't do things that we're not required to do, such as start a Pacific Research Group. Such a group could add real value to School Research Groups and might engage a lot of people that aren't degree teachers but are interested in research.

Hadley Brown recently brought an action to Tūāpapa Rangahau from this committee around encouraging schools to support and identify Māori and Pacific research interests in their School Research Plans and in the Research Groups. Arun Deo leads the annual review of the School Research Plans. Going forward they'll be a requirement that RLs and HOSs consider that directive and give some priority for Māori and Pacific research.

It was queried how the new criterion will be implemented. As this committee's jurisdiction is governance, questions around implementation should be directed to the Research Partners. However, Marcus responded that essentially, it's up to RLs how they prioritise groups. Generally, RLs should be applying the criterion to their priority lists before presenting them to the Research Director to approve.

Marcus advised that web profiles are being developed for the Research Groups. Links with contact details will be provided so groups can promote themselves and their mahi to the industries and communities they work with.

Marcus also pointed out that the SSAG and UAG are both being led by Sir Peter Gluckman, and it is widely known what his position is on performance-based research funding to TEOs, which is that we should not be making individual submissions, we should be making group submissions. While it's unclear what's going to happen with the PBRF being on hold, the new system is likely to be influenced by Gluckman and it just might be that next time around we'll be submitting as groups. This means that the work we're putting into revivifying our research groups will be fruitful.

The committee were advised that if they have any other feedback, they should be in touch with the Research Partners.

Action: Brenda Massey to report the committee's feedback on Research Groups back to Tūāpapa Rangahau for consideration.

Section 4.2 **Māori and Pacific Research in Schools**

Some schools have not explicitly identified Pacific and Māori research in their School Research Plans or in their proposed Research Groups. Tūāpapa Rangahau will be working closely with schools to

ensure that Pacific and Māori research is more clearly emphasised in both School Research Plans and in Research Groups going forward.

It was noted that Unitec has had a Pacific Research Fono for many years, previously under the leadership of Dr Falaniko Tominiko, and now chaired by Daisy Bentley-Gray, and that it has been supported by various staff in Tūāpapa Rangahau.

Action: Marcus Williams asked Daisy Bentley-Gary to ensure she contacts Penny Thomson asking that the Fono be given a web presence alongside Unitec's other Research Groups and asking that the Fono is kept apprised of any opportunities available for Research Groups, such as the writing retreats.

Section 4.3 **Supporting Research at Unitec – Jamie Smiler**

Jamie Smiler was unable to attend the meeting, therefore this item will be deferred to a future meeting.

SECTION 5 - NGĀ TUKUNGA | ITEMS TO RECEIVE

Section 5.1 **Prohibition of the use of AI to Assist with Research Interview Transcription**

The committee noted that Unitec and MIT have prohibited the use of AI to assist with research interview transcription. The reason revolves primarily around the safe management of confidential data and information.

Martin Carroll's communication on the matter listed a number of other contexts in which the use of AI is also prohibited. With research interviews, we're not to use any AI software, except MS Teams, unless it has been explicitly approved by the Unitec Ethics Research Committee for a specific Principal Investigator (PI) on a specific project. This will give assurance that the piece of software that's being used can be controlled, the data is controlled, and that the PI knows how to control the data in that software

Martin has set up and is leading the Artificial Intelligence Committee, and staff have been sharing the software that is being used around Unitec. The committee will then have a better understanding of what people are using and can start to get a sense of what protections need to be in place going forward.

Section 5.2 **GenAI Features Added to Scholarly Databases**

Nora Md Amin presented a paper to provide information to the committee on GenAI features recently added to two scholarly databases (provided by Ebsco and Proquest). There is no risk in using these databases as the AI is contained within the database.

Section 5.3 **Minimum Criteria for a Presentation (non-conference)**

As a follow up from the last meeting, the committee received the approved definition of a Presentation (non-conference) Research Output for the purposes of verification in Unitec's Research Output Management System (ROMS).

Section 5.4 **2024 Unitec Early Career Research Forum Annual Report**

Kristie Cameron presented the highlights of the activities undertaken last year by the ECR Forum, including holding three coffee mornings and a well-attended annual 'Spiel' competition.

Hadley Brown noted that while the Mt Albert coffee catch ups are generally well attended, there is an ongoing issue with attracting ECRs to attend events held on the Waitakere campus.

One of the things that Helen Gremillion promotes at the beginner workshop that she runs on research is the fact that the ECR Forum is open to anyone who considers themselves a beginner researcher. Helen would be happy to follow up the concern around Waitakere staff not attending coffee mornings with staff in her area and suggested there could be some more active promotion of these events out in Waitakere.

Section 5.5 **2024 Unitec Early Career Researcher Fellowship Final Report – A/P Kristie Cameron**

Kristie Cameron received an ECR Fellowship last year and provided a comprehensive report for the committee on what the fellowship enabled her to achieve, including producing a number of publications, the submission of external grant applications, and mentoring new researchers.

Section 5.6 **Reminder of Responsibilities of Academic Governance Committees (AGCs)**

The committee received a reminder of the protocols and conventions by which Academic Governance Committees, including the Unitec Research Committee, operate and the scope and nature of their responsibilities as committee members.

Meetings are able to be attended by guests, such as representatives of the MIT Research Committee, who are invited at the discretion of the Chair, however only committee members can vote on motions and move and second motions.

SECTION 6 - KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA | CLOSING

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

Marcus Williams advised that a question came up at a recent school meeting about Individual Research Plans in which it says:

How will your research impact Māori research leadership, capability, excellence, partnership, processes and governance?

The question was, can this question be broadened to include Pacific or Indigenous research?

Daisy Bentley-Gray and Hinewai Reihana-White expressed support to include Pacific research, however asked for more time to consider the wording of the exact question that should be asked in Individual Research Planners.

Action: Hadley Brown to form a small working group to consider and respond to this item, reporting back to the committee at next month's meeting.

Section 6.2 Komiti Self-Assessment

Marcus Williams commented that it is heartening to see the committee being so ably chaired. Today nearly every committee member is in attendance, and people are contributing and learning. There is good, critical conversation happening. To be departing after 12 years in the role, seeing the committee like this, there couldn't be anything more gratifying.

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:	1430 h
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SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Agenda Item(s)	Action	Responsible	Outcome
2.3	Establish a working group to scope the mahi required to update the current Unitec Scholarly Communication Guidelines. Present the results of the scoping work to the committee mid-2025.	Nora Md Amin / Arun Deo / Hamid Sharifzadeh	
2.3	Invite committee members to attend a workshop to discuss and respond to the SSAG Phase 2 submission questions.	Brenda Massey / Hadley Brown	
3.1	Advise the nominator of the approval of Artem Tolstykh as an Honorary Research Fellow.	Brenda Massey	
4.1	Report the committee's feedback on Research Groups to Tūāpapa Rangahau for consideration.	Brenda Massey	
4.2	Contact Penny Thomson asking that the Pacific Research Fono be given a	Daisy Bentley-Gray	

	web presence alongside Unitec's other Research Groups and asking that the Fono is kept apprised of any opportunities available for Research Groups, such as the writing retreats.		
6.1	<p>Form a small working group to consider and respond to a question about Individual Research Plans in which it says:</p> <p><i>“How will your research impact Māori research leadership, capability, excellence, partnership, processes and governance? “</i></p> <p>The question is, can this question be broadened to include Pacific or Indigenous research?</p> <p>The working group should report back to the committee next month.</p>	Hadley Brown	