



# minutes

## Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date:	2025-07-10
Scheduled Start:	1300h
Scheduled End:	1500h
Location:	Microsoft Teams

<b>MEETING OPENED:</b>	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 representative from the School of Building Construction, A/P Linda Kestle, and Loloa Alatini as proxy for Aiono Manu Fa'aea from MIT.

### SECTION 2 – STANDING ITEMS

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

##### **Members Present**

1. Hadley Brown (Chair)
2. Linda Kestle
3. Arun Deo
4. Kristie Cameron
5. Nora Md Amin
6. Helen Gremillion
7. Xinxin Wang
8. Hinewai Reihana-White (from 1.20pm)
9. Kathryn George (from 1.20pm)

Total members represented: 9 members

##### **Apologies**

1. Hamid Sharifzadeh

2. Daisy Bentley-Gray
3. Leon Tan
4. Lian Wu
5. Khaled Ibrahim
6. Aiono Manu Fa'aea, MIT Research Committee

Total apologies:

5 members + 1 MIT representative

**MOTION**

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

**Moved: Kristie Cameron**

**Seconded: Helen Gremillion**

**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. Loloa Alatini, MIT (proxy for Aiono Manu Fa'aea)

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

**MOTION**

**That the committee approves the minutes of the 2025-06-12 meeting as a true and accurate record.**

**Moved: Helen Gremillion**

**Seconded: Kristie Cameron**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Item 2.3 Mahia Atū | Matters Arising**

Last month the committee queried how we can build more resilience into our research centres, when their continuance is so often dependent on one individual. Hadley Brown raised this matter at Te Komiti Mātauranga (TKM). **Action:** Martin Carroll has asked that the committee reviews the criteria for setting up a research centre to ensure that resilience is built into business cases.

Hadley also brought this issue up with the Research Partners. Gregor Steinhorn queried whether, as we continue working towards establishing research groups, there will continue to be a need to establish research centres.

Member Khaled Ibrahim, representative from the School of Applied Business, is leaving Unitec and has therefore resigned from the committee. **Action:** The Chair will work with the Head of School to recruit a new member.

Agenda Item(s)	Action	Responsible	Outcome
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2.1	Work with the HoS to recruit a new committee representative from the School of Building Construction.	Hadley Brown	Complete. The new representative is A/P Linda Kestle.
2.3	Liaise with Nora Md Amin and Arun Deo to check on progress towards updating the Unitec Scholarly Communication Guidelines and to ensure that Hinewai Reihana-White's extensive mahi around the revision of section 4.7 will be incorporated into the revised guidelines.	Hadley Brown	Complete.
2.3	Present the reviewed and updated Unitec Scholarly Communication Guidelines to the committee's July meeting for approval.	Nora Md Amin	In progress. Additional consultation with staff from NWaTT has now occurred and the final document will be presented to the committee's August meeting.
4.1	Invite Irene Lee, Finance Administration Manager, to a future meeting to give an update on the review of Finance's contracting procedures.	Hadley Brown	Complete, see update below.
6.2	Develop a framework within which committee members can provide feedback on any aspect of the committee's operation and processes confidentially and outside of the live meeting.	Hadley Brown / Brenda Massey	Complete, see update below.

**4.1:** Finance responded that the review of contracting procedures has been put on hold. Finance has had many other pressing matters to deal with this year, especially with two resignations in the team. They will let Hadley Brown know when they decide to pick this matter up again.

Hadley brought up Finance's contracting procedures and processes for managing sensitive expenditure at TKM. Vivienne Merito, Director Māori Success, concurred that from her team's perspective, there is an ongoing issue with the way we contract external researchers and external service providers.

For Tūāpapa Rangahau, with regards to sensitive expenditure there was a recent issue around catering for a specific function, where the team got pushed back on an invoice. This brought to the attention of Lisa Dick that the sensitive expenditure policy is not specific about how much can be spent per person on catering. As we continue to unlink from Te Pūkenga, Hadley has asked Lisa to include him on any review of the sensitive expenditure policy that may occur in order to ensure it is researcher-services friendly.

**6.2:** Martin Carroll has advised that the committee should not be self-assessing its performance within the live meeting, and that a process needs to be developed so that committee members can provide feedback confidentially.

Delphine Gesche, who is Martin's EA and also Secretary of TKM, has agreed to be the liaison to receive and facilitate a response to any feedback members of the committee may have on any aspect to the committee's operation. The committee is asked to refer to the self-assessment provocations that are included at the end of each agenda for examples of the types of issues that can be directed to Delphine going forward.

**Action:** Brenda Massey to update the committee's Self-Assessment document to include Delphine's contact information.

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### SECTION 3 – MEA HEI WHAKAAE | ITEMS TO APPROVE

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#### **Section 3.1 Honorary Research Fellowship Nomination – Dr Melissa Vera, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, Māori & Indigenous Research Centre**

The nomination for the appointment of Dr Melissa Vera as an Honorary Research Fellow was approved.

#### **MOTION**

**That the committee approves the appointment of Dr Melissa Vera as an Honorary Research Fellow within Ngā Wai a Te Tūi.**

**Moved: Kristie Cameron**

**Seconded: Arun Deo**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Action:** Brenda Massey to advise the nominator, A/P Bryon Rangiwai, of this outcome.

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

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There we no items to discuss this meeting.

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### SECTION 5 - NGĀ TUKUNGA | ITEMS TO RECEIVE

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#### **Section 5.1 2025 Research Productivity Traffic Light (RPTL) Report**

The committee received the 2025 Research Productivity Traffic Light (RPTL) Report from Arun Deo.

Arun drew the committee's attention to the exclusion criteria, which is that staff returning from maternity leave are excluded from RPTL for one year. The committee has previously approved that staff returning from extended sick leave may opt to exclude themselves from RPTL for the year following the sickness (extended sick leave being defined as medical leave lasting three months or more); this criterion is now in effect.

The proportion of green-lit programmes increased from 88% in 2024 to an impressive 94% in 2025, reflecting a sustained commitment to research activity in degree teaching and supervision.

In 2025 Unitec has 33 degree programmes: 17 bachelor's degrees, 10 master's degrees, five postgraduate certificates and diplomas and one doctoral degree, involving 195 academic staff, 161 of whom are research active, 14 who are partially research active and 20 who are not research active.

The 20 staff who are not research active are generally new to academia or are early career researchers; we cannot make them research active overnight, it will take them a year or two to come up to speed.

The two programmes that are amber-lit have given some facts around why they are amber-lit. The Bachelor of Applied Technology is affected by small teaching cohorts, so minor numerical changes significantly influence metrics. The Bachelor of Veterinary Nursing has a high proportion of staff that are new to academia, with limited research history and who have recently graduated. With targeted capability-building, mentorship, and ongoing support, this programme is expected to transition to green-lit status in the near future.

Current RPTL data shows a strong research compliance rate of 94%, reflecting a 6% gap from full compliance. To sustain this high performance and advance toward 100% compliance, Unitec is well positioned to continue its existing research strategies and implement further targeted actions.

Arun extended his thanks to Unitec's Research Leaders, Heads of Schools, academic staff and the research support team for their help in achieving the impressive RPTL results.

A summary of the committee's discussion is as follows:

- It is difficult to encourage staff to undertake research if they don't enjoy it.
- Anecdotally, some staff in amber-lit programmes are feeling pressured, as it is raised a lot that their programmes aren't green-lit. This pressure does effect morale and motivation. We need to approach and support these people in a way that doesn't make them feel like they're 'letting down the team'.
- Is there a way of providing a little funding to get individuals on the research track? There are examples of research inactive individuals who, with a bit of funding and dedicated mentorship, have started producing research outputs.
- Funding is essentially already allocated to all staff teaching on a degree programme in the form of a research time allocation.
- We have groups of researchers doing collaborative work, and there is opportunity to encourage and include staff that aren't quite as active, or don't know where to start, on projects. Some staff coming to Unitec from professional practice have benefitted from senior researchers developing projects that involve staff new to Unitec and research. This is a good model.
- Networking between schools, over coffee etc, is a good way to find out what others around the institution are working on and to identify synergies.
- The outcome of the RPTL shouldn't be viewed as a judgement, but as a developmental opportunity.
- At one point a funding opportunity did exist, the New Researcher Project Start-up Fund, for more senior researchers where, to obtain the funding, there was an explicit requirement to include on the team someone who needed to be lifted in the RPTL. It was quite a

successful initiative that could be worth revisiting. **Action:** discuss with the new Research Director the possibility of revisiting this scheme and allocating budget towards it next year.

- In terms of development needs it may not always be around competency but also around confidence.
- Two years' ago, the Bachelor of Applied Technology was green-lit. One of the reasons for this improvement was an initiative where staff were mentored to write up journal papers, and this resulted in the production of multiple, co-authored research outputs. This is another tactic that could be encouraged.
- The mentorship that is being provided to staff in some areas of Unitec benefits the staff who receive it in their own relationships and dealings with ākonga in particular.

## SECTION 6 - KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA | CLOSING

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

Arun Deo took the committee through a new School Research Plan Template he has developed as a 'one stop shop' for everything research related that is happening in schools.

A few of the changes to the template include:

- Inclusion of a new research productivity snapshot.
- Revised Te Tiriti o Waitangi Alignment sections, with specific provocations around leadership, research prioritisation and partnership development etc.
- A new section that responds to the committee's wish that schools consider how their activities align with Pacific research.
- The Research KPIs and Goals section now incorporates more graphs, with scope for commentary underneath.
- The SWOT analysis is now in table format for ease of editing.
- The Research Groups section responds to the new 2025 requirement that Unitec's research dissemination support is strategically prioritised for staff who are active members of a research group.
- The Research Goals section: a significant change is being introduced in this area. In previous template iterations, it became evident that some schools faced challenges in effectively aligning and populating research goals across individual research groups. A noticeable gap persisted between the institution-wide research goals and those articulated at the research group level. This section of the template has been revised to address these issues.
- Arun has developed 'A Framework for Adapting and Implementing Research Goals Across the School' section and invites feedback. The table outlines a set of research goals intended to be broadly applicable across all research groups within the school. It is recommended that Heads of School and Research Leaders engage in consultation with the wider school community to review, discuss, and refine these goals as appropriate to their specific context. Once consensus is reached at the school level, individual research groups should adapt the agreed-upon goals to align with their particular strengths, focus areas, and capacity. Arun is proposing two primary approaches to achieving the six research goals:
  1. **Unified Approach:** All research groups collectively work towards achieving all six research goals.
  2. **Pragmatic Approach:** A more flexible method where responsibilities for specific goals are distributed based on the expertise and capacity of individual research groups.
- The Appendix section has been simplified so that all that is required now is a list of staff names, their area of expertise and the name(s) of the research groups they belong to.

Completed School Research Plans will cover the 2025-2026 period and will be valid until July/August 2026. It is hoped that they will all be prepared in time to present to this committee in either September or October.

A summary of the committee’s discussion is as follows:

- It is a big job for Research Leaders (RLs) to complete School Research Plans alongside the other responsibilities their role entails. Whilst acknowledging that the plans are necessary, there was concern expressed that it could take a lot longer to pull the required information together. Arun responded that he will hold catch up meetings with RLs to go through the new template. Most of the information required already exists and he will pre-populate some of the template. In addition, the template has been designed to be flexible.
- It was queried whether schools can share the data from School Research Plans externally to Unitec, e.g. with programme monitors. Arun responded that we should not be sharing staff-level data anywhere. But for programme monitoring visits, Arun and the Chair agreed that it’s appropriate to share programme level data, especially because we are exceeding in almost every area.
- For the Rangahau Māori Productivity goal, it was queried whether NWAaTT has a role in helping some of the schools develop their goals. Hinewai Reihana-White responded that some of this work is already underway. The new Centre Director, Deb Heke, would be best placed to give more of an overall vision around those relationships. **Action:** invite Deb Heke to the next meeting to provide an overview of NWAaTT and its focus.
- Regarding the pragmatic versus unified approach to adapting and implementing research goals across schools, it was raised that perhaps the schools could incorporate a blend of both of these approaches or perhaps not even be limited to the two options. Arun responded that it’s for individual research groups to work out what approach works best for them.

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

As discussed in matters arising, any feedback about this meeting, or about how the committee is operating in general, should be directed to Delphine Gesche [dgesche@unitec.ac.nz](mailto:dgesche@unitec.ac.nz).

The Chair advised that general comments or queries are still welcome to be provided to either the Chair or the Secretary, either inside or outside of meetings.

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

<b>MEETING CLOSED:</b>	1410 h
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### SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Agenda Item(s)	Action	Responsible	Outcome
2.3	Martin Carroll has asked that the committee reviews the criteria for setting up a research centre to ensure that resilience is built into their business cases.	Hadley Brown	
2.3	Work with the Head of Applied Business to recruit	Hadley Brown	

	a new committee representative from the school.		
2.3	Present the reviewed and updated Unitec Scholarly Communication Guidelines to the committee's August meeting for approval.	Nora Md Amin	
2.3	Update the committee's self-assessment document to include the framework within which committee members can provide feedback on any aspect of the committee's operation and processes confidentially and outside of the live meeting.	Brenda Massey	
3.1	Advise the nominator of the approval of Dr Melissa Vera as a Unitec Honorary Research Fellow.	Brenda Massey	
5.1	Discuss with the new Research Director the possibility of establishing a scheme for projects led by senior researchers that include researchers who need support to achieve research outputs for the RPTL.	Hadley Brown	
6.1	Invite Deb Heke to the next meeting.	Hadley Brown / Brenda Massey	