



agenda

Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date:	2025-08-14
Scheduled Start:	1300h
Scheduled End:	1500h
Location:	Microsoft Teams

SECTION 1 NGĀ KUPU ARATAKI | PRELIMINARIES

1. Karakia Timatanga | Opening Prayer
2. Mihi Whakatau | Welcome from the Chair
3. Membership
4. Terms of Reference

SECTION 2 STANDING ITEMS

1. Ngā Whakapāha | Attendance, Apologies & Quorate Status
2. Pitopito Kōrero o Ngā Hui | Minutes of the Previous Meetings
3. Mahia Atu | Matters Arising

SECTION 3 MEĀ HEI WHAKAAE | ITEMS TO APPROVE

1. Updated Unitec Scholarly Communication Guidelines
2. Updated Pacific Research Guidelines for Social & Cultural Responsiveness

SECTION 4 WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO | ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Introducing A/P Deb Heke, Director, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, Māori & Indigenous Research Centre
2. Unitec Research Centre Procedure
3. What does the Unitec/MIT merger mean for research?

SECTION 5 NGĀ TUKUNGA | ITEMS TO RECEIVE

1. 2024 Unitec Research Report
2. New Director Research & Enterprise

SECTION 6 KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA | CLOSING

1. Ētahi Kaupapa Anō | Any Other Business
2. Komiti Self-Assessment
3. Karakia Whakamutunga | Closing Karakia

SECTION 1 **NGĀ KUPU ARATAKI | PRELIMINARIES**

Item 1.1 Karakia Tīmatanga | Opening Prayer

KARAKIA TĪMATANGA	OPENING PRAYER
<i>Manawa mai te mauri nuku</i>	<i>Embrace the power of the earth</i>
<i>Manawa mai te mauri rangi</i>	<i>Embrace the power of the sky</i>
<i>Ko te mauri kai au</i>	<i>The power I have</i>
<i>He mauri tipua</i>	<i>Is mystical</i>
<i>Ka pakaru mai te pō</i>	<i>And shatters all darkness</i>
<i>Tau mai te mauri</i>	<i>Cometh the light</i>
<i>Haumi ē, Hui ē, Tāiki ē!</i>	<i>Join it, gather it, it is done!</i>

Item 1.2 Mihi Whakatau | Welcome from the Chair

Item 1.3 Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec Membership

Hadley Brown (Chair)	Nominee of Director Research & Enterprise
Daisy Bentley-Gray (Emerging)	Nominee of Interim Manager Pacific Success
Hinewaimarama Reihana-White (Early Career)	Nominee of Taharangi Director Māori Success
Dr Helen Gremillion (Professor)	Healthcare and Social Practice
Xinxin Wang	Architecture
Dr Linda Kestle (Associate Professor)	Building Construction
Dr Lian Wu (Associate Professor)	Healthcare and Social Practice
Dr Hamid Sharifzadeh (Professor)	Computing, Electrical and Applied Technology
Dr Leon Tan (Associate Professor)	Creative Industries
Dr Kristie Cameron (Associate Professor/ Early Career)	Environmental & Animal Sciences
Vacant	Applied Business
Dr Norasieh Md Amin (Subject Librarian)	Library
Kathryn George	Student Representative
Arun Deo (Research Advisor)	Tūāpapa Rangahau

In attendance: Brenda Massey (Acting Secretary)

Tūāpapa Rangahau

Up to two members from the MIT Research Committee

MIT

Item 1.4 **Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec Terms of Reference**

The powers and functions of Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec (URC) shall be to:

- a. Foster the conduct of research, and support the achievement of Unitec’s strategic research, enterprise and innovation priorities.
- b. Propose and advise on strategic directions and priorities for research, enterprise, and innovation.
- c. Provide expert advice on institutional policy.
- d. Develop protocols and guidelines and make recommendations in relation to the conduct of research, enterprise, and innovation.
- e. Oversee the Grants Advisory Committee and the reporting of funded projects.
- f. Encourage and enhance the development of the research, enterprise, and innovation culture along with student and staff research capability, with emphasis on the development of Māori and Pacific research capability.
- g. Oversee the monitoring of research outputs and research reporting.
- h. Foster Māori and Pacific, transdisciplinary, collaborative and externally engaged research, enterprise, and innovation.

SECTION 2 **STANDING ITEMS**

Section 2.1 **Ngā Whakapāha | Attendance, Apologies & Quorate Status**

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee accepts the apologies of today’s meeting.

Section 2.2 **Pitopito Kōrero o Ngā Hui | Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

refer to [pg5](#)

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee approves the minutes of the meeting of 2025-07-10.

Section 2.3 **Mahia Atu | Matters Arising**

refer to [pg13](#)

SECTION 3 **MEI HEI WHAKAAE | ITEMS TO APPROVE**

Section 3.1 **Updated Unitec Scholarly Communication Guidelines**

refer to [pg14](#)

Section 3.2 **Pacific Research Guidelines for Social & Cultural Responsiveness**

refer to [pg28](#)

SECTION 4 WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO | ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Section 4.1 Introducing A/P Deb Heke, Director, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, Māori & Indigenous Research Centre

refer to [pg34](#)

Section 4.2 Unitec Research Centre Procedure

refer to [pg35](#)

Section 4.3 What does the Unitec/MIT merger mean for research?

refer to [pg50](#)

SECTION 5 NGĀ TUKUNGA | ITEMS TO RECEIVE

Section 5.1 2024 Annual Unitec Research Report

refer to [pg51](#)

Section 5.2 New Director Research & Enterprise

refer to [pg131](#)

SECTION 6 KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA | CLOSING

Section 6.1 Ētahi Kaupapa Anō | Any Other Business

Section 6.2 Komiti Self-Assessment

refer to [pg132](#)

Section 6.3 Karakia Whakamutunga | Closing Karakia

TE KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA	CLOSING PRAYER
<i>Ka wehe atu tātou</i>	<i>We are departing</i>
<i>I raro i te rangimārie</i>	<i>Peacefully</i>
<i>Te harikoa</i>	<i>Joyfully</i>
<i>Me te manawanui</i>	<i>And resolute</i>
<i>Haumi ē, Hui ē, Tāiki ē!</i>	<i>We are united, progressing forward!</i>



minutes

Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

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

MEETING OPENED: 1300h

SECTION 1 – NGĀ KUPU ARATAKI | PRELIMINARIES

Item 1.1 Karakia Timatanga | 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.

SECTION 3 – MEA HEI WHAKAAE | ITEMS TO APPROVE

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.

SECTION 4 - WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO | ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

There we no items to discuss this meeting.

SECTION 5 - NGĀ TUKUNGA | ITEMS TO RECEIVE

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

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.

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

MEETING CLOSED: 1410 h

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	

MATTERS ARISING

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	In progress - on agenda for discussion
2.3	Work with the Head of Applied Business to recruit a new committee representative from the school.	Hadley Brown	In progress
2.3	Present the reviewed and updated Unitec Scholarly Communication Guidelines to the committee's August meeting for approval.	Nora Md Amin	Complete - on agenda for approval
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	Complete
3.1	Advise the nominator of the approval of Dr Melissa Vera as a Unitec Honorary Research Fellow.	Brenda Massey	Complete
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	In progress. This conversation will be held once the new Research Director is on board.
6.1	Invite Deb Heke to the next meeting.	Hadley Brown / Brenda Massey	Complete

Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of Unitec Research Committee

Date of Meeting: 14 August 2025

Title	Updated Unitec Scholarly Communication Guidelines
Provided by:	Norasiehd Md Amin
Authored by:	Norasiehd Md Amin & Brenda Massey
For:	APPROVAL

Recommendation

That the Committee approves the updated Unitec Scholarly Communication Guidelines as attached.

Purpose

The committee established a working group to review and update the Unitec Scholarly Communication Guidelines. Revised guidelines were presented to the committee in May for approval; however, it was requested that updates to Section 4.7 “Māori Culture and Identity” be made in consultation with Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, and that the Guidelines then be reconsidered for approval by the committee at this meeting.

Background

The Scholarly Communication Guidelines, last updated in 2016, were overdue for review. The Guidelines are owned by the Library and Tūāpapa Rangahau.

The Library requested that the committee establish a working group to review and update the guidelines.

The scope of the working party:

- Maintain the original main ideas and structure, as well as contents that are relevant
- Add/omit/edit guidelines to reflect current practices where applicable
- Add/omit/edit relevant hyperlinks
- Edit relevant names of groups/committee
- Improve readability and include relevant citations where applicable
- Include recent Reference Documents

Out of scope:

- Make any changes to the Reference Documents

Next Steps

- If the updated guidelines are approved, the working group will facilitate their upload to Te Aka | The Nest.
- Tūāpapa Rangahau and the Library will advise Schools and relevant staff and students that the guidelines have been updated and will provide a link to where they can be found on Te Aka.

Contributors

- Norasieh Md Amin
- Arun Deo
- Hamid Sharifzadeh
- Hinewaimarama Reihana-White

Attachments

The updated Scholarly Communication Guidelines



Scholarly Communication Guidelines

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1. PURPOSE

These guidelines advise Unitec staff and students on the nature, policies and processes of Scholarly Communication and dissemination at Unitec, including recommendations on how and when to make research and teaching materials available on the web. They provide the framework for several Unitec's policies and guidelines, particularly the Conduct of Research, Conduct of Student Research, Documenting Research Outputs, Intellectual Property and Research Outputs policies. These policies should be consulted along with these guidelines and links to them are provided throughout.

2. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

These guidelines apply to all Unitec staff and students. They focus on formal, public examples of Scholarly Communication and not informal and private examples, such as blog or social media posts. Examples are wide range and include books, chapters in books, conference presentations, musical compositions, creative works (e.g. dance performances), exhibitions, films and videos. Unitec's Guidelines on Research Output Type Evidence provide a good list of 'output categories' considered to be Scholarly Communications. Journal articles are the most common Scholarly Communication output, whether in print or electronic format. Research shows that publishing in peer-reviewed journals is still important, particularly those that have a readership that authors/creators wish to reach, those that have higher prestige and those that their peers regular read (Niles et al., 2020). However, there is a growing call to "de-centre" the journal article as the sole scientific output that counts (Brembs et al., 2023).

3. DEFINITIONS

Article Processing Charge (APC)	a charge paid by an author to a publisher enabling research (usually a journal article) to be made available to all without access barriers (e.g. access only available subscribers). Also called "author pays".
Creative Commons	an international nonprofit organisation that "empowers individuals and communities around the world by equipping them with technical, legal, and policy solutions to enable sharing of knowledge and culture in the public interest (Creative Commons, 2024)
Open Access	Free availability of research literature on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself (Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2002)

Open Educational Resources (OER)	learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permits no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others (UNESCO, 2024)
Post-Print	the version of an academic article that has been accepted by a publisher after peer review but has not yet been formatted according to the publisher's style guide; essentially, it's the author's final accepted manuscript, ready to be published with final formatting changes applied by the publisher (<i>SHERPA RoMEO Colours, Pre-Print, Post-Print, Definitions and Terms</i> , n.d.)
Research Output(s)	research outputs included in and defined by Unitec's Guidelines for Documenting Research Outputs.
Scholarly Communication	the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use. The system includes both formal means of communication, such as publication in peer-reviewed journals, and informal channels, such as electronic mailing lists. It is created as a public good to facilitate inquiry and knowledge and many scholars develop and disseminate their research with no expectation of direct financial reward (ACRL, 2025)

4. GUIDELINES

4.1 Overview

The creation and dissemination of scholarly research is a major mechanism to produce knowledge that increases knowledge in academic fields and adds to our understanding of our world. It tests laws and theories and leads to creative projects that grow our understanding of humanity and its stories and how we interact (Beck et al., 2019). There are strong community calls that publicly funded research is made accessible for the public good.

These guidelines recognise that researchers are authors (or creators) as well as readers (or users) of knowledge; and that attitudes towards communication may vary depending on whether they are author or reader.

4.2 Māori Knowledge Systems and Scholarly Communication

Unitec recognises that Māori knowledge systems (taonga mātauranga) are living, relational, and grounded in whakapapa and tikanga. They carry intergenerational responsibilities, relationships, and protections, and must not be treated as material to be extracted or reproduced without context or accountability.

Engagement with taonga mātauranga (such as whakapapa, waiata, mōteatea, haka, whakairo, raranga) requires early and respectful consultation with iwi, hapū, whānau, or recognised kaitiaki, especially where research outputs may be made public or digitally accessible.

Ko Aotearoa Tēnei, the Waitangi Tribunal's report on the WAI 262 claim, affirms the status of taonga mātauranga and the rights of kaitiaki in decisions about the care, use, and dissemination of taonga and taonga-derived knowledge. This aligns with Unitec's responsibility under *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, expressed through the Te Noho Kotahitanga partnership, to recognise Māori authority, act as a critical guardian of taonga mātauranga, and engage in respectful and collaborative relationships.

All scholarly communication at Unitec should:

- 1) Recognise the authority of Māori over their own knowledge and creative expressions
- 2) Reflect *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* responsibilities in research and dissemination practices
- 3) Follow the *Guidelines for Researchers Regarding Māori Social and Cultural Responsiveness*

4.3 Scholarly Communication

The nature of scholarly communication is changing. Researchers have noted that scholarly communication is now a more global enterprise and interest in tools such as bibliometrics and citation analysis have grown significantly (Donthu et al., 2021). The commonality of English as the most common language of Scholarly Communication has led to unintentional equity and diversity biases (Bowker, 2024). In the past, formal communication usually meant publication in peer-reviewed journals or books, conference papers and proceedings, reports and creative works of art. Today, scholarly communication practices have been transformed by the internet, enabling unprecedented possibilities for dissemination that affect scholarly publishing by enabling new publishing models, such as open access. Sierra (2022) notes that a better understanding of how knowledge building itself has evolved and continued to adapt to contemporary challenges through the recognition of different forms of expanding and communicating knowledge. Through this process we can strengthen what research can be. Different forms of output do not replace traditional scholarly publications but supplement them.

4.4 Responsibilities

Unitec will seek to facilitate these guidelines by:

- 1) Contributing to government strategy and policy frameworks to improve access to scholarly information.
- 2) Incorporating scholarly dissemination and community access to scholarly work into Unitec strategic plans.
- 3) Advocating and implementing policies to ensure fair use of copyrighted information for educational and research purposes.
- 4) Staffing the repository to identify and abide by publishers' policies relating to copyright.

- 5) Promoting dissemination of scholarly findings to staff and postgraduate students through Research Office and Research Leaders in respective Schools.
- 6) Ensuring that mentoring and training of research students incorporates discussions about scholarly dissemination.
- 7) Recognising the increasing availability of parallel dissemination options when publishing scholarly work, to reach the widest audience.
- 8) Collaborating with other researchers, research institutions and publishers to raise awareness of scholarly communication principles and practice, including the benefits of open access publishing.
- 9) Working with researchers to enable appropriate open access to both their published works and their primary research data.
- 10) Applying a Creative Commons license to open access materials, when appropriate, to determine how materials may be used, reused or repurposed.
- 11) Retaining and filing their final post-peer reviewed and corrected version of articles sent for publication.
- 12) Considering the outcomes of the Treaty of Waitangi claim WAI 262 of 2011, affecting Māori culture and identify (Waitangi Tribunal, 2011).

Unitec Research Office staff will seek to facilitate these guidelines by:

- 13) Ensuring Unitec's research community is familiar with relevant policies.
- 14) Ensuring research students and academic staff are aware of current issues in scholarly publication and dissemination.
- 15) Developing infrastructure within Unitec, including ePress, that will facilitate access to scholarly information.
- 16) Providing a consistent form of institutional affiliation and address for author/s when submitting work for publication, so that Unitec's output will be able to be easily identified and retrieved.

Unitec Library staff will seek to facilitate these guidelines by:

- 17) Developing infrastructure within Unitec, entitled Research Bank, that will facilitate access to scholarly information.
- 18) Providing a sustainable repository for the deposit and dissemination of scholarly work.
- 19) Maintaining and retaining content submitted to the repository.

4.5 Authorship and Publication Practice

Unitec's Conduct of Research Policy, Conduct of Student Research Policy, Intellectual Property Policy, and Guidelines for Research Outputs discuss authorship and publication practice, including dissemination.

4.5.1.1 Advice about authorship and publication

While Unitec supports the freedom of academics to choose the best publication venue

for their research outputs, one aspect of professional development in scholarships is mentoring and advice in respect of publishing and disseminating scholarly research.

The Research Office and Research Leaders in respective Schools will lead in providing this mentoring and advice. Members of Unitec's ePress Advisory Committee, Research Advisors and Research Partners can advise on researchers publishing options.

Mentoring and advice includes:

- 1) Recommending the choice of publication outlet (journal, conference, website etc).
- 2) Assisting with the development, structure and writing of an article, paper or presentation.
- 3) Advising on approaches to dealing with the editors and assessors of scholarly work.
- 4) Providing support in the face of rejection and critical attacks in the discipline.

In addition, supervisors of undergraduate and postgraduate research students have a responsibility to inform them about the meanings and processes of Scholarly Communication and dissemination. These are outlined in Unitec's Conduct of Student Research Policy, particularly Guideline 12/10 'Guidelines for publication from a thesis or dissertation or research project.'

4.5.1.2 *Solicitations to publish / Paying to publish*

Staff may receive emails from journals or book publishing houses soliciting their publications. They need to assess the validity of these offers as the quality and legitimacy of these publications can be questionable. For example, predatory publishers - those who lack transparency, deceive or otherwise fail to follow industry standards - publish substandard and often disputable research to exploit the open-access, author-pays model. Other publishers scam researching staff by soliciting their work and invoicing them only after publication. The credibility of a journal soliciting publication should be assessed by reviewing previous publications, assessing membership of editorial committees and discussing the request with colleagues. When deciding on a publisher, consider thinkchecksubmit.org. This site is backed by many reputable bodies including the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). There are also reputable resources for identifying predatory publishers; such as Beall's List <https://bealllist.net/> and Cabells's Predatory Reports <https://www2.cabells.com/predatory>.

All research dissemination funding applications go through the Research Advisor and Research Partners. The dissemination platform is thoroughly investigated before funding is approved by the Research director.

There are some reputable journal or book publishing houses that require payment for publication. The most common requirement is an Article Processing Charge (APC), in which the publisher requires payment by the author to publish. This is an integral element of 'Gold Open Access' publishing. See section 4.8 on Open Access publishing for more information. Staff should discuss possible APC with their school's Research Leaders and Research Advisors before committing to paying the charges as reimbursement by Unitec is not guaranteed.

4.6 Ownership and Copyright

Copyright is a way to recognise your authorship or creatorship over a work/mahi. In New Zealand, copyright is created automatically with original work, like artwork, books, websites, computer programs, drawings, plays, films, music, and sound recordings. You may use the symbol © to help you demonstrate that you claim copyright in a particular work, but you do not need to. Copyright lasts for the lifetime of the creator plus 50 years (New Zealand Intellectual Property Office, 2025)

The ownership and copyright of Scholarly Communications, Research Outputs and research data is held by the author or creator unless it has been signed over to a third party (for example, a journal publisher).

Ownership of work created by a Unitec staff member, in the course of their employment with Unitec, is retained by the individual, except in situations where it is agreed that commercialisation of that material should be pursued as detailed out in Unitec's Intellectual Property Policy.

4.7 Assigning Copyright

While theses, conference papers, posters and working papers are normally acceptable in their final format, copyright is often an issue when it comes to making journal articles openly accessible via the web. In most cases, copyright over an article is transferred to the journal publisher. Despite this, journal publishers do allow authors to make their work open access, albeit with some restrictions on the format of the paper you use. Usually, publishers do not allow authors to post the final, published version of a paper on the Internet. However, large publishers can allow you to use your final draft version of the paper (also known as a [post-print](#)). This should be identical in content to the published version, although the formatting may be different. In almost all cases where the use of the final draft is permitted, the publisher requires a link to their authorised version.

When the published version of a journal article isn't clear about copyright policy, there is also a useful tool called Search Sherpa Services. This platform lists exactly what the policy is together with conditions (such as embargo times). Formerly called Sherpa-Romeo, Search Sherpa Services can be found at:

<https://beta.sherpa.ac.uk/search>

Unitec recommends authors retain copyright of their work where possible by not assigning copyright to a publisher. While many publishers' agreements request transfer of copyright, authors can attach an addendum which modifies the publisher's agreement and allows authors to keep key rights to their works, including placement into Unitec's Research Bank. When it comes to Research Bank, staff research outputs are not self-submitted, therefore copyright compliance on that platform is handled by the library. See also: paragraph 4.11 below.

4.8 Open Access

An overview of Open Access is available in a [Library Guide](#). Additionally, [Open Access Australasia](#) provides a toolkit designed to guide researchers through the process of making their journal articles Open Access.

These guidelines endorse the principle of Open Access and Unitec recommends researchers to make their work available in Open Access format. To this end Unitec has established the [Research Bank](#). Researchers do not submit their work directly to Research Bank; their entries in Unitec's Research Outputs Management System ([ROMS](#)) provide details which the Library uses to make their research output available to the public.

This does not mean that researchers must make their work available in an open access format. Unitec recognises that researchers are best placed to choose the publication and dissemination option of their choice and that there will be circumstances when it would be inappropriate to make research or other content openly accessible.

An item record in ROMS has a way for researchers to indicate when they do not want to make their work available on an open access platform. When considering open access publishing researchers also need to be aware of predatory publishers. See section 4.4.2 for more information.

Most discussion on Open Access recognises the two main mechanisms for achieving open access. The gold route, often referred to as the "author pays" route, involves payment of an article processing charge to publishers enabling the article to be made available to all without subscription or charge barriers. The alternative green route, often referred to as the "self-archiving" route, entails authors submitting manuscripts to traditional journals but maintaining the right to mount a version of their work on an open access repository. Unitec currently follows the 'green route' of open access publishing.

4.9 Open Educational Resources

Creative Commons Aotearoa New Zealand works with the Open Educational Resources (OER) movement. By having Creative Commons licenses, teachers can reuse, remix and share their own lesson plans, courses, textbooks and a growing range of digital and print resources (*Creative Commons NZ*, n.d.).

The [Open Education Resources Foundation](#), based at Otago Polytechnic, is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that provides leadership, international networking and support for educators and educational institutions to achieve their objectives through Open Education.

Unitec has been an OER Anchor partner since 2013 (*OER Foundation*, 2020) and will continue to support staff who want to make their teaching materials OER.

4.10 Creative Commons

The [Creative Commons](#) provide free licenses and tools that copyright owners can use to allow others to share, reuse and remix their material, legally. The licenses give everyone from individual creators to large companies and institutions a simple, standardised way to grant copyright permission to their creative work resulting in a vast and growing digital commons (Creative Commons, n.d.).

There are six types of licenses. See the Creative Commons [website](#) for more details. Unitec staff should be aware of the different types of Creative Commons licenses and apply them to their work then making that material freely available on the internet. The Unitec Library and Research Office staff will assist in this if required.

4.11 Documenting Research Outputs

Unitec takes responsibility for ensuring accuracy in reporting research activity and the resulting outputs undertaken at Unitec. To this end Unitec will provide a comprehensive list of research and academic output types to categorise and report on this activity. This will be managed through a centralised database (ROMS), in which staff are required to record all research-related outputs. This database will be regularly checked to ensure information provided to the public domain is complete and accurate. For more information see Guidelines on Research Outputs Management System (ROMS) and Research Output Type Evidence.

4.12 Storing and Preserving Research Outputs

Unitec's [Research Bank](#) is the digital repository in which research carried out at Unitec is stored and made available to the world. The purpose of the Research Bank is to make Unitec research as widely available as possible, by providing free access to it over the Internet, and making it easily found by Internet search engines.

The repository was developed using DSpace, an open-source software platform, as part of a Library Consortium of New Zealand project. The contents of the repository are listed on the National Library's [DigitalNZ platform](#).

The Research Bank is administered by Unitec library staff. The Research Office and Library staff work together to make information recorded in ROMS available in open access format within the Research Bank where possible. Copyright restrictions may limit the availability of material held in ROMS and Research Bank.

Digital preservation is a significant problem facing institutional repositories such as Research Bank and at Unitec we have yet to determine the intent and methodology of a digital preservation programme for research outputs. The uncertain timeframes around the deterioration of digital storage media and technological obsolescence are examples of issues common to all preservation agencies that deal with digital formats. How we define adequate access and preserve commonly supported text, image and audio file formats (such as .pdf, .xml, .jpg, .wav, .tiff or .avi) are questions a preservation programme will need to address. Conversations around digital preservation and the role Unitec's digital repository will take regarding this are on-going.

4.13 Academic Integrity

In the context of scholarly communication, Unitec's [Academic Integrity](#) Procedure (2023) mandates that all students and staff engage in their academic endeavors with integrity. This is defined as *intellectual honesty in the use of information and in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding*. The responsible use of information encompasses not only its acquisition but also its publication and dissemination.

Academic integrity, as outlined in the procedure, involves adherence to ethical and professional standards, and a commitment to core values such as honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. These principles underpin the academic community and guide all aspects of learning, teaching, research, and scholarly output.

4.14 Theses

A common part of postgraduate study is the completion of a research thesis or research project. At Unitec, it is a requirement of completion for students to provide a digital copy of their thesis to the Research Office. The library will then deposit the thesis into the Research Bank for public access, unless restricted by an embargo.

Theses completed by Unitec staff at other academic institutions and awarded by those institutions are considered their institutions' research outputs. Therefore, unless it is a joint award, this work goes into the research repository of those other institutions. At the Library's discretion, access to that work, when awarded by other another institution, can be provided by a catalogue link in the Library Catalogue.

5 References

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Sierra, M. (2022). Non-traditional research outputs: Explainer.
<https://research.unimelb.edu.au/strengths/updates/news/explainer-what-are-non-traditional-research-outputs,-and-why-do-they-matter>

Wai 262 Report: Protecting and Nurturing Taonga Māori. (2011). <https://www.wai262.nz/ko-aotearoa-tenei>

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

1. [Academic Integrity](#)
2. Conduct of Research Policy
3. [Copyright Procedures for Staff](#)
4. [Copying of Copyright Works for Educational Purposes](#)
5. Intellectual Property Guidelines
6. Guidelines for Researchers Regarding Māori Social and Cultural Responsiveness
7. Guidelines on Research Output Type - Evidence
8. Guidelines on Research Outputs Management System (ROMS)
9. [Conduct of Student Research Policy](#)

Note: Reference documents are retrievable from Te Aka
<https://thenest.unitec.ac.nz/TheNestWP/policies-and-forms/guidelines/>

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Version:	3	Issue Date this Version:	May 2025
This Version Approved by:	Unitec Research Committee	Date of Approval:	Aug 2025
Document Owner:	Library / Research Office and Postgraduate Centre	Document Sponsor:	Unitec Research Committee
Date of Next Review:	2027		
Date first version issued:	4 March 2014	Original Approval Body:	Unitec Research Committee

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Version	Issue Date	Reason for Revision	Approved by
2	March 2016	Small amendment Maori Culture & Identity section	Dean Research and Enterprise
3	July 2025	Remove outdated information; cite recent sources of information; and link to recent reference documents	Unitec Research Committee (URC)

Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of Unitec Research Committee

Date of Meeting: 14 August 2025

Title	Guidelines for Pacific Social & Cultural Responsiveness
Provided by:	Daisy Bentley-Gray
For:	APPROVAL

Recommendation

That the Committee approves revised Guidelines for Pacific Social & Cultural Responsiveness as attached.

Purpose

The Guidelines for Pacific Social & Cultural Responsiveness are due to be updated. A/P Dion Enari and Daisy Bentley-Gray have worked together to make the necessary changes and present the updated guidelines today for URC approval.

Next Steps

- If the updated guidelines are approved, the working group will facilitate their upload to Te Aka | The Nest.
- Tūāpapa Rangahau and the Library will advise schools and relevant staff and students that the guidelines have been updated and will provide a link to where they can be found on Te Aka.

Contributor

- A/P Dion Enari

Attachments

The updated Guidelines for Pacific Social & Cultural Responsiveness



Pacific Research: Guidelines for Social & Cultural Responsiveness

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide guidance on Pacific research, what it is, what the principles are and how to consult appropriately. Pacific research may include research where the subject matter is Pacific centred, has an impact on Pacific Island communities and or includes Pacific research methodologies and methods.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all Unitec staff and students.

Guidelines

1. Principles

- The principles outlined in the Guidelines for Māori and Community Social and Cultural Responsiveness document are applicable to all Unitec research. The following specific guidelines should be considered in relation to Pacific Island research. Pacific research should be conducted with the following Pacific principles and values in mind:
 - Respect
 - Reciprocity
 - Cultural sensitivity and awareness (Pacific protocols)
 - Sincerity
 - Humility
 - Love
 - Service
 - Spirituality (Traditional)
 - Christianity
 - Family/Community connection (collective as opposed to individual)
- Although many of the above can be regarded as universal values, they are particularly important in the Pacific and are often the values upon which most Pacific groups live by. However, it is important to acknowledge that despite these values being common throughout various Pacific groups, they may be practiced differently by each of these groups.

2. Methodology

- A Pacific methodology should be used when conducting Pacific research. It is important that the Pacific research methodology is selected with the advice of the research supervisor, Pacific Research Advisor, Pacific Research Fono or Pacific group consultant.

3. Relationship

- Relationships are an important part of any Pacific Island society and will therefore be important for the purposes of research. The relationship between the researcher and research participants needs to be established at the beginning of the research and continue through beyond the time of the research project. It is not a contractual relationship as it is a relationship without a defined end date. Good relationships will be conducive to better and greater information sharing and assure parties to the respectful handling of the information that is being shared.

4. Knowledge

- Many Pacific Island cultures will view knowledge as something to be shared rather than safeguarded as in the case of intellectual property. Researchers should be made aware of this and how to manage such information so as to balance sensitive information and knowledge sharing.
- The expectation that certain agreements should be enacted prior to the research project commencing and an understanding of the fact that:
 - Cultural knowledge is considered collective knowledge.
 - That the researcher is granted use or guardianship of cultural knowledge, not ownership.
 - Benefits/outcomes of research should be agreed upon and reported back on.
 - Knowledge generated should be shared in a manner accessible to the community.
 - Engagement will be culturally appropriate, and principles and values of the group will be observed.
 - Language may feature as part of this list.
- The group and individuals involved may choose if the knowledge generated will become public or remain confidential, and if they wish to remain anonymous.

5. Consultation

- **5.1.1 Unitec Consultation Process**
 - The purpose of consultation is to ensure that the research practices are appropriate and that research will be conducted to ensure safety for the participants, the researcher and Unitec. Appropriate consultation endeavours to establish a foundation for a collaborative relationship between researchers, participants and the community.
 - Given that the Pacific consists of many different groups, the most appropriate consultant would be preferably one from the actual Pacific group that is being researched. For example, if research is being conducted in the Cook Islands, the most appropriate consultant would be someone from the actual island on which the research is being conducted. The Cook Islands is made up of 15 different islands each with its own dialect and variation in customs and practices.
 - It is expected that at the beginning of the proposal process, when it is identified that Pacific people will be involved in the research, that appropriate consultation will be sought.
 - Initial consultation should be made with a Unitec Pacific Research Advisor.

- The consultation process will begin at proposal stage, and the consultant will agree with the researcher as to the next steps and if further consultation is required.
- Part of the consultation process will be to ensure the researcher understands the Pacific principles and values above, develops relationships appropriately, ensures cultural competency and meaningful engagement.
- **5.1.2 Unitec Pacific Research Advisors**
 - The Unitec Pacific Research Advisors are:
 - Daisy Bentley-Gray; dbentleygray@unitec.ac.nz
 - Associate Professor Dion Enari; denari@unitec.ac.nz
- **5.1.3 External Unitec consultation options**
 - Some Pacific education organisations that could be useful for consultation:
 - The Centre for Pacific Studies – University of Auckland.
 - The Office of Pacific Advancement – AUT University
 - The Pacific Research & Policy Centre – Massey University
 - The Māori & Pacific Development Office – University of Waikato
 - Va'aomanū Pasifika – Victoria University
 - Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies – University of Canterbury
 - School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies – University of Otago

6. Supervision

- Where research is identified as Pacific research, it is ideal for a supervisor to be experienced in Pacific research. In the event that the main supervisor has no experience in Pacific, it is recommended that the student has a secondary supervisor or advisor who is.

7. Confidentiality, Informed Consent and Cultural Knowledge

- Given the relatively small Pacific community in New Zealand and the closeness of the community, the need for anonymity may be required in order to protect confidentiality.
- Informed consent is generally required in written form. Given that oral traditions are very important in Pacific communities, it may be more appropriate to acquire verbal consent from individuals, family members, members of the community. This is acceptable as evidence for informed consent provided this is clearly detailed within the researcher's ethics application.
- The process of knowledge transfer during the interview process does not give the researcher ownership of cultural knowledge. The researcher is a guardian of this knowledge and consideration must be given to how the knowledge is processed and presented. Part of the consultation process is to ensure ethnic-specific, culturally sensitive practice.

8. For more information about engagement with Pacific research see:

- Enari, D., Matapo, J., Ualesi, Y., Cammock, R., Port, H., Boon, J., ... Faleolo, R. (Lute). (2024). Indigenising research: Moanaroa a philosophy for practice. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 56(11), 1044–1053. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2024.2323565>
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- [Enari D. \(2021\). Methodology marriage: Merging Western and Pacific research design. Pacific Dynamics, 5\(1\), 61–73](#)
- [Pacific Health Research Guidelines \(2014\). The Health Research Council of New Zealand.](#)
- [Human Research Ethics: A Handbook for USP Researchers \(2009\). The University of the South Pacific.](#)
- [Mahina, O., Williams, N., & Nabobo-Baba, U. \(2004\). Researching Pacific and indigenous peoples: Issues and perspectives \(pp. 159-67\). T. Baba \(Ed.\). Auckland: Centre for Pacific Studies, The University of Auckland.](#)
- [Pasifika Education Research Guidelines \(2001\). Report to the Ministry of Education. Auckland Uniservices Ltd.](#)

Definitions

Term	Means
Pacific	A collective term which includes groups of islands located in three regions of Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. Note that New Zealand is also part of the Pacific.
Pacific People	For the purposes of research, this applies to people with genealogical ties to any of the Island groups located within the Pacific boundary. It may also consider people who identify with the ethnicity and cultures of the island nations of the Pacific.
Pacific Research	Research to generate knowledge and understanding about, and for, Pacific peoples and their physical, social and spiritual environments. This includes the use of Pacific Island research methodologies and methods.

Reference Documents

- [AC 4.3 Research Ethics Policy](#)
- [Human Research Ethics Guidelines](#)
- [Pacific Research Protocol, University of Otago`](#)
- [Guidelines for Māori and Community Social and Cultural Responsiveness](#)
- [AC 4.0 Conduct of Research Policy](#)
- [AC 4.2 Conduct of Student Research Policy](#)

Approval Details

Version number	2	Issue Date	August 2025
Version History	Date of amendment/s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2025 	Amendment/s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated title, references and formatting. 	

Approval authority:	Unitec Research Committee	Date of Approval	14 August 2026
Guidelines Sponsor (Has authority to approve minor amendments)	Manager Pacific Success	Guidelines Owner:	Director Research & Enterprise
Contact Person	Manager Pacific Success	Date of Next Review	August 2028

DRAFT

Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date of Meeting: 14 August 2025

Title	Introducing A/P Deb Heke, Director, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, Māori & Indigenous Research Centre
Provided by:	Hadley Brown, Chair
Authored by:	Brenda Massey, Secretary
For:	DISCUSSION

Recommendation

That the committee warmly welcomes A/P Deb Heke, Director of Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, Māori & Indigenous Research Centre (NwaTT), to the meeting and hears from Deb about her vision for the centre.

Purpose

A/P Deb Heke started in her role at Unitec in April, taking over the Directorship of NwaTT from A/P Hinekura Smith. NwaTT is very interested in hearing about some of the research and ideas that the Unitec whānau are into and seeing how connections could be built.

Key Points

NwaTT has been focused on adapting to some of the changes and challenges in the broader research environment and continuing to build and nurture the community relationships that are vital to Kaupapa Māori research.

NwaTT is focused on developing its individual and collective research projects and building the profile of the research centre.

NwaTT is due to host a “meet the team” morning tea in Semester Two. Unitec staff will have a chance to meet the team and hear about some of its research. Those who are keen to engage in Kaupapa Māori / Pasifika research will have the chance to explore possible collaborations.

Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date of Meeting: 14 August 2025

Title	Unitec Research Centre Procedure
Provided by:	Hadley Brown, Chair
Authored by:	Brenda Massey, Secretary
For:	DISCUSSION

Recommendation

That the committee discusses how the Research Centre Procedure and Request to Establish a Research Centre form could be updated to ensure that resilience, particularly in terms of Directorship, is built into business cases.

Purpose

At its June meeting 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 subsequently raised this matter at Te Komiti Mātauranga (TKM) at which time Prof Martin Carroll, DCE Academic, asked that the URC reviews the criteria for setting up a research centre to ensure that resilience is built into business cases.

Background

The Research Centre Procedure was last reviewed in 2022. It sets out the requirements for the establishment, accreditation, and review of Research Centres at Unitec.

A Research Centre is a formally constituted grouping of researchers who work together to collectively achieve defined research aims.

Research Centres have formal institutional standing and recognition and are expected to operate in ways that serve to enhance Unitec’s research capability, activity, and reputation.

Research Centre Directors will be senior researchers within Unitec with proven experience in managing large-scale projects. An application for a proposed centre may propose a Research Centre Director(s). Research Centre Directors are responsible for:

- Leadership of research and the centre’s programme.
- Line management of centre staff.
- Input into the research-related performance of staff not managed by the centre.
- Overseeing supervision of students working with the centre.

- Continuing to contribute to teaching and research at Unitec unless an agreement with Unitec states otherwise.

Provocations

- The Environmental Solutions Research Centre and the Centre of Research in Education for Healthcare Professionals have both closed this year following the departure of their Founders and Directors, Prof Terri-Ann Berry and A/P Samantha Heath respectively. The Cybersecurity Research Centre was put in abeyance following the departure of its Director, Denis Lavrov, although a plan is now in place for its recovery. *How can we ensure the future of Research Centres is not contingent on the involvement of a specific individual?*
- Aotearoa New Zealand's science system is undergoing significant change, with many funding schemes having been paused (e.g. the Endeavour Fund), realigned (e.g. Marsden and Catalyst Funds) or disestablished (including Ako Aotearoa's AARIA Fund, the Teaching & Learning Research Initiative, Te Pūnaha Hihiko: Vision Mātauranga Capability Fund, Unlocking Curious Minds). *What effect could this disruption have on the financial viability of new Research Centres?*
- One of the Actions associated with Goal Two of Unitec's Research Strategy 2020-2024 is to "Develop Research Centres, facilitate concomitant business planning and annual evaluations". One of the Actions associated with Goal Three of the strategy is to "Develop reputation through the establishment of Research Centres with strong partnerships". *Are these actions still appropriate?*
- As Unitec's focus moves to establishing research groups in schools, *is there a need to continue to work towards establishing new research centres, or should we instead limit our focus to strengthening and resourcing new and established research groups?*

Attachments

- Research Centre Procedure
- Request to Establish a Research Centre
- Unitec's Research Strategy 2020-2024



Research Centre Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the requirements for the establishment, accreditation, and review of Research Centres at Unitec.

Scope

A Research Centre is a formally constituted grouping of researchers who work together to collectively achieve defined research aims.

As part of the development and enhancement of a vibrant and active research culture Unitec may establish Research Centres.

These arrangements will have formal institutional standing and recognition and will operate in ways that serve to enhance Unitec's research capability, activity, and reputation.

Procedure

1. Establishing Research Centres

- Criteria for establishment
 - Applications for the establishment of Research Centres will be evaluated against a set of criteria. These include:
 - Demonstrable consideration of the principles of Te Noho Kotahitanga.
 - Adherence to research relevant policies, procedures, and guidelines.
 - Clearly identified research aims that, if achieved, will result in research with impact.
 - Demonstrated linkage between the aims of the centre and:
 - Institutional research themes, clusters, or strategies; and/or
 - Programmes or areas of academic provision.
 - Identification of a critical mass of staff with credibility in the area and a demonstrated track record of research outputs.
 - Sustainability in both financial and human terms, using existing physical and human resources of Unitec:
 - The centre must seek external funding.
 - Provision of opportunities for involvement of students.
 - Distinctiveness of the proposed centre's aims in relation to other centres that may or may not exist at other institutions.
 - Identification of the location and management of any financial and human resource matters including specification of clear lines of responsibility/authority.

2. Benefits

- Potential benefits include:
 - Promotion of Research Centre activities by Unitec.
 - Invitation to contribute to Unitec research publications including Unitec's Research Blog and Unitec's ePress.
 - Potential for discretionary funding and scholarships.

3. Expectations

- All Research Centres will be expected to:
 - Perform at high standards of research excellence, including meeting agreed milestones and outputs.
 - Aim to become fully externally funded.
 - Seek to enact and further Unitec's Research and Enterprise Strategy, including:
 - Building more and deeper relationships with industry.
 - Improving and supporting researchers' performance.
 - Broadening teaching-related/-integrated research.

4. Centre Management

- Research Centre Directors will be senior researchers within Unitec with proven experience in managing large-scale projects.
- An application for a proposed centre may propose a Research Centre Director(s):
 - Unitec's Te Komiti Rangahau | Unitec Research Committee (URC), in considering the application, may recommend suitable candidates to the DCE Academic for the position(s) of Research Centre Director.
- Research Centre Directors are responsible for:
 - Leadership of research and the centre's programme.
 - Line management of centre staff.
 - Input into the research-related performance of staff not managed by the centre.
 - Overseeing supervision of students working with the centre.
 - Continuing to contribute to teaching and research at Unitec unless an agreement with Unitec states otherwise.

5. Centre Membership

- Members of the Research Centre will generally be Unitec-employed academic staff who are highly research engaged and have relevant research expertise.
- It is expected members will:
 - Actively engage with the work of the centre, including its programme of research, seminars and workshops, and strategic planning.
 - Continue to fulfil the duties for which they are contracted by Unitec unless the centre 'buys out' their time or comes to an agreement with Unitec for that staff member's time.

6. Advisory Board

- Each Research Centre shall have an Advisory Board, typically comprising:
 - The Director, Tūāpapa Rangahau, partnering research & enterprise.
 - A Research Partner (Performance or Enterprise).
 - A Head of School.
 - Unitec staff members not involved in the Centre.

- A mātauranga Māori champion.
- Representatives from relevant external groups (such as an industry partner, external research organisation, and/or community group).

7. Resources

- All staff must exercise responsible stewardship of Unitec's resources.
- The centre's funding and resources will be managed by the Research Centre Director, in consultation with Tūāpapa Rangahau.
- Specific funding and resources from Unitec for a Research Centre will be negotiated upon application.

8. Request Process

- In recommending the establishment of a Research Centre, the criteria set out in Section 1: Establishing Research Centres must be addressed in supporting documentation.
- A completed Request to Establish a Research Centre must be submitted with specified documentation.
- Proposals to establish a Research Centre at Unitec must follow the procedure outlined below:
 - The proposal must be approved by the Director Tūāpapa Rangahau and Head of School before being presented to the URC.
 - The proposal is presented to the URC for endorsement.
 - The URC considers the application and makes a recommendation to the DCE Academic.

9. Centre Review and Evaluation

- Upon approval for registration as a Research Centre, the centre will receive an agreement outlining expectations, resources, and other agreed-upon terms.
- A Research Centre shall be accredited for a period of up to three years and shall be subject to a re-accreditation process every three years whereby the Director Tūāpapa Rangahau will review the Research Centre and report to the URC, which will consider the reaccreditation and make a recommendation to the DCE Academic.
- Each centre will report annually to the URC. Reports will include:
 - Performance against forecast budget and outputs.
 - Evidence of external funding applications.
- Where a Research Centre has reached the end of its period of accreditation that centre may apply to renew accreditation.
 - The centre must apply to the Director Tūāpapa Rangahau, who will make a recommendation to the URC and then seek approval from the DCE Academic.
 - The re-accreditation recommendation must:
 - Consider the performance and relevance of the centre against the establishment criteria in force at the time of re-accreditation.
 - Include evidence of past and future research outputs.
 - Make specific reference to the centre's record and achievements.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Research Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake research activities that adhere to this Procedure and related policies and procedures.
Research Centre Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage Research Centres in accordance with this Procedure and related policies and procedures. Report annually to the URC on the centre's performance.
Tūāpapa Rangahau Research and Enterprise Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the activities of Research Centres. Support Research Centre Directors in their management of centres.
Unitec Research Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review applications to establish and reaccredit Research Centres and Research Centre reports. Make recommendations to the DCE Academic on the appointment of Research Centre Directors.
Director Tūāpapa Rangahau, partnering research and enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make recommendations to the URC on applications to establish Research Centres. Make recommendations to the URC on the appointment of Centre Directors. Make recommendations to the URC on the reaccreditation of Research Centres. Participate as a member of centres' Advisory Boards.
DCE Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the establishment and reaccreditation of Research Centres. Approve the appointment of Research Centre Directors.

Definitions

Unless otherwise specified the definitions in the Policy Framework Glossary apply.

Reference Documents

- [Academic Statute](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Conduct of Research Policy](#)
- [Guidelines for Applying for and Managing External Research Funding](#)
- [Te Noho Kotahitanga](#)
- [Unitec Research and Enterprise Strategy 2020-2024](#)

Approval Details

Version number	2.3	Issue Date	20 July 2022
Version History	Date of amendment/s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 July 2022 	Amendment/s:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to nomenclature Clarification of approval, reporting and accreditation processes and delegations
Approval authority:	Te Komiti Mātauranga Academic Committee	Date of Approval	January 2011
Procedure Sponsor (Has authority to approve minor amendments)	Prof Martin Carroll	Procedure Owner:	DCE Academic
Contact Person	A/P Marcus Williams, Director Tūāpapa Rangahau	Date of Next Review	July 2024

Request to Establish a Research Centre

Proposed name of Research Centre:	
Proposed Director/s:	
Relevant Research Committee Chair supporting the proposal:	
Executive Dean supporting the proposal:	
Name of Unitec staff member/s associated with this project:	

1. Background

2. Research aims

3. Partnerships and Connections

- 3.1. Strategic Research Foci
- 3.2. Unitec Research Strategy 2015-2020 - particularly related to the table of Key Actions and Deliverables on pp.7-9
- 3.3. External

4. Staff members involved

4.1. Proposed Research Centre Directors:

Please provide key experience of the proposed Research Centre Director(s), we are looking for past experience that demonstrates ability to manage large projects and funding. Please provide evidence that the proposed Research Centre Director(s) understand employment obligations, risk management processes, mentoring and supervision practices and outline areas they may require support in.

Please provide a CV for each in the NZ Standard Template format (*available in the Forms section on the Nest*) – of no more than five pages.

4.2. Potential key members of staff involved:

Please list below potential key staff members and their organisation or Practice Pathway. Provide a CV for each staff member in the NZ Standard Template format – of no more than five pages.

Contributing Staff Potentially involved

Name	Organisation / Practice Pathway

5. Funding

Research Centres must demonstrate sustainability in both human and financial terms. They must also seek external funding.

Provide a budget, forecasting to at least year three, in the template provided (*available in the Forms section on the Nest*).

6. Teaching and Students

Provide linkage between the aims of the Centre and programmes or areas of teaching provision. Outline intended opportunities for the involvement of students at postgraduate or undergraduate level.

7. Distinctiveness

Please outline how the proposed Centre is distinct from existing Centres (nationally and internationally).

8. Management and Operation

8.1. Proposed Location

8.2. Proposed Advisory Board

8.3. Proposed Personnel

8.4. Proposed Operational Financing

8.5. External Research Income

9. Outcomes

Please outline any expected outcomes and how you will assess these.

Please outline previous outputs of the group along with intended outputs and forecast outputs of the Centre in the template provided (*available in the Forms section on the Nest*).

9.1. Previous

9.2. Intended

9.3. Forecast

10. Work Programme and Milestones

Please outline, in brief, the work programme for the proposed Centre.

Please outline, using the Project Milestones Template (*available in the Forms section on the Nest*), projects proposed and their estimated completion date, to be undertaken by the Research Centre.

Please note reporting requirements are outlined in the relevant guidelines.

UNITEC

Research Strategy 2020-2024

NB – in keeping with Unitec process on strategies, a separate action plan will outline how we implement the actions, how we show the progress of that implementation and what indicators we use to measure success. This will follow approval of this draft research strategy.

Vision

To undertake research of excellence that aligns to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and has transformative outcomes for the communities we serve.

Mission

We undertake impactful research in order to provide significant economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits to Māori, New Zealand communities, industries and the environment. We do this by igniting the power of our founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, partnering with tangata whenua, our communities and industry. This partnering is at the heart of our value proposition and is fundamental to research from the beginning of the research process, through to the dissemination of the outcomes. Unitec's strengths lie in its kaupapa Māori capability, its applied and practical focus, its mixture of programmes involving research and enterprise at postgraduate and undergraduate levels, and its strong relationships with community and industry. We will develop these strengths through focused, sustainable research and enterprise activity that is Treaty aligned, integrated with teaching and learning and undertaken within networks of stakeholders and partners, enabling effective knowledge transfer. In these networks we aim to contribute to better knowledge bases for decision making, improved wellbeing, socioeconomic resilience, cultural diversity, flourishing communities and improved productivity, policy, technologies, products or processes.

Background

During the 2015 – 2019 Research Strategy period, three Strategic Research Foci were developed: the Cybersecurity Focus, the Applied Molecular Solutions Focus and the Kaupapa Māori Focus. Through mechanisms such as the Research Voucher Scheme, the strategy successfully drove institutional change toward higher levels of industry-partnered research resulting in many funded projects. Coupled with an emphasis on building staff capability and research leadership, Unitec has experienced growth in its research, with externally funded research increasing by 450%, increased external partnering with 184% more industry-funded projects, improvement in excellence with a 97% success rate through the PBRF Quality Evaluation and increased NZQA compliance with 91% of degree programmes research compliant. The Kaupapa Māori Focus led to the appointment of two highly respected Māori professors, and the establishment of Ngā Wai a te Tūi Māori and Indigenous Research Centre, which is now leading numerous externally funded projects, including an Endeavour Fund Research Programme and a National Science Challenge project.

This next strategic period will see Unitec continue investing in our Strategic Research Foci with an emphasis on rangatiratanga, embedding a flourishing, diverse and sustainable research culture and weaving strong, enduring industry/community partnerships.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Te Noho Kotahitanga

Unitec will uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the founding document of our nation and its principles, through our research. Our commitment to Te Noho Kotahitanga, which express Unitec's Treaty partnership and its principles, underpins the values and kaupapa of our organisation, including our approach to research.

Rangatiratanga

Authority and Responsibility

Whakaritenga

Legitimacy

Kaitiakitanga






Guardianship

Mahi Kotahitanga

Co-operation

Ngākau Māhaki

Respect

 <p>RANGATRATANGA AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY</p>	 <p>WHAKARITENGA LEGITIMACY</p>	 <p>KAITIAKITANGA GUARDIANSHIP</p>	 <p>MAHI KOTAHITANGA CO-OPERATION</p>	 <p>NGĀKAU MĀHAKI RESPECT</p>
<p><i>E whakarite ana te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka ki te pūtake ake o te rangatiratanga o te Māori me ngā mātauranga Māori.</i></p> <p>Unitec accepts the principle that Māori have authority over and responsibility for all teaching and learning relating to the Māori dimensions of knowledge.</p>	<p><i>E whakarite ana te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka ki te mana o tena, o tena, ki te noho kotahi, ki te puaki i tona ake reo, ki te whakamahi i ngā rawa mo ngā iwi katoa.</i></p> <p>Unitec believes that each partner has a legitimate right to be here, to speak freely in either language, and to put its resources to use for the benefit of all.</p>	<p><i>E whakarite ana te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka ki te kaitiakitanga o ngā taonga mātauranga.</i></p> <p>Unitec accepts responsibility as a critical guardian of knowledge.</p>	<p><i>E whakarite ana te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka kia tau he ngākau māhaki i roto i ngā mahi katoa.</i></p> <p>Unitec affirms that a spirit of generosity and co-operation will guide all its actions.</p>	<p><i>E whakarite ana te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka ki te whakanui i ngā taonga tuku iho o ngā ao e rua, a hiko ki mua. Ko te Māori me te Pākehā e mahi tahi ana mo Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka.</i></p> <p>Unitec values each partner's heritage and customs, current needs and future aspirations. Māori and Pākehā working together within Unitec.</p>

Vision Mātauranga

Unitec acknowledges and actively supports staff in engaging with the Vision Mātauranga policy as outlined by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. The policy aims to unlock the innovation potential of Māori knowledge, resources and people to assist New Zealanders to create a better future.

Code of Practice and Research Ethics

Research at Unitec will function within Ngā Tikanga Whakahaere (Unitec's Code of Conduct) and the research-specific Code of Professional Standards and Ethics developed by the Royal Society Te Apārangi. All human research is conducted with guidance from the Unitec Research Ethics Committee, an accredited research ethics committee, and animal research is overseen by an approved committee.

Priorities

The Unitec Research Strategy 2020 – 2024 has three key priorities which underpin our goals, our actions and the way we measure success:

Priority One	Research that is aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi
Priority Two	A flourishing, collaborative research culture
Priority Three	Partnered research and innovation

Priority One – Research that is aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Unitec will ensure that its support for research, governance and processes is aligned with Tiriti o Waitangi. In this way, Unitec will exemplify leadership in Māori research in the NZIST sector and in Aotearoa. The principle of rangatiratanga expressed through our partnership document, Te Noho Kotahitanga, will apply to research at Unitec: that Māori will have authority over and responsibility for all research related to Māori dimensions of knowledge. Vision Mātauranga will be integrated into all research processes and researchers will be supported to understand and fulfil these requirements. We will resource and grow the numbers and capability of Māori researchers, including Māori supervisors of our postgraduate programmes. We will actively seek and maintain partnerships with iwi, hapū, Māori businesses, institutions and peak Māori bodies. We will evolve our research office appropriately to ensure Māori research governance and rangatiratanga.

GOAL ONE:

Unitec has strong Māori research leadership, capability, excellence, partnerships, processes and governance.

Actions:

- Review research policy, guidelines and processes to ensure rangatiratanga
- Review all funding frameworks, guidelines and processes to incorporate Vision Mātauranga
- Increase Māori postgraduate supervisors and student scholarships
- Provide professional development by Māori for Māori researchers and postgraduate supervisors
- Support and resource Ngā Wai a te Tūi appropriately
- Review capability and plan for institutional research co-governance and leadership
- Tell stories of Māori research projects, outcomes and success

Priority Two - A flourishing, collaborative research culture

Unitec will grow a productive, diverse, student integrated, engaged and sustainable research workforce with the necessary resourcing and infrastructure. There will be an inclusive pipeline of support for developing the capability of our people and empowering them toward transformative outcomes for our communities; from the beginnings of their research independence through to leadership at the highest level, as expressed in Unitec's Research Competencies. Grounded in Te Tiriti and Te Noho Kotahitanga partnership, this will be inclusive and provide opportunity for the diverse cultures and individuals who make up our institution and the varied nature of that activity we call research and its related enterprises. This pipeline will be aligned with and actively support the initiatives at the heart of Te Manaakitia te Rito, Unitec's Renewal Strategy.

GOAL TWO:

The diverse people of Unitec have fit-for-purpose capability development and support toward sustainable, collaborative research productivity and excellence.

Actions:

- Provide high quality, diverse, multi-level research professional development
- Implement formalised research planning at individual and School level
- Support degree teachers to be research engaged
- Increase research excellence and productivity
- Develop Research Groups in every School offering degree programmes
- Develop Research Centres, facilitate concomitant business planning and annual evaluations
- Support Strategic Research Foci
- Support emerging and early career researchers; grow leaders
- Collate, authenticate, sustainably disseminate and publicise research
- Support and resource postgraduate student research
- Increase student involvement in research
- Foster research into Wairaka, our place; the natural environment, history and wairua
- Embed sustainability into all funding guidelines

Priority Three - Partnered research and innovation

Research at Unitec will concentrate on opportunities and problems identified by Māori, industry and community partners. Strong, enduring partnerships will be facilitated and valued, with investment in capacity building, innovation and leadership in this space. The reciprocity created by these partnerships will enhance opportunity for student work-integrated learning.

GOAL THREE:

Research that is industry/community partnered and promotes innovation.

Actions:

- Weave, ignite and nurture long-term partnerships across community, academia and industry
- Facilitate subsidised research consultancy
- Implement industry/community-partnered postgraduate research scholarships
- Provide industry partnering, IP, innovation and commercialisation advice and practical support
- Develop reputation through the establishment of Research Centres with strong partnerships
- Identify areas of future importance and opportunity; Research Sandpits

RESEARCH SANDPITS HAVE:

- the values of Te Noho Kotahitanga
- high societal need
- student-involved research and learning potential
- existing external partnerships
- cross-school transdisciplinary opportunity

**POTENTIAL FUTURE DIRECTIONS
(MANAAKITIA TE RITO)**

- Business, finance and professional services
- Maori and indigenous research
- Construction and infrastructure
- Health and wellbeing
- Transport and logistics
- Education and training
- Environmental services
- Creative industries and arts
- Computing and services

Glossary

Ngā Tikanga Whakahaere – Unitec’s Code of Conduct

NZIST – the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology incorporating 16 Institutes of Technologies and Polytechnics

Research Centres – Formally structured research institutes governed by the Unitec Research Committee

Research Competencies – Detailed description of what it means to be research competent at Unitec

Research Groups – Informal groups of researchers around a theme, identified in School Research Plan

Research Sandpits - areas of future research importance and opportunity

Strategic Research Foci – Research Centres which receive seed funding from Unitec

Te Manaakitia te Rito – Unitec’s Renewal Strategy 2019 – 2022

Te Noho Kotahitanga – Unitec’s Partnership agreement under Te Tiriti and our values

Te Tiriti o Waitangi – the founding document of Aotearoa, New Zealand

Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date of Meeting: 14 August 2025

Title	What does the Unitec/MIT Merger mean for research?
Provided by:	Hadley Brown, Chair
Authored by:	Brenda Massey, Secretary
For:	DISCUSSION

Recommendation

That the committee is provided with an opportunity to consider the opportunities that the Unitec/MIT merger could represent, or any concerns they may have, in the research space.

Purpose

Minister for Vocational Education Hon. Penny Simmonds has announced MIT and Unitec will transition away from Te Pūkenga to become a single independent legal entity, as of January 1, 2026.

Key Points

- MIT and Unitec, currently business divisions of Te Pūkenga, will exit the national network in the new year as a single independent legal entity for the delivery of on campus vocational education and training in Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland. We have demonstrated a robust enough pathway to financial viability to satisfy the Government’s criteria for independence.
- MIT and Unitec as a single entity will form a significant education provider not only in Tāmaki Makaurau, but in the national context.
- The merger gives us the opportunity to work more closely with our partners to create a platform for delivering training that is more responsive to local needs, as well as providing greater accessibility for those across Tāmaki wishing to partner and use our services.
- We are being asked to further pursue learner-centredness, industry engagement, community focus and values-based leadership in a regional context.
- Kaimahi will be fully consulted on this future direction and – it is expected – once developed we will be following a single regionally-focused operating model.

Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of URC – Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date of Meeting: 2025-08-14

Title	Unitec 2024 Research Annual Report
Provided by:	Arun Deo (Research Advisor) & Hadley Brown (Acting Director), Tūāpapa Rangahau
Authored by:	Arun Deo & Tūāpapa Rangahau team
For:	INFORMATION

Recommendation

That the Unitec Research Committee (URC) receive the Unitec 2024 Research Annual Report for information.

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to accompany the Unitec 2024 Research Annual Report, produced by Tūāpapa Rangahau — Partnering Research and Enterprise. The report provides a comprehensive overview of Unitec’s research and enterprise activities undertaken during the 2024 calendar year, highlighting achievements, strategic alignment, and areas of growth across the institution.

Background

The production of an annual research report was initiated by the Academic Committee (Te Komiti Mātauranga) in the early 1990s, when Unitec first began offering degree programmes. The responsibility for commissioning and receiving this report now sits with the Academic Committee. The report is presented to the Unitec Research Committee (URC) for information and feedback and is then submitted to Academic Committee for formal approval.

Next Steps

Feedback from the URC will be reviewed and incorporated into the final version of the report. The revised report will be submitted to the Academic Committee at its September 2025 meeting for approval. Following approval, the finalised report will be disseminated to relevant internal stakeholders, including staff within Tūāpapa Rangahau and other areas engaged in research and enterprise across Unitec.

Contributors

- » Arun Deo – Research Advisor, Tūāpapa Rangahau.

Attachments

Please refer to the attachment: Research Annual Report 2024.pdf

Unitec Research

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



Pacific Research Fono (PRF)



L-R: Sana Saleem, Annette Pitovao, Karen Petana-Ioka, Daisy Bentley-Gray, Genevieve Sang-Yum, Flora Apulu, Helen Luka, Venusi Taumoepeau, Lupeti Fihaki, Rokosiga Morrison (sitting), Ioane Aleke Fa'avae (sitting). **Absent:** Linda Aumua, Aki Te'evale, Margi Grey, Janet Tawaketini, Jason Hallie, Vimlesh Shukla, Associate Professor Dion Enari & Arun Deo

Photo Credit: Daisy Bentley-Gray

Prepared by Tūāpapa Rangahau, Partnering Research and Enterprise



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1 Introduction

Whāia te iti kahurangi, ki te tuohu koe me he maunga teitei.

Seek the treasure you value most dearly: if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain.

A deep commitment to applied research from staff and leadership at Unitec continues to prevail despite uncertainty in the New Zealand science and research space and ongoing disruption in the New Zealand Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. The Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) was placed on hold and two major advisory groups were stood up in 2024, charged with a deep dive into the research and innovation ecosystem (Science System Advisory Group) and the university system (University Advisory Group). Unitec actively participated in all consultations from these two groups in 2024, both led by Sir Peter Gluckman.

This proactive and highly engaged feedback, coupled with the outcomes summarised in this report, speaks volumes for the importance of this aspect of academic life to the institute and the value placed on it by staff. Senior Leadership, Directors of Research Centres, Research Leaders in Schools, Principal Investigators of funded projects, committee members, teaching researchers and Tūāpapa Rangahau (the research office) colleagues work together in difficult conditions to make these things happen, in the spirit of Te Noho Kotahitanga.

Significantly, a drive to develop and empower group-based research in the institute was initiated in 2024 and is ongoing, gaining momentum in 2025.

This document reports on the fifth and final year of the Unitec Research Strategy 2020–2024. It also marks the last year of my directorship, spanning 11 years in the role and 36 years at Unitec. It has been my honour to lead this work at Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka and an utter pleasure to work with all the rangahau and research kaimahi who show so much determination and resilience. Mauri ora.



Associate Professor Marcus Williams

Director Research and Enterprise

Tūāpapa Rangahau; Partnering Research and Enterprise


2 Executive Summary


This research report is structured around the [Unitec Research Strategy 2020–2024](#) (Section 8.1). The strategy responds strongly to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Unitec’s values, the purpose statements coming out of the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) and Te Pūkenga. The strategy has three Priorities and three related Goals, with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) designed to measure progress toward these goals. They are:

Priority One – Research that is aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.


Goal One: Unitec has strong Māori research leadership, capability, excellence, partnerships, processes and governance.

Report Highlights – Priority 1


 **Ngā Wai a Te Tūi – Māori and Indigenous Research Centre** - continues to play a pivotal role in advancing kaupapa Māori and Indigenous research at Unitec.


 **External Research Income & Contribution** - The centre remains a cornerstone of Unitec’s research funding success.


- \$341,107 External Research Income (ERI) generated by Ngā Wai a Te Tūi.
- Represents 42% of Unitec’s total ERI in 2024.


 **Leadership Transitions:**

- **Departure:** Associate Professor Hinekura Smith – a major loss in kaupapa Māori research leadership.
- **Return:** Associate Professor Byron Rangiwai – strengthens academic and cultural leadership.


 **Māori Postgraduate Scholarships** - our commitment to supporting Māori academic pathways and postgraduate success.

 9 postgraduate scholarships awarded to Māori students.

 **Research Outputs** - Strong and sustained scholarly contributions by both Māori and Pacific researchers, with a focus on research excellence and cultural relevance.

 **Māori Academics:**

- 49 total research outputs.
- 32 quality-assured outputs.

 **Pacific Academics:**


- 31 total research outputs.
- 26 quality-assured outputs.

Priority Two – A flourishing, collaborative research culture.


Goal Two: The diverse people of Unitec have fit-for-purpose capability development and support toward sustainable, collaborative research productivity and excellence

Note: The highlights, in grey colour, represent the KPIs of research at Unitec.


Report Highlights – Priority 2

 **Research Capability Building** - Strong staff engagement highlights growing interest and institutional investment in building research confidence and networks.


- ➔ 6 workshops and retreats held in 2024.
- ➔ 262 staff participated.

 **Early Career Researcher (ECR) Support** - Targeted support for emerging researchers builds long-term academic strength and encourages research continuity.


- ➔ 4 ECR Fund recipients supported.
- ➔ 1 ECR Fellowship awarded.


 **Research Output** - A healthy and consistent output rate, reflecting improved academic productivity and research culture.


- ➔ **Total: 588 research outputs**
 - 475 (81%) quality-assured. 113 (19%) non-quality-assured.
- ➔ **Average:** 2.86 quality-assured outputs per FTE of degree-teaching staff (institutional target was 1.5).










 **Student-Integrated Research** - Embedding students in research deepens learning and nurtures the next generation of researchers.

- ➔ 121 student-integrated research outputs (co-authored by staff and students).

 **Staff Research Support Funds** - A diverse portfolio of funding options provides holistic support across all research stages. Key available funds:

- ➔  **Research Dissemination Funding** - \$120,00 allocated to eight schools that offer degree programmes.
- ➔  **Collaborative Research Dissemination Fund** – 1 project supported with \$10,000.
- ➔  **Wairaka Fund: Natural Environment, History & Culture** – 1 recipient supported with \$7,000.
- ➔  **Student-Integrated Research Output Fund** – 11 researchers supported with funding of \$5,417.
- ➔  **Conference Seed Fund** – funding was available in 2024 but there was no uptake.

 **Research Productivity Traffic Light (RPTL)** - Most programmes meet or exceed expected research activity benchmarks—demonstrating system-wide performance alignment.

- ➔  **Programme Scope**
 -  Total number of degree programmes – 33.
- ➔  **Staffing:**
 -  195 academic staff involved.
 -  178.3 full-time equivalent (FTE).
- ➔  **Staff research engagement:**
 -  **Research Active** – 161 (83%).
 -  **Partially Active** – 14 (7%).
 -  **Not Research Active** – 20 (10%).

🔍 Programme status:

- ● **94% of degree programmes** rated “green - lit”.
- ● **6%** rated “amber-lit”.
- ● **None** rated “red-lit”.

✅ **Ethics Approvals** - A consistent volume of ethically approved research affirms academic integrity and procedural compliance.

- ➔ **47 ethics applications** approved out of 53 applications submitted.

🎓 **Postgraduate Scholarships** - Continued investment in postgraduate support contributes to academic pipeline development and research output growth.

- ➔ \$250,000 allocated with \$194,000 utilised.
- ➔ **45 postgraduate scholarships** awarded

Priority Three – Partnered research and innovation.

Goal Three: Research that is industry/community partnered and promotes innovation.

📊 Report Highlights – Priority 3

👛 **Industry-Funded Projects** - Strong demand from industry reflects Unitec’s growing reputation as a trusted applied research partner.

- ➔ **26 industry-funded projects** delivered.

📄 **External Research Funding Proposals** – An average success rate indicates growing capability in research bidding and alignment with funding priorities.

- ➔ **21 proposals** submitted.
- ➔ **9 successful** (43% success rate).


💰 **Grants & External Research Income (ERI)** - Diverse external funding sources boost research sustainability and support strategic growth.

- ➔ **\$298,011** in grants awarded.


- ➔ **\$807,907 total ERI.**

🏠 **Research Centre Contributions to ERI** - Research Centres are key engines of ERI, showing targeted expertise and operational excellence in high-performing fields.


- ➔ 🌐 **Ngā Wai a Te Tūi:** \$341,107.
- ➔ 🌱 **Environmental Solutions Research Centre:** \$288,666.
- ➔ 🛡️ **Cybersecurity Research Centre:** \$3,917.
- ➔ **Three Research Centres = 85%** of Unitec’s total ERI.
- ➔ **Schools contributed 15%.**


 **Unitec Staff Excellence Awards – Research Recognition** - These awards honour outstanding research leadership and emerging talent, reinforcing a culture of excellence within Unitec.

➡ **Excellence in Early Career Research Award**


-  Winner: **Dr Sameh Shamout**.

➡ **Excellence in Research Award**




-  Winner: **Associate Professor Nigel Adams**.

 **Student Research Showcase: 3-Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition** - A vibrant student research culture is emerging, with strong emphasis on communication and knowledge translation.


- ➡ **10 students** participated in the 3MT competition.

 **ITP Research Symposium – Sector Collaboration & Dissemination** - Broad participation across multiple symposiums highlights Unitec’s leadership in the applied research sector and its inclusive approach to Pacific, virtual, and national academic engagement.

➡ **The ITP Research Symposium included three coordinated events:**

-  **Unitec-MIT and Pacific Symposium** – 90 presentations.
-  **Virtual Symposium** – 39 presentations.
-  **OPSITARA Symposium** – 104 presentations.


- ➡ **Total:** 233 research presentations disseminated.

 **Unitec ePress** - Unitec ePress plays a pivotal role in research dissemination across the Te Pūkenga network, enhancing cross-institutional collaboration.


- ➡ 41 publications.
- ➡ **80 Unitec staff** published.
- ➡ **19 Te Pūkenga colleagues** published.

The Research Strategy Action Plan (Section 8.2) provides a detailed breakdown of how we will achieve the three goals and how the six [KPIs](#)¹ measure our progress toward these goals.

The six KPIs for research are:

1.  **Rangahau Māori Productivity** – productivity in this context is aggregated as quality-assured (QA) outputs by Māori staff, funded projects with named Māori staff, Māori supervisors, Level 9 and 10 Māori postgraduate scholarships, QA outputs that demonstrate excellence in Vision Mātauranga, accredited Vision Mātauranga and kaupapa Māori rangahau professional development achievements, and rangahau Māori research stories in the media.

¹ This hyperlink takes you to Unitec’s Power BI Portal. You will need to log into this portal using your own credentials, and once you are into Power BI refer to the **Research Dashboard**.

2.  **Quality Assured (QA) Research Outputs** – recognised research outputs that have been through a peer-review process or have been specifically commissioned. This is presented as a ratio of counts of the number of QA outputs to FTE of degree teaching staff.
3.  **Research Productivity** – measure of staff teaching on degree programmes who meet the agreed levels of research in the Research Productivity Traffic Light. This is measured as the ratio of research-active staff to the total number of staff on a degree programme.
4.  **External Research Income (ERI)** – income received from external sources for research purposes, calculated on the project milestones achieved and spending to date in a particular year. This is measured in dollars.
5.  **Industry-Funded Projects** – research and enterprise projects for which Unitec is receiving funding, where the services provided by Unitec involve applied contract research or consultancy for all funders, excluding any governmental contestable funding sources. This is measured by the number of projects.
6.  **Student-Integrated Research** – a measure of student input into staff-engaged research including authorship, contributions to wānanga, creative outputs, studentships, research assistant positions, awards or other contributions (as defined by the PBRF). This is measured as a count of the number of research outputs.

The first section of the report relates to Priority and Goal One, the second to Priority and Goal Two and the third to Priority and Goal Three.

3 Priority One (Research that is aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi)

Unitec will ensure that its support for research, governance and processes is aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In this way, Unitec will exemplify leadership in Māori research in the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) sector and in Aotearoa. The principle of rangatiratanga expressed through our partnership document, Te Noho Kotahitanga, will apply to research at Unitec: that Māori will have authority over and responsibility for all research related to Māori dimensions of knowledge. Vision Mātauranga will be integrated into all research processes and researchers will be supported to understand and fulfil these requirements. We will resource and grow the numbers and capability of Māori researchers, including Māori supervisors of our postgraduate programmes. We will actively seek and maintain partnerships with iwi, hapū, Māori businesses, institutions and peak Māori bodies. We will evolve our research office appropriately to ensure Māori research governance and rangatiratanga.

This section of the report highlights:

- » The activities of Ngā Wai a Te Tūi – Māori and Indigenous Research Centre
- » Postgraduate examinations (including completions by Māori and Pacific students)
- » Māori postgraduate scholarship
- » Research outputs by Māori academics and research outputs by Pacific academics.

3.1 Ngā Wai a Te Tūi (NwaTT), Māori and Indigenous Research Centre

While the core kaupapa and intent of Ngā Wai a Te Tūi remain firmly rooted in kaupapa Māori principles, the research priorities and areas of focus are evolving in response to recent staff appointments. These new team members bring diverse expertise that is gradually reshaping the Centre's direction and enhancing its capacity to respond to emerging issues within Māori and Pasifika communities.

Associate Professor Byron Rangiwai brings a strong focus on kaupapa Māori research related to neurodiversity, particularly Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). His appointment is contributing significantly to the Centre's engagement with mental health and education equity from a Māori worldview. His work opens new pathways for understanding the lived experiences of neurodivergent Māori and encourages the Centre to explore areas that have previously received limited attention.

- » Introduces kaupapa Māori research focused on neurodiversity, particularly ADHD.
- » Brings attention to mental health, education equity, and inclusion from a kaupapa Māori perspective.
- » Expands capacity to address the lived realities of Māori with neurodivergent experiences.
- » Opens opportunities for collaborative work across health, education, and social research.
- » Encourages the Centre to engage with underexplored topics.

Associate Professor Deborah Heke, and new Director, brings expertise in wāhine Māori health, physical activity, and atua wāhine-based frameworks. Her research, rooted in whakapapa, movement, and connection to the environment, strengthens the Centre's position in kaupapa Māori health research and introduces an embodied, relational approach to leadership.

- » Specialises in wāhine Māori health, physical activity, and atua wāhine-based frameworks.
- » Uses whakapapa, movement, and environmental connection as key entry points to wellbeing.
- » Enhances the Centre's health research through Mana Wahine-informed methods.
- » Emphasises leadership grounded in place-based and relational research practices.
- » Reframes physical activity as identity, expression, and mātauranga transmission.

Associate Professor Dion Enari adds a vital Pasifika dimension to the Centre’s work, particularly grounded in Fa’a Samoa, sport, and transnational identity. His research strengthens Indigenous–Pasifika partnerships across Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa and introduces sport as a culturally rich platform for exploring belonging, wellbeing, and language revitalisation among Pasifika youth.

- » Adds Pasifika research focus grounded in Fa’a Samoa, sport, and identity.
- » Highlights cultural continuity and intergenerational knowledge among Samoan diaspora communities.
- » Strengthens Indigenous–Pasifika research partnerships in the Pacific.
- » Explores sport as a platform for cultural expression and wellbeing.
- » Supports engagement with Pasifika youth, language revitalisation, and cultural resilience.

3.1.1 Vision Mātauranga

Vision Mātauranga is a vital strategy for guiding research and rangahau across Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly in areas that may not traditionally centre Mātauranga Māori, tikanga, or te reo Māori but are seeking to build capability in these spaces. As a kaupapa Māori research centre, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi inherently aligns with the principles and intentions of Vision Mātauranga. These values are not supplementary but are embedded within the Centre’s foundations, informing its practices, methodologies, and overall research direction.

3.1.2 Student Engagement and Capacity Building

MAI ki Wairaka, the Māori and Indigenous postgraduate student programme, based at Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka (Unitec) and hosted by Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, is part of Te Kupenga o MAI, a national network within Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (NPM). The programme provides kaupapa Māori support for Māori and Indigenous postgraduate students, offering access to research-focused wānanga, writing sessions, mentoring, and national hui. These opportunities aim to strengthen students’ academic confidence, cultural grounding, and connections within the broader MAI community.

In 2024, MAI ki Wairaka delivered a range of key activities. Weekly Tuhi MAI writing sessions were held at Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, providing a regular, supportive space for focused research and writing. A local wānanga hosted at Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae offered students time for whakawhanaungatanga and study. Students also attended the national Te Kupenga o MAI hui-a-tau, hosted by MAI ki Tāmaki at the University of Auckland, where five Unitec students presented their research. These experiences provided valuable opportunities for academic growth, peer support, and the affirmation of students’ place within a thriving community of Māori and Indigenous scholars.

3.1.3 Personnel Changes and Strategic Leadership Development

In April 2025, Associate Professor Deborah Heke assumed the Directorship of Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, following the departure of Associate Professor Hinekura Smith, who stepped down to take up a position at the University of Queensland. Associate Professor Heke brings significant experience in kaupapa Māori research leadership, transitioning from Auckland University of Technology and contributing additional research FTE to the Centre. She also takes on a new national leadership role as the MAI Doctoral Strategy Lead within Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga. Associate Professor Smith will continue to contribute to the Centre in a 0.2 FTE capacity from 2025 to 2027.

In addition, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi welcomed the return of Aki Te’evale from maternity leave. Aki plays a vital role within the Centre as a key professional staff member, with responsibilities spanning research project support and management, administrative coordination, and financial support. Her return strengthens the Centre’s operational capacity and continuity during this period of leadership transition.

3.1.4 Partnerships: External and Internal

The recent appointments of Associate Professors Deborah Heke and Dion Enari have significantly expanded Ngā Wai a Te Tūi’s networks across academic, community, and international platforms.

Associate Professor Heke maintains her longstanding research connections with the Taupua Waiora Centre for Māori Research at Auckland University of Technology, where she holds a Research Fellow position within the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences. She has recently begun a collaboration with Associate Professor Isaac Warbrick on a healthy microbiome study based at Te Rangimarie Pā Harakeke. Associate Professor Heke is also a founding member of the Ōkura Collective, a community-led programme supporting rangatahi Māori identity and wellbeing and is developing a Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) proposal in partnership with Hobsonville Point Secondary School. Her international reach is reflected through her active involvement in Te Kupenga Māreikura, a global Indigenous women's network, and her role on the Kāhui Ārahi for Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga.

Associate Professor Dion Enari brings a strong Pasifika research presence and a wide array of established networks. These include academic and community collaborations with Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) Pasifika, Oceania Institute at the University of Melbourne, Griffith Pasifika Association, Moanaroa Pacific Research Network at Auckland University of Technology, Fofonga at the University of Auckland, and national agencies such as the Ministry of Pacific Peoples, New Zealand Rugby Union Pacific Council (where he is a member), and Sport New Zealand. His connections span media, education, sport, and health sectors, and include partnerships with organisations such as Moana Connect, Pacific Island Centre at the University of Otago, Radio New Zealand, Tagata Pasifika, Village Connect, and academic institutions across Aotearoa, Australia, and the Pacific.

Associate Professor Byron Rangiwai continues to grow his extensive network of academic, clinical, and community partners both nationally and internationally. His collaborations include institutions such as the University of Auckland, University of Otago, University of Canterbury, Massey University, Auckland University of Technology, and Victoria University of Wellington. Internationally, his networks extend to the University of Queensland, Griffith University, University of South Australia, Edith Cowan University, University of Singapore, and Tan Tock Seng Hospital in Singapore. He also maintains connections with the National Neuroscience Institute (Singapore), Auckland Bioengineering Institute, Starship Hospital, Mātai Medical Research Institute, De La Salle University (Philippines), Pūrangakura, New Zealand Police, and Ako Aotearoa. Collectively, these networks greatly enhance the Centre's reach, impact, and capacity for interdisciplinary collaboration.

3.1.5 External funding applications

In 2024, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi prioritised securing external funding through a range of competitive grants and strategic partnerships with central and local government agencies, as well as industry collaborators. Notable funding applications included support for the International Teaching Artist Collaborative (ITAC6–7) project and a proposal to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) for the Ka Tū Te Rā project. Both applications were successful, resulting in a total of \$158,640 in grant funding being secured to advance and sustain the Centre's ongoing research activities.

3.1.6 External research income

In total, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi generated \$341,107 in external research income (ERI) in 2024, from eight active contracts (with a contract value of \$1,174,464), contributing 42% of the total ERI at Unitec.

3.2 Postgraduate examinations and completions

Tūāpapa Rangahau manages and administers the examination of all 90-credit and higher theses for Unitec's master's and doctoral programmes. Figure 1 shows the number of theses (90 or more credits) submitted for examination since 2011. The number of submissions in 2024 has experienced a notable increase compared to the previous two years. This surge can primarily be attributed to the strong enrolment in the newly introduced Master of Applied Technology programme, which has attracted a significant number of students. The programme's success in drawing enrolments is indicative of

growing interest and demand for advanced qualifications in computing technologies. Additionally, the increase in submissions reflects a broader trend of recovery and return to normalcy following the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic had previously impacted academic activities, leading to delays and a reduction in submissions, but with improved stability, both student engagement and academic output have rebounded significantly in 2024.

The following programmes with 90-credit and higher theses are currently active:

- » Master of Applied Business
- » Master of Architecture (by Project)
- » Master of Architecture (Professional)
- » Master of Landscape Architecture
- » Master of Applied Technology
- » Master of Computing
- » Master of Creative Practice
- » Master of Applied Science (Biodiversity)
- » Master of Applied Practice (Social Practice).

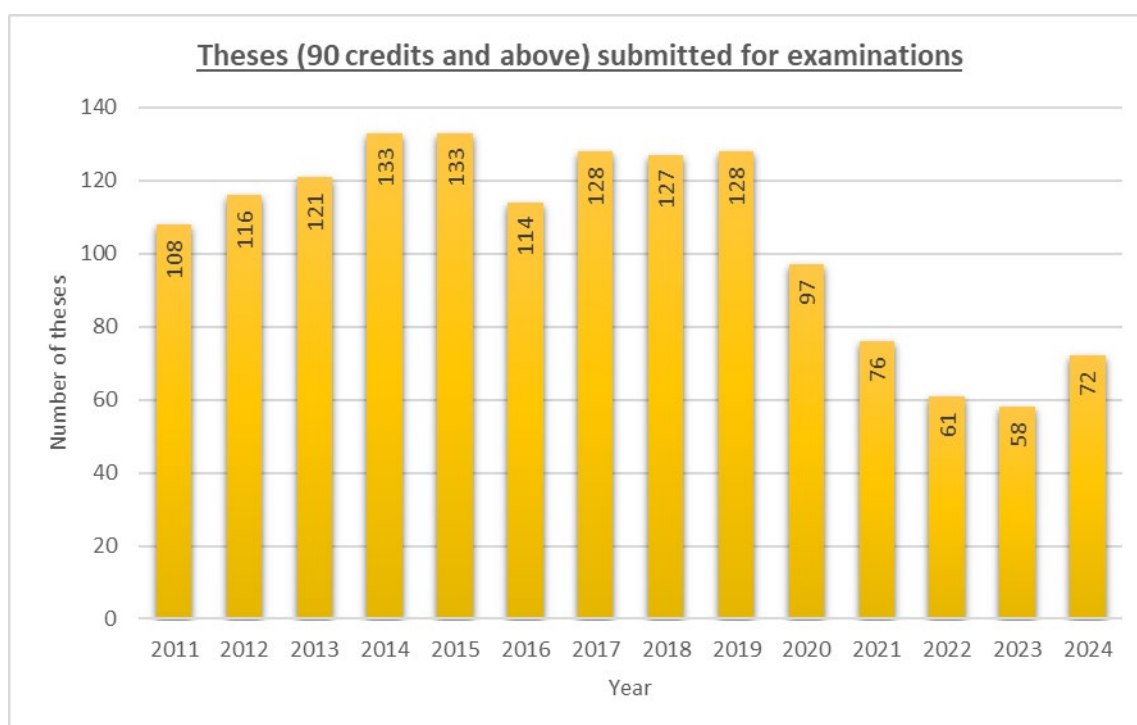


Figure 1: Theses (90+ credits) submitted for examination.

3.2.1 Completions by Māori and Pacific students

In 2024 there were 52 successful completions of master's thesis examinations (90 or more credits). Of these, 10 completions were by students who identified as Māori, and four by students who identified as Pacific.

The thesis submission and completion figures differ because not all submissions from a particular year are completed within that year; some completions pertain to submissions from previous years.

3.2.2 Masters' Research Excellence Award

Tūāpapa Rangahau acknowledges the critical role of research within the postgraduate education framework, particularly within the master's programmes. As part of its commitment to academic excellence, the institution recognises outstanding research achievements by celebrating the accomplishments of those who attain an A+ grade. This annual recognition highlights the institution's dedication to fostering high standards in scholarly work.

In 2024, two students from the Master of Architecture (Professional) programme completed with an A+ grade. Additionally, another completion from the same programme was honoured with a Distinction in Architectural Design, underscoring their exceptional contribution to the field. The awards ceremony, a momentous occasion, was attended by the graduates' families, academic supervisors, and programme leaders, all of whom gathered to celebrate these notable achievements.

3.3 Māori Postgraduate Scholarship

In 2024, a total of seven Māori Postgraduate Scholarships were awarded to Māori students pursuing postgraduate studies across various academic disciplines. In addition to these seven recipients, two more students from the broader postgraduate cohort identified as Māori, bringing the total number of Māori students receiving postgraduate scholarship support to nine. These scholarships aim to foster academic excellence, leadership, and the development of skills that contribute to the Māori community's growth and representation in higher education and professional fields.

The recipients of these scholarships were enrolled in the following programs: two students in the Master of Applied Practice (Social Practice), two in the Master of Applied Science (Biodiversity Management), two in the Master of Architecture (Professional), and three in the Master of Creative Practice. This distribution underscores the commitment to supporting Māori students across a diverse range of fields, including social practice, architecture, biodiversity management, and the creative arts. The scholarships not only aim to enhance academic achievement but also to empower Māori students to make significant contributions to their respective sectors and communities.

3.4 Research outputs by Māori and research outputs by Pacific academics

This section highlights the research productivity of Unitec's Māori and Pacific academics, showcasing their research contributions within the institution. More thorough analysis of research productivity is presented in Section 4.3.

Figure 2 presents a visual overview of research outputs by Māori academics. From 2021 to 2022, there was a concerning year-on-year decline in these outputs, largely due to the recruitment of Unitec's Māori researchers by other institutions. This trend not only impacted Unitec's academic productivity but also reduced the presence of diverse perspectives within the broader research landscape.

In 2024, there is a promising reversal, marked by a significant rise in both quality-assured and non-quality-assured research outputs by Māori academics. This increase is primarily driven by the recruitment of a few research-active Māori staff in 2024 and 2025, who have also contributed their previous years' research. As a result, research outputs continue to grow each year. To sustain and build on this progress, it is crucial to implement retention strategies, including fostering a supportive work environment, offering competitive remuneration, and providing clear pathways for professional development.

Increased investment in research capacity-building for Māori academics will be key to ensuring their continued contribution and long-term success.

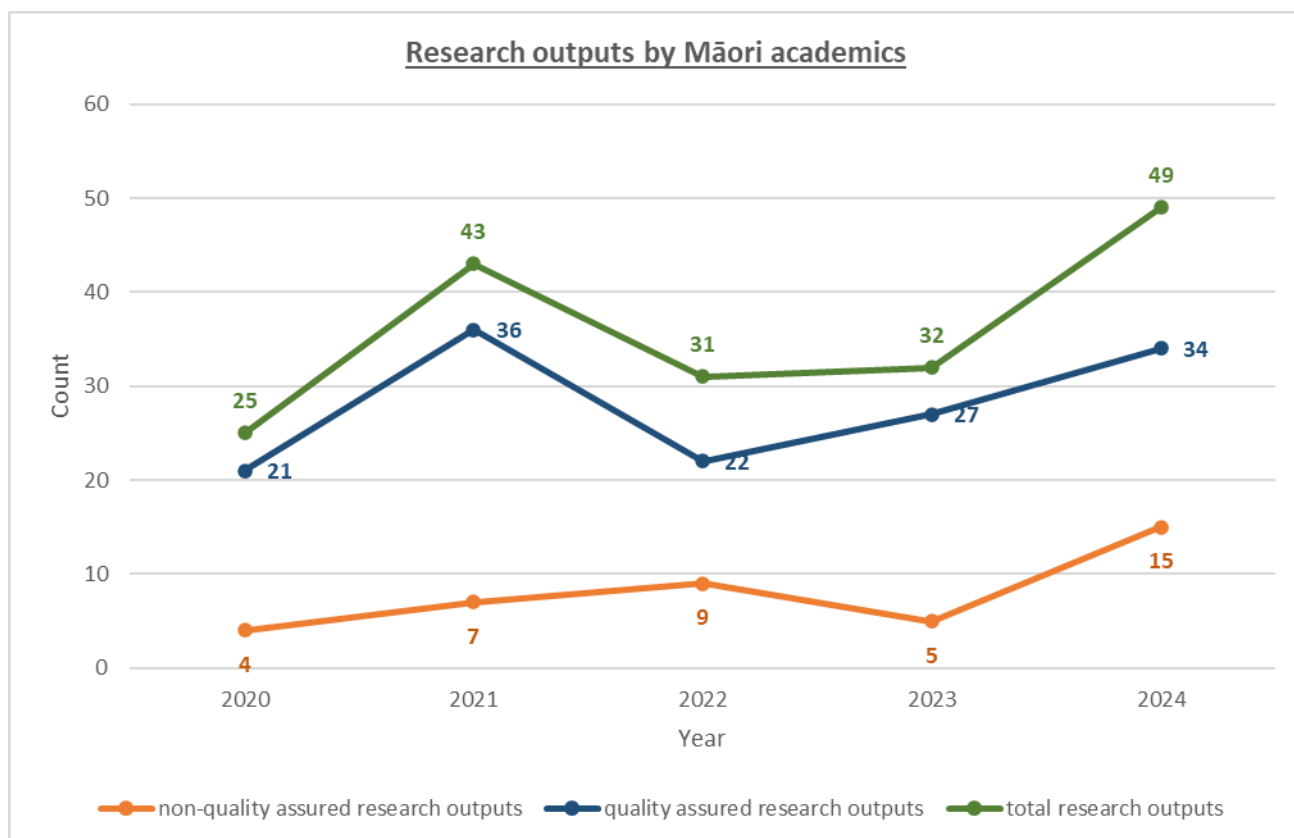


Figure 2: Research outputs by Māori academics.

Additionally in 2024, three Māori staff members were involved in teaching degree programmes out of a total of 183 staff, while four Māori staff were on the supervisors' register out of 78 staff, and Māori staff contributed to 8% of the total research outputs.

Figure 3 illustrates the research outputs by Pacific academics. While there was a decline in 2022, a gradual increase was observed in 2023. However, this growth was modest, and the 2024 research outputs remained largely consistent with 2023 levels.

To foster meaningful progress, it is essential to invest in targeted support for Pacific academics, including increased resources and access to professional development opportunities. Such efforts could significantly enhance research capacity and output in the coming years.

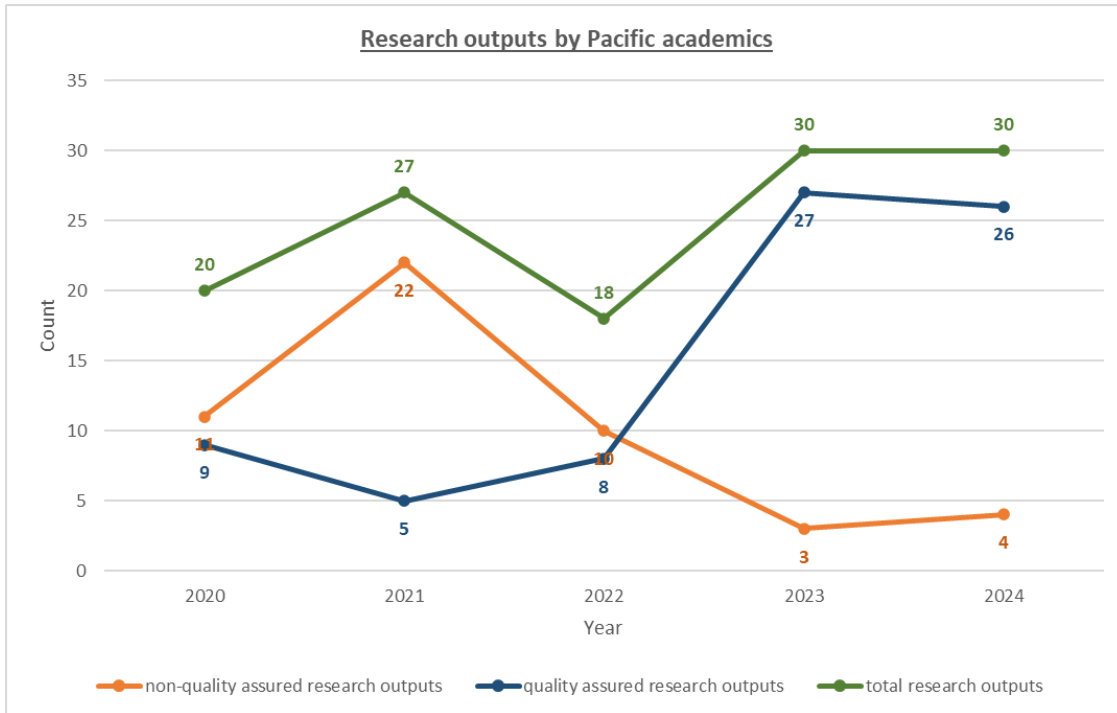


Figure 3: Research outputs by Pacific academics.

Additionally in 2024, nine Pacific staff members were involved in teaching degree programmes out of a total of 183 staff, while three Pacific staff were on the supervisors' register out of 78 staff, and Pacific staff contributed to 5% of the total research outputs.

4 Priority Two (A flourishing, collaborative research culture)

Unitec will grow a productive, diverse, student-integrated, engaged and sustainable research workforce with the necessary resourcing and infrastructure. There will be an inclusive pipeline of support for developing the capability of our people and empowering them toward transformative outcomes for our communities, from the beginnings of their research independence through to leadership at the highest level, as expressed in Unitec’s Research Competencies. Grounded in Te Tiriti and Te Noho Kotahitanga partnership, this will be inclusive and provide opportunity for the diverse cultures and individuals who make up our institution, and the varied nature of that activity we call research and its related enterprises. This pipeline will be aligned with, and actively support, the initiatives at the heart of Te Manaakitia te Rito, Unitec’s Renewal Strategy.

This section of the report highlights:

- » Building staff capability in research
- » Supporting our researchers – internally funded research projects
- » Focusing on research productivity – research outputs
- » Research dissemination support to schools
- » Professoriate
- » Research Productivity Traffic Light (RPTL)
- » Research partnering
- » School research plans
- » Ethics
- » Postgraduate studies and student-engaged research.

4.1 Building staff capability in research

Unitec supports “engaged and inspired staff” who have the capability and expertise to address and respond to a wide range of social, industrial and environmental challenges, including through research activity. Capable staff foster the development of “highly employable lifelong learners” who will contribute to a “highly skilled, innovative and enterprising New Zealand workforce”.

In 2024, Tūāpapa Rangahau continued to prioritise raising the capability of Unitec staff, particularly those teaching on degree-level programmes, to undertake research, disseminate their research findings, and attract external research and development funding to progress their initiatives.

Unitec researchers are at various stages in their research careers, therefore capability-development initiatives are tailored to Unitec staff according to whether they are new and emerging (beginner), early career (well published, intermediate) or advanced (senior leader, professoriate) researchers. The capability-development initiatives are also targeted to respond to the requirement to lift, and to maintain at a high level, Unitec’s research productivity (as measured by the Research Productivity Traffic Light (RPTL) in Section 4.6).

4.1.1 Developing our staff – Research Professional Development series

Tūāpapa Rangahau’s Research Professional Development series is designed to improve the level of staff research capability, to encourage and assist staff to disseminate the results of their research and to link staff to industry-partnered opportunities. In 2024, as in 2023, some of these opportunities were offered to Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) staff as well, in light of increased efforts to support institutional collaboration opportunities with MIT. In addition, for the first time in 2024, several of these opportunities were offered to Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) staff across the motu, as well. A part-time staff member at Tūāpapa Rangahau, in the role of Research Professional Development Liaison, organises the series each year and facilitates several of its components.

Figure 4 shows the numbers of staff who enrolled in research workshops and writing retreats that were offered in 2024. As in the past, uptake in 2024 indicates high levels of staff engagement.

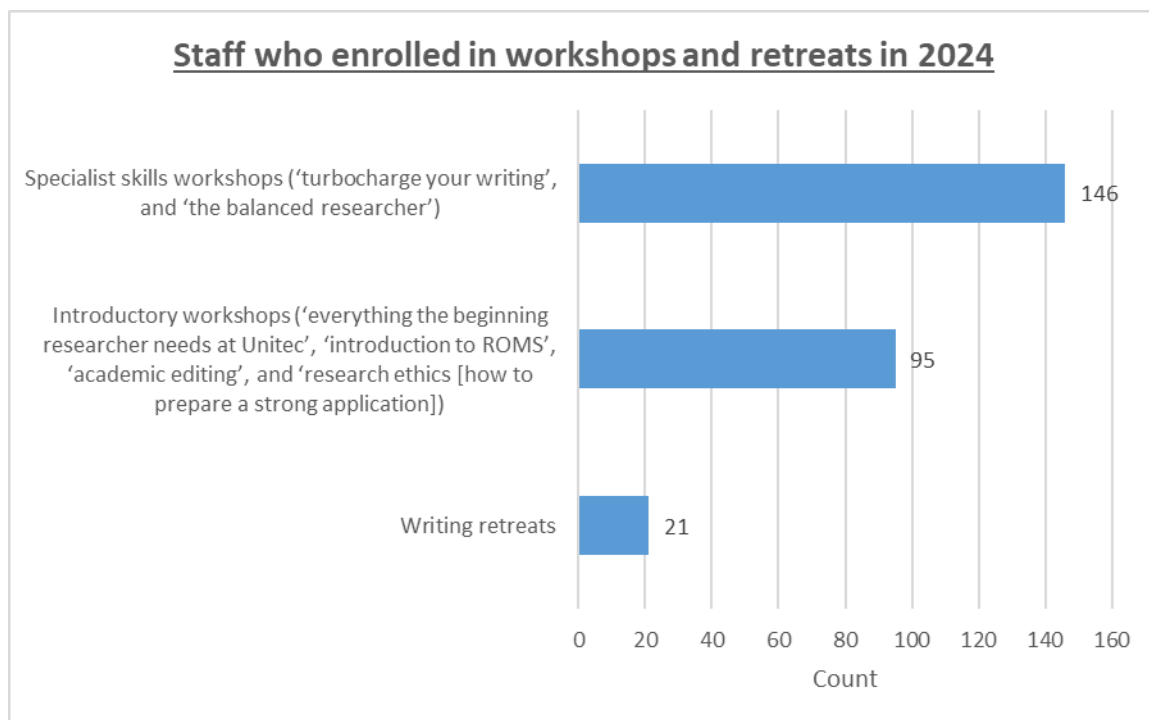


Figure 4: Staff who enrolled in workshops and retreats in 2024.

Writing retreats require an application and selection process and allow staff members to devote dedicated time and energy to producing research outputs in a supportive and collegial, yet intensive, environment. Early indications are that specialist skills workshops, alongside the writing retreats, led to increased levels of research activity and output dissemination. These events also serve to lift staff morale and inspire greater confidence that research is supported and valued at Unitec, and at MIT.

The specialist skills workshops were especially plentiful, and popular, in 2024 and serve an important induction function. Figure 5 shows the numbers of staff who enrolled in specialist skills workshops:

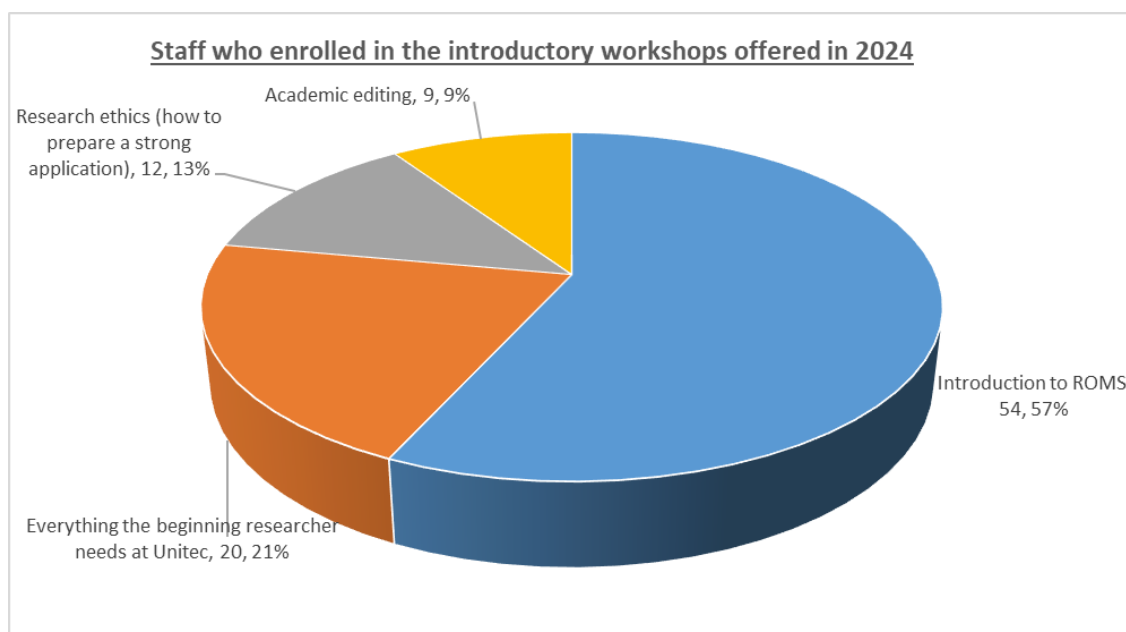


Figure 5: Staff who enrolled in introductory workshops offered in 2024.

Sixteen staff members completed the Successful Postgraduate Supervision course in 2024. This blended and ‘flipped’ course is very highly regarded and serves as a permanent resource for postgraduate supervision practice. Two additional courses that were on offer (online) in 2024 included Writing a Successful Grant Application and Managing a Research Contract. Course participation is largely self-managed; any Unitec staff member can self-enrol to access course resources and learning activities.

Evaluation data from the 2024 Research Professional Development series indicates a highly positive reception and perceived benefits. Indicative feedback from writing retreat participants includes the following: *“Collegial and supportive environment for a productive writing experience. Very well-organised event that allowed for intensive work but also cross-disciplinary contacts with like-minded researchers. Because of this retreat I will meet my research output dissemination goals this year. Unitec should definitely continue to offer this excellent opportunity.”*

4.1.2 Writing support

Tūāpapa Rangahau continued to offer writing support to staff members in 2024, through the services of a contractor, to assist with preparing research texts for publication. Staff members receiving writing support are also guided through the process of submission to journals where necessary and are given help with responding to reviewer feedback when requested. This service is particularly valuable for new and emerging researchers, and researchers from programmes not always related closely to academia such as the Bachelor of Applied Technology (BAT). This offering represents a worthwhile investment in Unitec’s staff in supporting them towards achieving quality-assured research outputs. In 2024, assistance was given for two external journal articles and a number of papers submitted to journals published by Unitec ePress.

4.2 Supporting our researchers – internally funded research projects

In 2024 Unitec supported its researchers with three types of internal funding for research projects. These were the Early Career Researcher Fund, Early Career Researcher Fellowships and New Researcher Start Up Fund.

4.2.1 Early Career Researcher (ECR) Fund

The ECR contestable fund supports both emerging and established early career researchers at Unitec to develop their capability, capacity and career progression.

In 2024 Unitec held one annual contestable funding round for staff-initiated research projects: The Early Career Researcher (ECR) Fund. Applications for ECR funding were appraised by a Grants Advisory Committee, a sub-committee of the Unitec Research Committee.

In 2024 four ECR projects were awarded contestable funding totalling \$35,760. The 2024 awardees are listed in Table 1 below, along with selected highlights from some of the funded projects.

Lead Researcher	School	Project name
Associate Professor Kristie Cameron	School of Environmental and Animal Sciences	Methodologies for measuring preference and demand in Guinea pigs
Dr Mary Yan	School of Healthcare and Social Practice	Development of emergency food formulation with mainly New Zealand ingredients for disaster preparedness
Dr Caralyn Kemp	School of Environmental and Animal Sciences	Use and Benefits of Dog Parks for Dogs
Hinewaimarama Reihana-White	Ngā Wai a Te Tūī	Toitū te Whenua: Sustaining the Wāhi Tapu of Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae.

Table 1: 2024 Early Career Researcher Fund projects supported.

While several of these ECR projects are still underway, a few 2024 highlights to date are:

- » **Associate Professor Kristie Cameron** - *Methodologies for measuring preference and demand in Guinea pigs*
This research project developed a species-specific methodology to assess commodity demand using guinea pigs as a model species. The approach evaluates the animals' motivation by measuring their willingness to climb a ramp with progressively increasing height and incline to access various items. Faster ascent and greater climbing effort are interpreted as indicators of stronger preference. The method was recently applied to assess food preferences, yielding consistent and reliable results that demonstrate its robustness. The findings identified specific food items that can be effectively used to promote positive experiences during routine, yet potentially aversive, husbandry procedures such as health checks.
- » **Dr Mary Yan** – *Development of emergency food formulation with mainly New Zealand ingredients for disaster preparedness.*
The aim of this research was to improve the nutritional quality, shelf life, and cost-effectiveness of emergency food supplies by utilising primarily New Zealand-sourced ingredients, such as milk powder, fruit and vegetable powders, and other nutritional components. The project focused on developing innovative formulations, assessing the nutritional content and stability of the products, and evaluating the feasibility of their production. Through these efforts, the research contributed to enhancing disaster preparedness and the resilience of emergency food systems.
- » **Dr Caralyn Kemp** – *Use and Benefits of Dog Parks for Dogs.*
This study aimed to investigate the prevalence of positive and negative interactive behaviours between dogs, other dogs, their owners, and human strangers across four different dog parks. The research sought to compare observational data with owners' perceptions regarding the benefits of the dog park for both their dogs and themselves. Additionally, the study examined how social behaviours varied across different parks, exploring whether park design influenced owner behaviour and dog socialisation. Finally, the study assessed the extent to which each park was utilised by dogs, with the goal of informing design strategies that could enhance engagement and maximise park usage.
- » **Hinewaimarama Reihana-White** - *Toitū te Whenua: Sustaining the Wāhi Tapu of Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae.*
The overarching aim of this research was to integrate Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) with contemporary practices to regenerate ecosystems through the concept of kaitiakitanga (guardianship). The study focused on strengthening community ties, promoting sustainable urban development, and preserving and disseminating Indigenous knowledge and values. By combining traditional Māori approaches with modern sustainability practices, the research sought to foster a holistic approach to environmental regeneration that benefits both people and the planet.

4.2.2 Early Career Researcher (ECR) Fellowships

Each year Tūāpapa Rangahau offers Early Career Researcher (ECR) Fellowships to Unitec researchers. These fellowships aim to support and strengthen the establishment and development of ECR careers and foster new research leadership. ECRs play a crucial role in renewing the research culture at Unitec and are poised to become future leaders in research and enterprise in the institution.

Two types of fellowships are available: one to support the implementation of research projects and another to support professional research and research leadership development.

In 2024 one ECR fellowships worth \$15,000 was awarded to Associate Professor Kristie Cameron from the School of Environmental and Animal Sciences.

Associate Professor Kristie Cameron utilised her fellowship to publish five papers and has two additional papers in press for 2025 in leading behaviour analysis journals. The fellowship supported her future Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) strategy through both internal and external research projects involving ECRs and students. She successfully mentored a junior colleague in teaching and research, resulting in an upcoming publication, and strengthened community engagement through the 2024 external Research Voucher scheme. Kristie attended key conferences, including Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART), where she also supported her PhD student's presentation. Her collaboration with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) expanded to include new research on guinea pig welfare, building on her impactful work on greyhound racing, which contributed to the 2026 ban announcement. Additionally, she developed Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and Marsden Fund grant applications and co-led the Royal Society Te Apārangi ECR Forum, contributing to national science policy.

4.2.3 New Researcher Start Up Fund

The New Researcher Start-Up Fund is designed to support ECRs by providing initial funding to establish their research projects, foster new collaborations, and enhance their academic careers. This funding aims to enable the development of innovative research initiatives and contribute to long-term research success. This fund was introduced in 2024.

In 2024, Chloe McMenemy, a lecturer in the Bachelor of Veterinary Nursing programme within the School of Environmental and Animal Sciences, was awarded a grant of \$500 from the New Researcher Start-Up Fund to support her emerging research initiatives.

4.3 Focusing on research productivity – research outputs

Research outputs have been a key measure of Unitec's research performance for some time, which enables longitudinal data to be reported. Research outputs are a key way in which researchers contribute to the store and accumulation of human knowledge. They include articles, books, conference papers and less-traditional forms of research dissemination such as patents, websites, films, exhibitions and reports for industry, government, etc.

4.3.1 Total Unitec research outputs

In 2024 a total of 588 research outputs was recorded. Among these, 475 (81%) were quality assured (QA), while the remaining 113 (19%) were non-quality assured (non-QA). The overall count depicted in Figure 6 indicates an increase compared to the figures observed in 2023.

Recording research outputs is a retrospective process because staff continue to add research outputs to Unitec's research output management system (ROMS) each year. As new staff publish, they also add their research activity for previous years. These retrospective additions mean that the research outputs for each year continue to rise.

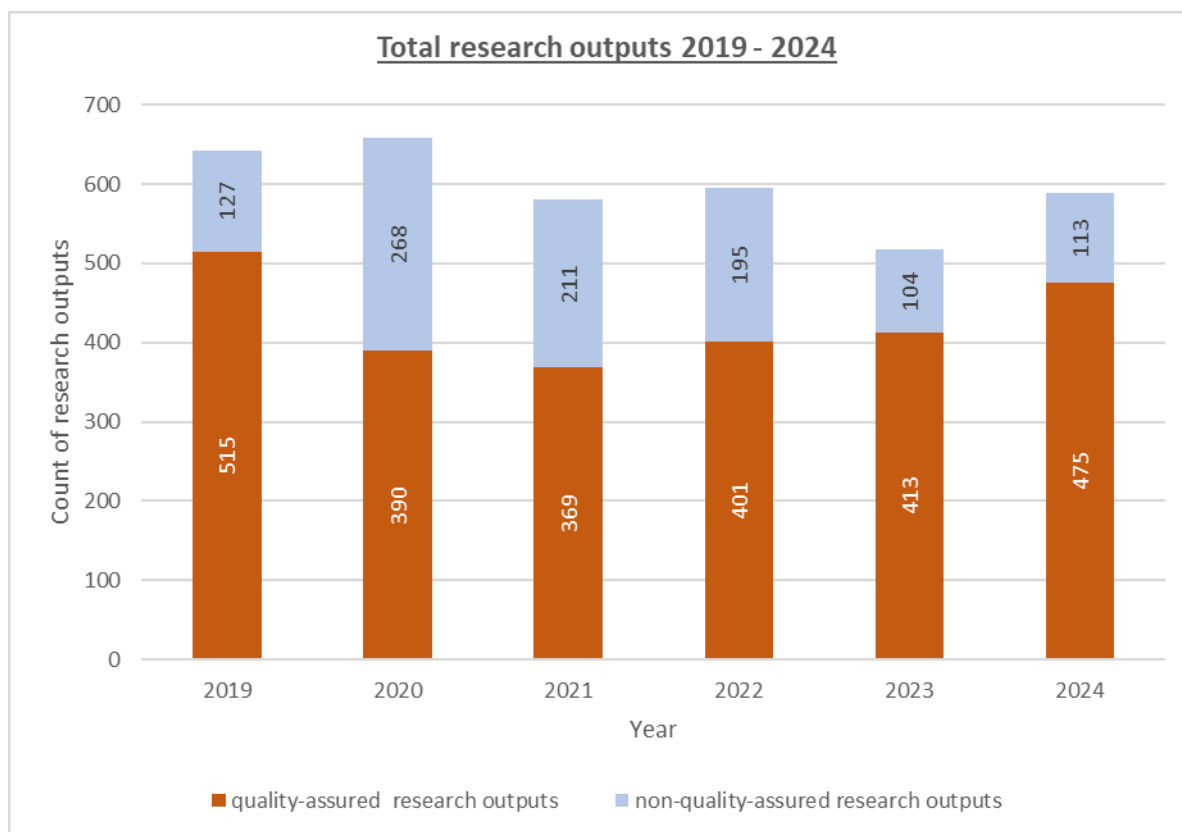


Figure 6: Quality-assured and non-quality-assured research outputs.

The proportion of QA research outputs relative to the total outputs generated annually exhibited some growth from 2020 to 2022, but a notable increase of 14% from 2022 to 2024. In 2024, the proportion of QA research outputs increased by one percentage point with the previous year, as illustrated in Figure 7. However, the total number of both QA and non-QA outputs increased notably from 2023, as shown in Figure 6. This QA growth can be primarily attributed to two key factors:

- » **Increased staff participation in virtual research dissemination**, particularly through conferences. These activities, classified as QA, included abstracts, oral presentations, poster presentations and published proceedings, collectively accounting for 51% of QA research outputs in 2024.
- » **The 2024 ITP Symposium**, which provided a platform for staff to present their research, with all contributions classified as QA outputs.

The top six types of disseminations contributing to QA outputs in 2024 were oral presentations at conferences (28%), journal publications (24%), papers in published conference proceedings (12%), poster presentations at conferences (7%), book chapters (6%) and abstracts presented at conferences (5%).

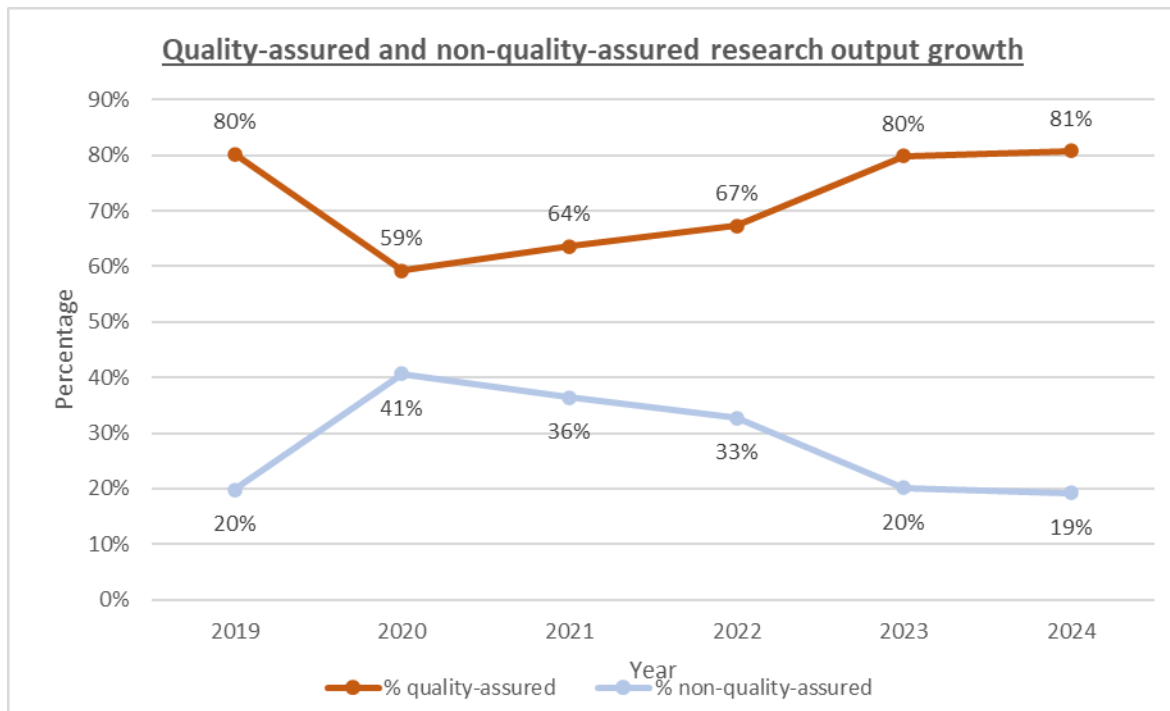


Figure 7: Quality-assured and non-quality-assured research output growth.

4.3.2 Research outputs by School

Figure 8 provides a visual representation of the aggregate quality-assured and non-quality-assured research outputs generated by each school in the year 2024. The “Others” category encompasses research outputs from Academic Development, Tūāpapa Rangahau and Ngā Wai a Te Tūi.

Note – School of Bridgepoint and School of Trades and Services do not offer degree programmes, therefore research is not a compliance priority.

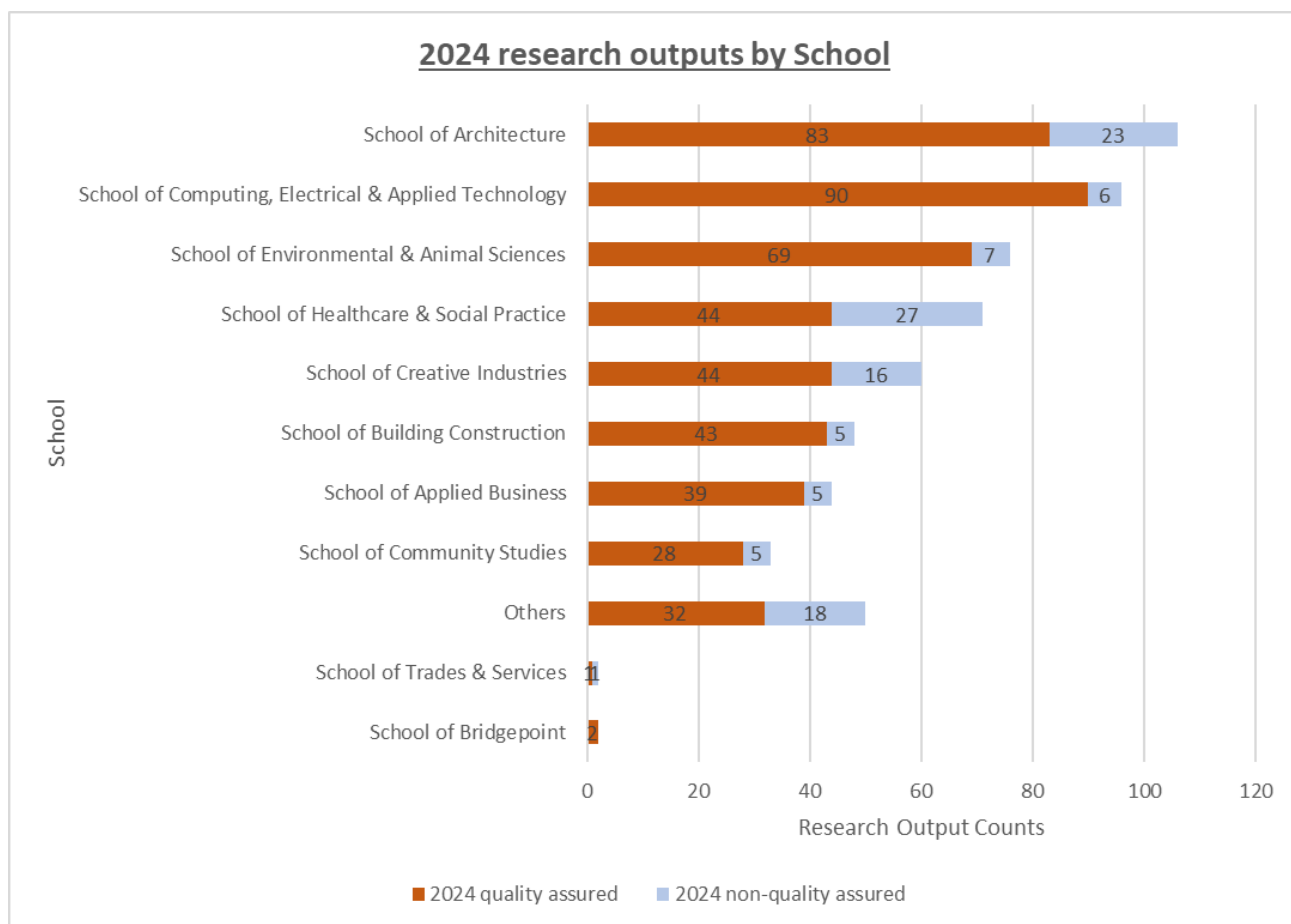


Figure 8: 2024 QA and non-QA research outputs by School.

Acknowledging that not all research outputs from 2024 were yet included in ROMS at the time of this report, the current findings demonstrate notable variability in research output productivity across the schools. However, these overall counts must be considered in relation to the total research-active full-time equivalents (FTEs) within each school. Table 2 precisely outlines the number of quality-assured (QA) research outputs achieved per research-active FTE within each school.

School	QA outputs per research-eligible FTE
School of Architecture	3.81
School of Computing, Electrical & Applied Technology	3.66
School of Environmental & Animal Sciences	3.18
School of Community Studies	3.04
School of Creative Industries	2.67
School of Building Construction	2.09
School of Applied Business	1.68
School of Healthcare & Social Practice	1.55

Table 2: QA research outputs per research-active FTE in 2024.

In 2024 Unitec achieved an institutional average of 2.86 QA research outputs per research-active FTE. The designated target for 2024 was 1.5 QA research outputs per FTE of degree teaching staff. The School of Architecture emerged as the clear leader, with the School of Computing, Electrical & Applied Technology and the School of Environmental & Animal Sciences following closely behind.

The strong research productivity demonstrated in recent years is the result of effective collaboration, strategic guidance, and shared commitment among key academic leadership and research support roles at Unitec. The coordinated efforts of Heads of Schools, Academic Programme Managers, Research Leaders, Research Partners, the Research Advisor, Research Administrators and the Research Director have collectively contributed to this success. Their partnership has not only driven a significant increase in research outputs but also played a crucial role in strengthening New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) compliance across academic programmes. This integrated approach has helped embed research more deeply into teaching and learning practices, ensuring that research excellence aligns with institutional priorities and quality assurance standards.

4.4 Research dissemination

Disseminating research through attendance and presentations at academic conferences and publishing in books and journals is an important and necessary part of academic careers. This provides opportunities to generate peer-reviewed research outputs (one measure of an academic's productivity), to provide staff professional development and networking opportunities, and to gain the latest knowledge and advances regarding a specific discipline. Unitec provides the Research Dissemination Fund, managed by Tūāpapa Rangahau, to support academic staff in the dissemination of new knowledge at approved fora, toward the benefit of the stakeholders that we serve.

4.4.1 Research dissemination funding

A total of \$120,000 was allocated across Unitec's schools to support research dissemination, with a portion remaining unspent. The majority of conference attendances and presentations were held virtually. A subtotal of \$88,308 was utilised to assist 69 individuals in disseminating their research, averaging \$1,280 per person.

The fund supported 62 international and domestic conference presentations. The remaining funds were allocated to aid in writing, publishing and exhibiting research work. A sustainable resourcing model for research dissemination, essential for the future PBRF submission, underlies the resource-distribution strategy.

The allocation of resources for research dissemination at Unitec involves collaboration between the schools and Tūāpapa Rangahau. The prioritisation process ensures that resources are directed to areas where they can have the greatest impact on our priorities. Additionally, three staff members received partial funding from external organisations to disseminate their research outputs, reflecting the high quality and relevance of their work.

4.4.1.1 Research dissemination funding calculations

At Unitec, Research Dissemination Funding (RDF) is calculated strategically at the school level, based on a robust and evidence-based methodology that accounts for both research productivity and the scale of research-active staffing. This approach ensures a fair and performance-driven allocation of funding that reflects each school's research contributions.

The RDF allocation process begins with an analysis of research outputs recorded in the Research Outputs Management System (ROMS) over the past three years. Each output is weighted based on its type (e.g., journal article, conference paper) and its classification as quality-assured or non-quality-assured. These weighted outputs are aggregated annually at the school level, and a three-year rolling average is calculated. Each school's share of the total is then determined as a percentage, of which 50% is used to establish the **Research Productivity Weight**.

The second component, the **Research Active FTE Weight**, considers the full-time equivalent (FTE) of staff engaged in teaching and/or supervising within degree programmes. These FTEs are totalled by school and converted into percentage shares, with 50% again used for calculation. The two weights—

Research Productivity and Research Active FTE—are then combined to determine each school’s proportion of the total RDF pool. This dual-weighted model ensures that funding distribution reflects both tangible research outputs and the human resources driving that research.

4.4.2 Collaborative Research Dissemination Fund

In 2020, amidst the challenges posed by the post-Covid era, the Collaborative Research Dissemination Fund was established as a strategic response. This fund serves as a structured framework aimed at fostering collaborative research endeavours and facilitating the subsequent dissemination of findings through a competitive funding mechanism. The overarching goal was to develop and delineate a collaborative approach to research dissemination that yields tangible research outputs benefiting multiple staff members.

In 2024, Tūāpapa Rangahau allocated a total of \$10,000 to fund a collaborative project titled *Puna Kōrero*.

Project Team: The project team consisted of key individuals from the School of Creative Industries, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, and Taurahere Marae. The team members included Associate Professor Leon Tan, Cris de Groot, Peeti Lamwilai, and Emma Smith from the School of Creative Industries, Hinewaimarama Reihana-White from Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, and Hohepa Renata from Taurahere Marae.

Project Description: Puna Kōrero enabled a collaborative effort between the School of Creative Industries and Marae staff to advance one of the key aspirations of Ngā Kaitiaki: the development of a pou whenua framework designed to mark sites of ecological, cultural, and historical significance across the campus landscape. The project involved the design and testing of a prototype interactive pou whenua, curated by Kaunuku, a specialist public art agency working with mana whenua and Māori communities in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Additionally, a curatorial framework was developed to guide iwi engagement in planning, fundraising, and the future implementation of additional pou whenua. Funding pathways were identified, including applications to Foundation North and Creative New Zealand.

Ultimately, the project laid the groundwork for a future integrated network of pou whenua that could transform the campus into a culturally resonant and educational landscape. With iwi input, the initiative aimed to make visible the multiple tribal histories of the site, alongside those of more recent settlement.

The funded project exemplifies Unitec’s commitment to fostering collaborative research initiatives and facilitating the dissemination of research outcomes across diverse disciplines. Through strategic funding allocations and interdisciplinary collaborations, Unitec aims to advance knowledge creation and contribute to societal wellbeing.

4.4.3 Wairaka: Natural Environment, History and Culture Fund

The fund originates from Priority Three in the 2020–2024 Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan, which focuses on fostering research into Wairaka, our place: the natural environment, history, and wairua.

Associate Professor Leon Tan from the School of Creative Industries was the recipient of this fund in 2024, receiving \$7,000. The project, titled *Ihirangaranga* is a public engagement and placemaking project that integrates nature connection and sonic arts through two free events/wānanga within the marae’s whareniui and surrounding grounds. These wānanga invite participants to reconnect with sound vibrations—*ihirangaranga*—and place as a means of cultivating individual and collective wellbeing, offering pathways to restoring balance, resilience, and connection at a time of rapid urban change in Ōwairaka.

4.4.4 Student-Integrated Research Output Funding

Student-integrated research is part of Priority Two in the Research Strategy, aiming to encourage mutual benefits for both staff and students through collaborative efforts. This Key Performance Indicator (KPI) doesn't cover all related activities but significantly measures student contributions to staff-engaged research. These contributions include authorship, participation in wānanga (educational workshops), creative outputs, studentships, research assistant positions, awards, or other contributions as defined by the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF). The KPI is quantified by counting the number of research outputs. It was approved by the Unitec Research Committee in 2019, with 2020 being the first reporting year.

Eleven Unitec researchers received funding under this initiative, totaling \$5,417.

Table 3 illustrates the research output counts where the co-authors were current or recent Unitec students.

Year	Count research outputs, where the co-authors were current or recent Unitec student(s) ²
2020	60
2021	69
2022	88
2023	92
2024	121

Table 3: Count research outputs, where the co-authors were current or recent Unitec students.

4.4.5 Conference Seed Fund

Unitec's Conference Seed Fund was established to provide initial support for undertaking conference bid responses, developing conference plans, and securing the necessary sponsorship to fund conferences and symposia hosted by Unitec. This funding was available throughout 2024. However, despite its availability, no applications were submitted for this fund during the year.

4.5 Professoriate

Ko te amorangi ki mua, ko te hāpai ō ki muri.

The leader is in front and the food bearers behind.

The professoriate comprises researchers who have gained national and international recognition and have reputations as leaders in their disciplines. The goal for the Unitec professoriate is to share their knowledge, skills, leadership, passion, listening ears and selves with colleagues, students and industry stakeholders for the betterment of society. This is done in a wide range of ways, depending on the strengths and opportunities available to each individual member. The professoriate advocates for its disciplines, teaching, kaupapa and research by collaborating, presenting, engaging in public and building teams across the organisation to catalyse research potential at Unitec. Supervising new and emerging researchers is a key part of the mission of this eminent group.

The professoriate runs the Unitec Professorial Research Mentoring Framework, which involves every member mentoring an emerging researcher through to co-authorship in a recognised publication or supporting researchers to be the lead on their own paper. This framework continues to contribute to

² The 2020–2022 figures are slightly lower than those in the 2023 Research Annual Report due to a 2025 ROMS data audit, which corrected misattributed student co-authorships.

NZQA research compliance and toward developing high-quality research portfolios. In addition to matters research, members of the professoriate show leadership across many aspects of the institute; here is a small selection with examples:

Professoriate name	Leadership examples
Associate Professor Byron Rangiwai	Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Manawa, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Whare. Byron Rangiwai works in Ngā Wai a Te Tūi; Māori and Indigenous Research Centre, his research interests include Māori development, iwi and hapū history, and theology. He developed a number of grant applications in 2024 and served on several funded research projects, also publishing widely and mentoring emerging researchers and kaupapa Māori postgraduate students.
Adjunct Associate Professor Dan Blanchon	Curator of Botany, Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, Adjunct to the Applied Molecular Solutions Research Centre.
Professor Hamid Sharifzadeh	Achieved full professor in 2022. Principal Investigator on externally funded research projects; Academic Programme Manager, Bachelor of Computing Systems, Graduate Diploma in Computing, Postgraduate Diploma in Computing, Master of Computing, Doctor of Computing; Co-Research Leader for School of Computing, Electrical and Applied Technology.
Professor Peter de Lange	Achieved full professor in 2022. Principal Investigator on externally funded research projects. Extensively published botanist, science communicator, ethnobotanist, early career research mentor and founding editor of the journal <i>Perspectives in Biodiversity</i> published through Unitec's ePress.
Professor Martin Carroll	Deputy Chief Executive – Academic, Unitec and MIT. Martin has research, teaching and learning, and academic quality in his executive portfolio, and leads the Senior Academic Advancement and Promotions process at Unitec. Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic at Charles Darwin University from 2010 to 2017, Martin is a board member of the Universities Quality Assurance International Board and participates in the Rangahau Research Forum Professorial Working Group within the context of Te Pūkenga's development.
Associate Professor Diane Fraser	Transdisciplinary researcher and teacher across environmental and animal sciences. Champion of student-integrated research projects and work-based learning innovator, procuring externally funded studentships and stipends

	toward research projects and bearing credits toward their degree.
Associate Professor Linda Kestle	Principal Investigator on externally funded research projects; team leader of externally funded industry-partnered, multi-Unitec-team-member award-winning projects; Co-Research Leader for School of Building Construction. Linda is expert in bringing together multiple staff on research projects leading to QA papers which regularly win best paper awards.

Table 4: Leadership examples from the Unitec Professoriate.

4.6 Research Productivity Traffic Light (RPTL)





As per New Zealand Qualifications Authority requirements under Section 454 (3)(a) of the Education and Training Act 2020, degree programmes must be “taught mainly by people engaged in research.” To ensure compliance, the Te Komiti Mātauranga (Academic Committee) has approved the use of the Research Productivity Traffic Light (RPTL) Report to monitor the extent to which degree teaching and supervision are underpinned by research activity. Introduced in 2012, the RPTL Report has been presented annually since then, enabling the reporting of trends, and forecasting in Unitec’s degree programmes’ research activity due to its longitudinal nature.

The Unitec Research Strategy 2020-2024 aims for all degree-level programs to achieve and maintain a "green lit" rating from 2021.

This section provides a summary of RPTL results for Unitec’s degree programmes up to 2025 within the dynamic landscape of the tertiary education sector, marked by consistent disruption over the past 14 years of RPTL reporting.³




4.6.1 Research Productivity Traffic Light terms of reference and methodology

Key terms and methodology approved by Te Komiti Mātauranga - Academic Committee include:

- »  **Inclusion criteria:** Permanent or part-time staff with an FTE of at least 0.2, or staff on contracts of 12 months or more with an FTE of at least 0.2, who significantly teach and/or supervise degree-level courses in Semester One 2025.
- »  **Exclusion:** Staff returning from maternity leave are excluded from RPTL for one year. Staff returning from extended sick leave may opt to exclude themselves from RPTL for the year following the sickness. Extended sick leave is defined as medical leave lasting three months or more.
- »  **Definition of 'research active':** Staff must produce at least two eligible research outputs, verified in ROMS (Unitec’s Research Output Management System), within the past two years. Part-time staff (FTE ≤ 0.5) require at least one output from the previous two audited years.
- »  **Reporting period:** The 2025 report is based on staff research activity recorded in ROMS for 2023 and 2024.

³ 2024 RPTL results are based on the research outputs data from 2023 and 2024, and hence they are reported in this 2024 Research Annual Report.

The RPTL analysis uses a traffic light colour system to represent levels of research activity in each degree programme. Programmes are categorised based on the proportion of research-active academic staff involved in teaching or supervision. Research activity is determined by the number of verified research outputs recorded in the ROMS database.

	Green indicates meeting the required standard, with at least 75% of staff producing the necessary number of outputs over the two-year review period.
	Amber signifies marginal performance, with 50-74% of staff meeting the output requirements.
	Red denotes performance below the standard, with fewer than 50% of staff achieving the necessary outputs.

4.6.2 The 2024 Research Productivity Traffic Light results

As of Semester One 2025, Unitec offered a total of 33 degree programmes across eight academic schools. These comprised 17 bachelor's degrees, five postgraduate certificates and diplomas, 10 master's degrees, and one doctoral degree. These programmes were the focus of the annual RPTL audit in 2025.

4.6.2.1 Staff Research Productivity Overview

A total of 195 academic staff, equivalent to 178.3 full-time equivalents (FTE), were involved in delivering these programmes. Of the academic staff involved, 83% (161 individuals) met the criteria for research-active status, having produced at least two eligible research outputs over the past two years. An additional 7% (14 staff) were classified as partially research active, with one eligible output during the same period. The remaining 10% (20 staff) had not produced any eligible research outputs, highlighting a need for targeted capability-building initiatives, including mentorship and professional development support.

4.6.2.2 Programme Research Productivity Overview

In 2025, Unitec sustained its progress since the introduction of the RPTL report in 2012 (see Table 5 and Figure 9 below). Despite ongoing challenges, the institution achieved notable progress. 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.

The number of active degree programmes increased from 32 in 2024 to 33 in 2025, following the introduction of the Bachelor of Accounting. This programme, along with the Master of Applied Science, is delivered as part of a networked delivery model across Te Pūkenga; the reported data reflects only Unitec staff involved in teaching these programmes.

Programme Status	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Count of green-lit programmes	9	10	14	19	21	28	27	33	28	31	27	26	28	31
Count of amber-lit programmes	7	8	9	12	16	8	5	7	3	0	2	4	4	2
Count of red-lit programmes	11	9	7	4	3	5	8	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
Total	27	27	30	35	40	41	40	42	34	31	29	30	32	33
Programme Status	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Percentage of green-lit programmes	33%	37%	47%	54%	53%	68%	68%	79%	82%	100%	93%	87%	88%	94%
Percentage of amber-lit programmes	26%	30%	30%	34%	40%	20%	13%	17%	9%	0%	7%	13%	12%	6%
Percentage of red-lit programmes	41%	33%	23%	11%	8%	12%	20%	5%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 5: Total number and percentage of green-, amber- and red-lit degree programmes 2012–2025.

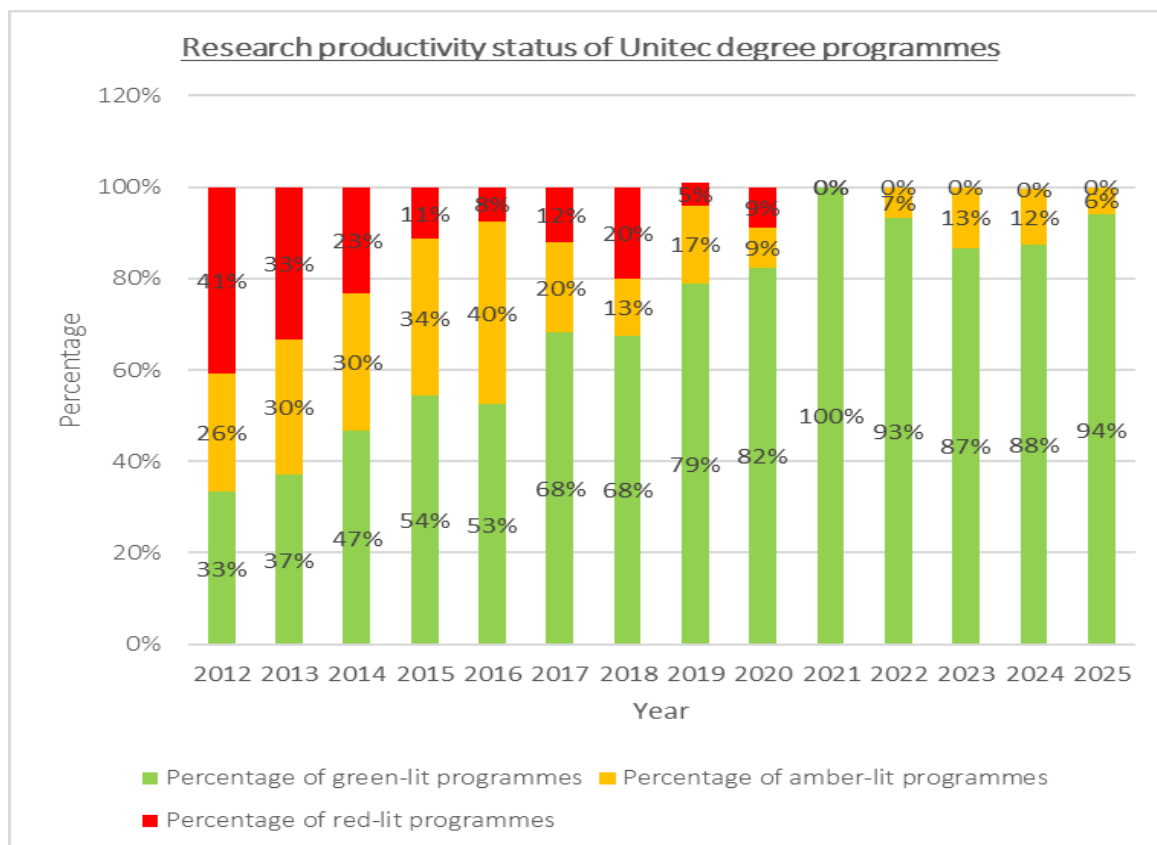








Figure 9: Percentage of green-, amber- and red-lit degree programmes 2012–2025.

Figure 9 also illustrates the research productivity results and trends for the institute over the last 13 years.



4.6.3 Summary

Programme Scope






-  **Eight Academic Schools** contributed to the delivery of degree programmes. Two additional schools (School of Bridgepoint and School of Trades & Services) were not included in this analysis, as they focus solely on **sub-degree (certificate and diploma)** offerings.
-  Total Degree Programmes included in 2025 RPTL: **33**.
 -  17 Bachelor's Degrees,
 -  10 Master's Degrees,
 -  5 Postgraduate Certificates & Diplomas,
 -  1 Doctorate Degree.


Academic Staffing

-  195 academic staff involved.




-  178.3 full-time equivalent (FTE).
-  Teaching at degree level audited for research engagement compliance.

Staff Research Engagement Summary

Research Classification	 Staff Count	 Percentage
 Research Active	161	83%
 Partially Active	14	7%
 Not Research Active	20	10%

 **Concern:** 10% of staff involved in degree teaching have not produced eligible research outputs in the past two years, reflecting a need for targeted capability-building, mentorship, and ongoing support.

Programme Status Overview

- 94% (31 out of 33) of programmes are green-lit
 -  Green-lit: 31 programmes
 -  Amber-lit: 2 programmes
 -  Red-lit: 0 programmes

Staff Performance Highlights – green-lit programmes

- 29 programmes have 80% or more staff at green-lit status.
- 2 programmes have between 75% to 80% at green-lit status
- 10 programmes boast 100% of staff meeting the green-lit benchmark
- All of these are **well above** the institutional benchmark of 75%

Key Influences on Programme Ratings

- Programmes with lower green-lit rates were affected by the onboarding of:
 - Newly appointed staff
 - Staff transitioning from research-inactive roles
 - Recent graduates or early-career academics.






Amber-Lit Programmes

1. Bachelor of Applied Technology
 - Affected by **small teaching cohorts**.
 - Minor numerical changes significantly influence metrics.
2. Bachelor of Veterinary Nursing

- High proportion of staff:
 - New to academia
 - With limited research history
 - Recently graduated
- With targeted **capability-building, mentorship, and ongoing support**, this programme is expected to transition to green-lit status in the near future.

Strategic Recommendations & Actions for Continued Success

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:

-  **Foster Strategic Collaboration:** Strengthen partnerships among Tūāpapa Rangahau's Research Partners, Research Leaders, and Heads of Schools.
-  **Develop Inactive and New & Early-Career Researchers:** Prioritise mentoring, funding, and development opportunities for emerging talent.
-  **Align Research with Institutional Goals:** Ensure research themes and projects contribute directly to the institution's strategic direction.
-  **Enhance Cross-School Collaboration:** Promote interdisciplinary research through shared initiatives and joint projects.
-  **Build Institutional Resilience:** Embed sustainable research practices to support long-term excellence and adaptability.

Despite challenges such as the Te Pūkenga restructure, post-Covid impacts, and the loss of experienced research staff, Unitec has consistently maintained the green-lit status of its degree programmes since 2012, with notable gains in 2025. Sustaining this progress requires research planning at both individual and school levels to remain adaptive, responsive, and well-integrated into academic management. Continued success will rely on strategic collaboration among Tūāpapa Rangahau's Research Partners, Research Leaders, and Heads of Schools. Priorities include developing new and early-career researchers, aligning research with institutional goals, and enhancing cross-school collaboration. These actions are vital to ensuring long-term research excellence and institutional resilience.

4.7 Research partnering

The Research Development Programme (RDP) initiative was implemented 10 years ago to support programmes to improve their research productivity, so staff engage in research activities and contribute to a strong research culture. To measure research productivity, Tūāpapa Rangahau has tracked individual progress with the Research Productivity Traffic Light (RPTL) system to optimise resources toward the goal of 100% green-lit programmes. The following measures were first used in 2019 but were adapted to the Covid environment for 2021, where necessary, and moved online during Covid lockdown periods. More recently, we have transitioned these events back toward more in-person delivery.

- » Attendance, where appropriate and accessible, at school staff meetings to promote our funding mechanisms and services.
- » Clear, concise and regular communication with Research Leaders to ensure they are well informed.
- » Quarterly Research Leaders' Hui set up as a forum for Research Leaders to share their experiences and plan for the upcoming months.
- » Continued implementation of the new co-designed, performance-based systems for research time allocation.
- » Actively encouraging research clusters, mentoring and collaboration, especially in those programmes that have needed extra support.
- » Reviewing and improving early career researcher (ECR) initiatives to grow and nurture research capability and leadership, including establishing new annual events such as the Unitec ECR Forum Research Spiel.
- » Continued support for PBRF candidates to implement their research plans (developed as part of an interim quality evaluation in 2022), so they remain on track for a future PBRF funding scheme replacement (awaiting further detail on the future funding landscape).
- » Supporting non-degree researchers through the non-degree teaching research track where their research activity warrants support.

These measures allowed us, despite the legacy of pandemic-related disruptions and the uncertain future in the sector, to have 94% of our degree programmes green-lit. It is worth noting here that there are zero red-lit programmes. Also, that the research compliance standard is high for the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector and by the standard used in many Te Pūkenga business divisions, Unitec is 100% compliant. Tūāpapa Rangahau plans to support Research Leaders in 2025 by helping to mitigate as much as possible the impact of restructures in the organisation on staff research activity. Tūāpapa Rangahau recognises the extra pressure on workloads due to the current situation, and that this could adversely affect these outcomes and require additional support.

4.8 School research plans

All schools at Unitec that offer degree programmes are required to develop and maintain formal research plans. These plans serve as a strategic framework to guide research activity and ensure alignment with institutional goals. The primary objectives of these research plans are to:

- » integrate research into programme curricula, teaching, and learning;
- » align with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and support the development of Māori and Pacific research capability;
- » contribute to the achievement of the six Key Performance Indicators outlined in Unitec's Research Strategy (Section 2);
- » foster clustered, collaborative research efforts by identifying research groups and maximising the use of available resources; and
- » coordinate research efforts within each school toward a cohesive and shared academic vision.

These research plans are reviewed annually by the Unitec Research Committee and play a key role in programme reviews and degree monitor visits. Importantly, they promote the formation of Research Groups, which support collaborative research practices. Notably, two of these groups evolved into formal Research Centres in 2022.

In 2024, Tūāpapa Rangahau worked closely with Research Leaders and Heads of Schools to conduct a comprehensive review of the school research plans that were initially updated in 2023. All schools with degree programmes successfully completed this review and updated their plans accordingly. Two rounds of review were conducted during the year: a standard mid-year review and a more focused

review in November. The latter concentrated on identifying and formalising research groups within each school, including the designation of a Research Group Leader and documentation of group membership. Following this process, a centralised database was created to catalogue all research groups, their leaders, and members. This resource is expected to significantly enhance the potential for research collaboration within and across schools. Further development of these research groups is planned for 2025.

The School of Bridgepoint and the School of Trades and Services were excluded from this process, as they offer only sub-degree programmes and are not subject to NZQA research compliance requirements.

Overall, these research plans not only guide research development and performance tracking at the school level but also serve as a foundational reference for Programme Monitors and external reviewers. By requiring the organisation of staff into Research Groups, they help foster a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement in research quality and output.

4.9 Ethics

The Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) reviews ethics applications for research projects involving human participants submitted by staff and students of Unitec and MIT. Applications relating to animal ethics are outsourced to AgResearch.

In 2024, UREC received 53 new ethics applications from Unitec and MIT. Of these, 47 were approved during the year. Eight applications were submitted by MIT faculty and three by the ConCove group. Approximately half of all applications came from students undertaking master's degrees.

On average, applications took between six and eight weeks from submission to final approval. Most applicants received authorisation to commence their research within one month. Feedback provided by UREC reviewers has led to substantial improvements across various aspects of submitted research, particularly those conducted by students.

The UREC Secretary delivered online ethics workshops for Unitec and MIT faculty and developed improved feedback forms for Application Types A and B. These forms enhanced clarity and improved the overall flow of the review process for both reviewers and applicants.

No breaches of research ethics were reported in 2024. However, an informal complaint was received from the School of Architecture regarding delays in feedback and concerns about the level of detail required, which was considered excessive given the scope of a student project. In response, the committee agreed to recruit a new member with relevant disciplinary expertise.

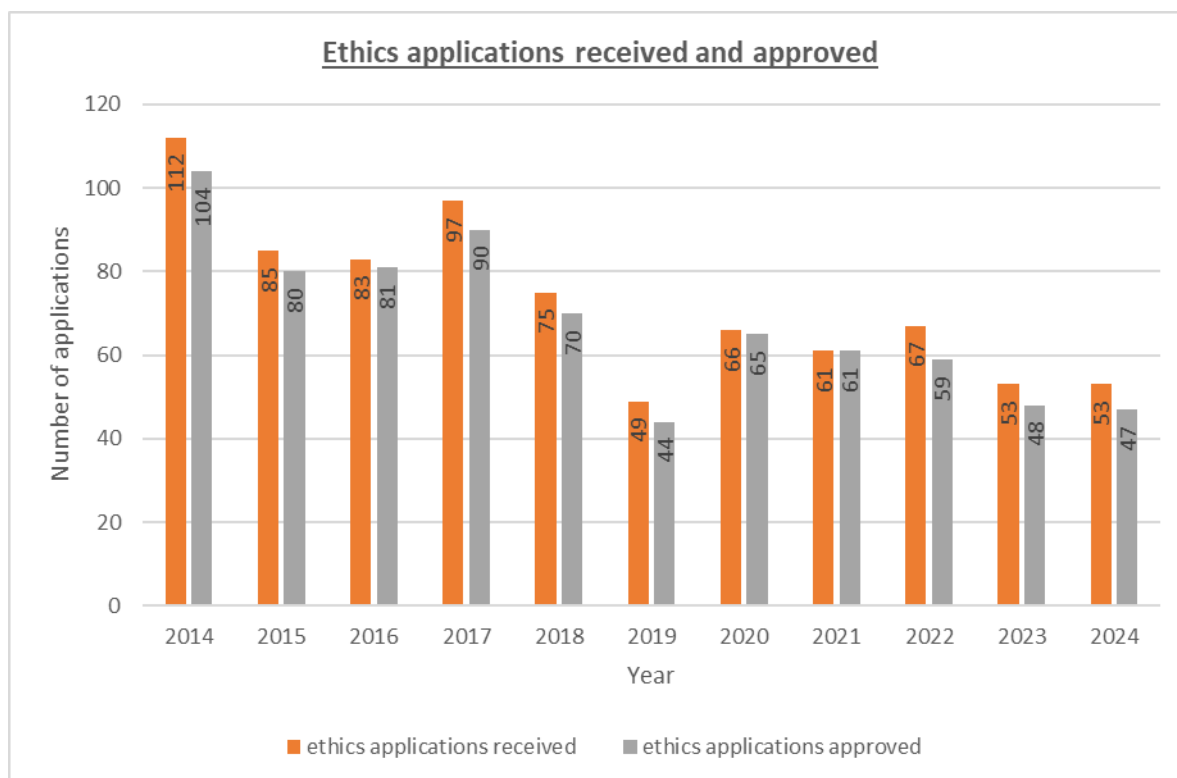


Figure 10: Staff and student ethics applications received and approved.

4.9.1 Committee Membership

Dr Nigel Adams stepped down as Chair in December 2024. He was succeeded by Dr Eric Boamah, former Deputy Chair, from Open Polytechnic. The Chair nominated Daisy Bentley-Gray (Pacific Representative, Unitec) and Hinewaimarama Reihana-White (Māori Representative, Unitec) to jointly serve as Deputy Chairs—a recommendation that was endorsed by the committee.

New members appointed in 2024 included:

- » DJ Jones (Māori Representative, MIT)
- » Yvonne Kainuku (MIT Nursing Programme)
- » Kylie Taffard (ConCove)
- » Susan Hudson (School of Healthcare and Social Practice, Unitec)
- » Annabel Pretty (School of Architecture, Unitec).

4.10 Postgraduate studies and student-engaged research

Engaging students in research is a crucial way to broaden their educational experience and make the taught subjects more accessible to them. This involvement allows students to apply theoretical knowledge to practical problems, deepening their understanding and fostering a more engaging learning environment.

Each year, Tūāpapa Rangahau offers postgraduate scholarships to students enrolled in Unitec's postgraduate programmes, aiming to support their academic success. These scholarships are advertised, awarded and managed by Tūāpapa Rangahau in collaboration with the relevant Academic Programme Managers.

In 2024, a total of \$250,000 in scholarship funding was allocated. A total of \$194,000 distributed to 45 students enrolled across six postgraduate programs. The allocation of funding was as follows: seven

students in the Master of Applied Practice (Social Practice), six students in the Master of Applied Science (Biodiversity Management), four students in the Master of Applied Technology (Computing), 18 students in the Master of Architecture (Professional), two students in the Master of Business, and eight students in the Master of Creative Practice. This funding aimed to support students in their advanced studies and contribute to the development of their respective fields.

Additional targeted allocations included \$10,000 for the Summer Postgraduate Māori Internship Project, supporting two Māori students with \$5,000 each; \$10,000 to the MAI ki Wairaka fund (as detailed in Section 3.1.2); and \$10,000 to support the Pacific Centre Writing Retreat for Pacific postgraduate students. The remaining \$26,000 of the total fund was not utilised, due either to a lack of eligible applications or to underspending in specific allocation areas

In addition to supporting a diverse range of academic disciplines, the scholarship funding prioritised two key groups through Māori-specific and Pacific-specific scholarships. Of the 45 scholarship recipients, nine identified as Māori, with further details provided earlier in Section 3.3, which outlines the Māori Postgraduate Scholarships. Additionally, 13 students identified as being of Pacific origin, reflecting the commitment to enhancing access to education for these priority communities. These figures indicate a strong focus on supporting Māori and Pacific students in their postgraduate studies, ensuring that they have the resources to excel in their chosen fields.

5 Priority Three (Partnered research and innovation)

Research at Unitec will concentrate on opportunities and problems identified by Māori, industry and community partners. Strong, enduring partnerships will be facilitated and valued, with investment in capacity building, innovation and leadership in this space. The reciprocity created by these partnerships will enhance opportunity for student work-integrated learning.

This section of the report highlights:

- » Increasing external engagement
- » Joint research with universities, other ITPs and CRIs
- » Seeking external funding
- » Delivery of externally funded projects
- » Unitec Research Centres
- » Telling our research stories
- » Unitec ePress
- » Unitec Research Blog.

5.1 Increasing external engagement

Building industry partnerships and enhancing student success are key to Unitec's vision and Research Strategy. By fostering collaborations, Unitec bridges academia and industry, ensuring the relevance of its education and research. These partnerships drive innovation and address industry needs, aligning with Unitec's overarching goals.

5.1.1 Building external relationships through research

Unitec plays a distinctive and essential role in New Zealand's research and innovation ecosystem by delivering applied, cost-effective research solutions to communities and industry sectors that may otherwise face barriers to accessing such expertise. Its focus on practical impact and inclusivity ensures that knowledge and innovation are extended to diverse groups, enhancing local and national development.

One notable example is the collaborative research initiative led by Associate Professor Dr Kristie Cameron, with support from the Research Partner – Enterprise, involving the hapū Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuarā of Te Arawa in Horohoro, near Rotorua. This partnership seeks to develop innovative scent lures for possum trapping. Since 2018, Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuarā have managed a trapping programme across more than 500 hectares of ancestral land. Eager to trial the new lure technologies, the hapū joined Dr Cameron's team in applying for an MBIE Smart Ideas grant, the outcome of which is expected in mid 2025. The project also involves lure and bait manufacturer Connovation as an industry partner, contributing expertise in product development and marketing.

In early 2024, Professor Terri-Ann Berry transitioned from leading the Environmental Solutions Research Centre to co-directing the Environmental Innovation Centre (EIC). Through a subcontracting agreement with Unitec, EIC has taken on the delivery of several high-profile waste minimisation projects for clients including BRANZ, Marley, BUPA, and HRV. To support the effective execution of these projects, Gregor Steinhorn and Penny Thompson from Tūāpapa Rangahau joined the EIC team, contributing business development, strategic planning, and data visualisation capabilities.

Professor Christoph Schnoor extended Unitec's international research profile through a partnership with the German Archaeological Institute (DAI). This project involved a laser scan survey of the historic colonial-era 'House of the Agricultural Expert' in Apia, Samoa. Technical scanning services were

delivered by Recon Limited, providing detailed documentation and digital preservation of this culturally significant site.

In further research aligned with equity and cultural identity, Ako Aotearoa engaged Daisy Bentley-Gray from Pacific Success and Associate Professor Evangelia Papoutsaki from Tūāpapa Rangahau to evaluate a micro-credential programme designed to enhance the training of tertiary educators and address racial equity in the technology sector for Pasifika learners. Technical expertise was provided by Dr Marion Muliaumasealii, a Melbourne-based academic and former Unitec graduate.

Associate Professor Papoutsaki also participated in a project funded by Apple NZ to evaluate the efficacy of the micro credential Apple in Schools train the Kaiako programme. Associate Professor Rangawai led this research across participating Kura Kaupapa sites in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and consequently commissioned to undertake a Phase 2 evaluation in 2025 throughout Te Tai Tokerau Northland.

Additionally, Associate Professor Hinekura Smith led a collaborative project with Aboriginal researchers Aunty Gina Bundle OAM and Yoolongteeyt Aunty Dr Vicki Couzens. This initiative explores how traditional garments created by Māori and Aboriginal mothers serve as culturally generative practices that support positive Indigenous identities and cultural reconnection. The project was funded by the Edinburgh-based International Teaching Artist Conference.

5.1.2 Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) Research and Enterprise Voucher scheme

The ITP Research and Enterprise Voucher scheme aims to seed new relationships with communities, iwi and businesses by subsidising the cost of our research services to kick-start research collaborations and develop staff capability. While delivering on a contract, we are facilitating professional development for staff in the commercial arena (outside of traditional academia) and engaging directly with end users. Where practical, we are involving students in the projects to give them valuable exposure to the industry and community research environment. This creates real-world opportunities for staff and students through increased industry engagement, as well as the opportunity to foster joint projects around commercialisation and the creation of intellectual property.

Two projects that began in 2023 continued into and concluded in 2024:

- » Project **CocoFlourish**, led by Associate Professor Kristie Cameron of the School of Environmental and Animal Sciences. The project tested compostable cat litter made from sustainably sourced coconut coir. This material could replace large amounts of mineral-based cat litter that are disposed to landfills today. Acceptance of the material by cats and its performance were tested in collaboration with a cattery. The research led to product improvements and results were published (<https://doi.org/10.34074/piahw.003101>).
- » **Huntsman Intelligence**, Denis Lavrov from the Cybersecurity Research Centre. The project developed a novel cybersecurity tool for an Aotearoa New Zealand start-up company. Three students from across Te Pūkenga were involved as research assistants. The developed technology was used by the industry client who is now in the market as nWebbed (<https://www.nwebbed.com>)

These examples demonstrate how the ITP Research and Enterprise Voucher scheme can kick-start research of important questions to help our academics to create significant impact.

5.1.3 Industry-funded projects

Industry-funded projects are defined as research and enterprise projects Unitec is receiving funding for, where the services Unitec is providing are applied contract research or consultancy, from all funders, excluding any governmental contestable funding sources. This is measured as a count of the number of projects. Figure 11 provides a visual representation of the counts of industry-funded projects for Unitec spanning from 2020 to 2024. This data offers insight into Unitec’s engagement with industry partners and its contributions to applied research and consultancy activities during this timeframe.

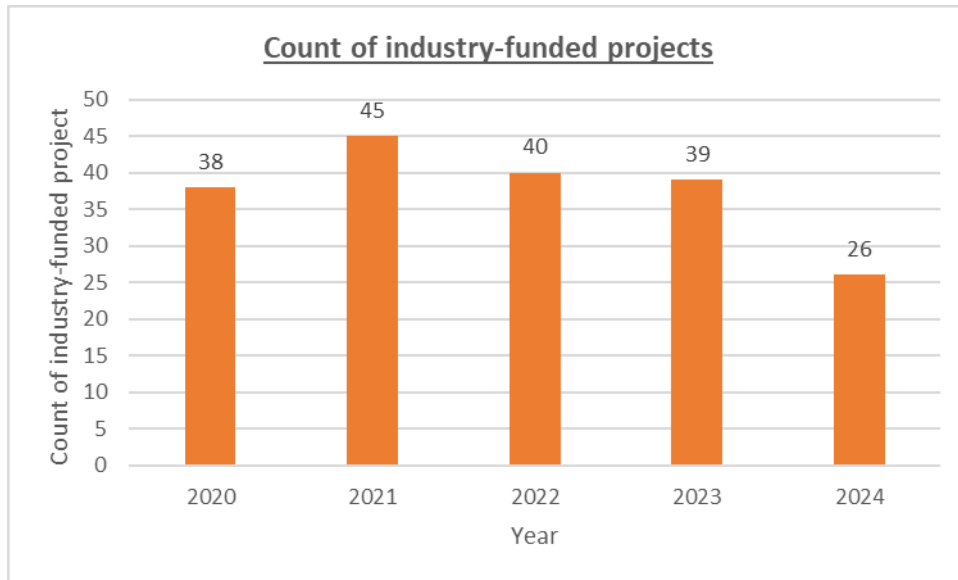


Figure 11: Unitec industry-funded project counts between 2019 and 2024.

Figure 12 provides a detailed breakdown of the contributions made by individual Schools within Unitec to industry-funded projects throughout the year 2024.



Figure 12: Schools’ contribution to industry-funded projects count.

5.1.4 Commercialisation

After significant successes from 2020 to 2023, in 2024 Unitec's Cybersecurity Research Centre had to discontinue its collaboration with Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland genetic information security start-up GeneCrypt due to GeneCrypt failing to raise funds and subsequently stopping to pay for the research services provided. Initial research by the Cybersecurity Research Centre had in 2021 led to an agreement to commercialise technology developed by the Unitec team as part of the MBIE-funded STRATUS project. A \$120,000 research contract was secured and successfully executed in 2022, providing a very significant opportunity for Unitec to partner with GeneCrypt during their growth journey. A further research contract with GeneCrypt was secured for 2023, but ultimately the project was shelved due to funding issues. This is very unfortunate as, due to the rapidly increasing threat level in cybersecurity, there is a great market demand for novel cybersecurity solutions and interest in research teams being able to deliver them. Despite this outcome, it is a common risk in deep-tech start-up ventures and any academic institution active in this kind of research and development must accept these kinds of risks. In 2024 the Cybersecurity Research Centre successfully delivered a research voucher for cyberthreat intelligence start up Huntsman Intelligence which continues on its venture journey.

In 2021, major Aotearoa New Zealand ventilation-system company HRV entered into a research collaboration with Unitec's Environmental Solutions Research Centre (ESRC) to test the quality of their products in real-world applications, using indoor air-quality sensors developed in a collaboration between ESRC and Unitec's School of Computing, Electrical and Applied Technology. The industry partner expressed great interest in developing these sensors further and licensing the underlying design to include them in future generations of their product family. This work has led to a \$206,000 research contract for work in 2022 and 2023, with considerable future commercialisation potential. Due to pandemic impacts the project had to be delayed, but the flexible approach of ESRC allowed it to retain the contract and successfully set up everything for a measurement campaign in winter 2023. After the resignation of Prof. Terri-Ann Berry (who was partially retained as a Unitec Adjunct Professor), her new research endeavor Environmental Innovation Centre was subcontracted to continue the successful delivery of the HRV project which was in large parts successfully delivered in 2024, with a final report due in 2025.

5.2 Joint research with universities, other Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) and Crown Research Institutes (CRIs)

Unitec benefited significantly from the arrival of two early career scientists, Dr Marilou Raduban and Dr Wesley Webb, who joined the institution from Massey University. Both researchers brought prestigious grants with them, further bolstering Unitec's research capabilities.

Dr Raduban's Catalyst Seeding Grant, which focuses on developing semiconductor thin films as radiation sensors, has enabled valuable international collaborations, notably with Dr Jiri Olenjnicek from the Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. In addition to this academic exchange, Dr Raduban's transition to Unitec also led to an unexpected advantage: the acquisition of specialised lab equipment from Massey University. This equipment, which was made available following the closure of its Albany Campus science facility, was purchased at a reasonable price and has contributed to strengthening Unitec's research infrastructure.

In contrast, Dr Webb's research, funded by a Marsden Fast Start Grant, explores the evolution of complex female song in songbirds. His work has fostered a collaborative relationship with Associate Professor Karan Odom from the University of Maryland, who shares similar research interests. Through this collaboration, Associate Professor Odom provided access to her extensive birdsong database, allowing Dr Webb to refine and rescope his research project.

This partnership exemplifies the power of resource-sharing and interdisciplinary collaboration, further enhancing the quality and scope of Dr Webb’s work. Together, these collaborations not only advance the individual research projects but also contribute to Unitec’s growing reputation as a hub for innovative and impactful scientific inquiry.

5.3 Seeking external funding

In 2024 the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) convened a Science System Advisory Group to “develop a set of evidence-based recommendations to strengthen the science, innovation and technology system and ensure its future success”. The adequacy, sustainability and balance of funding in areas of national and system importance, and the effectiveness of funding mechanisms, are included in the challenges the group will consider.

Separately, a University Advisory Group was also established to investigate issues and aspirations of the university sector. Group members were charged with considering challenges and opportunities for improvement in the university sector including how the funding system could incentivise better outcomes.

In December, the Marsden Fund Council advised of a change to its Terms of Reference and Investment Plan. The new Terms contained explicit signals that every application for funding must describe its potential to generate economic, environmental, or health benefit for New Zealand, and that 50% of grants from the Fund each year must have the potential for economic benefit. The new Investment Plan focused on sciences such as physics, chemistry, maths, engineering, and biomedical sciences, with the disestablishment of panels which assess proposals on social sciences and humanities. As a result of this change, Unitec researchers who were planning to submit social sciences and humanities focused applications were not able to apply to the fund.

The Catalyst Fund, which some Unitec researchers have successfully applied to in the past, also updated its Investment Plan in 2024 to align the fund with the “government’s priorities for the New Zealand science system, including delivery of greater economic impact and creating pathways for commercialisation of innovative technologies”. Research in the areas of Quantum technology, Artificial Intelligence, Health and biomedicine, Space and Earth observation, Biotechnologies and Antarctic research is now being prioritised.

Throughout 2024 Unitec was proactive in responding to the consultations undertaken by the Science System Advisory Group and the University Advisory Group, with feedback provided on issues including What sort of mechanisms could be established to identify funding priorities? What could be done to improve the effectiveness of our funding mechanisms? How can the funding system better serve under-represented and under-served communities, such as Māori and Pacific Peoples, and increase diversity within the science, innovation and technology workforce? What is an appropriate balance of funding between: areas of system importance (e.g., competitions, short versus longer term contracts, institutions, workforce initiatives, infrastructure, and commercialisation) and areas of national importance (e.g., sectors, science disciplines, wicked problems).

Throughout 2024, Tūāpapa Rangahau kept abreast of the rapidly changing funding landscape so that we could continue to provide the best advice and support to Unitec researchers’ external funding aspirations.

5.3.1 2024 success stories

The stories below highlight just a couple of Unitec’s external funding success stories in 2024.

5.3.1.1 2024 Te Pūnaha Hihiko: Vision Mātauranga Capability Funding

Te Pūnaha Hihiko: Vision Mātauranga Capability (VMCF) Fund aims to strengthen capability, capacity, skills and networks between Māori and the science, innovation and technology system, and increase

understanding of how scientific research can contribute to the aspirations of Māori organisations and deliver benefit for New Zealand.

In 2024 Associate Professor Hinekura Smith, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, was awarded a VMCF Connect grant of \$149,945 for a project called “Ka Tū Te Rā: A Toi Māori and Science innovation to return woven sails to voyaging waka in Aotearoa”. The grant supported a unique mātauranga Māori scoping project to return traditionally woven sails to voyaging waka inspired by the return of Te Rā, the last traditionally woven Māori sail in existence, from the British Museum to Aotearoa. With Associate Professor Smith taking up a senior academic role at the University of Queensland, this project is being transferred to The University of Waikato to be completed. German Archaeological Institute Award

In 2024 Professor Christoph Schnoor, School of Architecture, was awarded €8,500 by the German Archaeological Institute to prepare a conservation plan for the “House of the Agricultural Expert”, a wooden building planned and constructed by a German colonial official, Richard Schöneich, in 1914 in Apia, Samoa. The funds were designated to contract a service provider to digitally map the building enabling the conservation plan to be completed. Not only did the project assist to identify and document a vulnerable building’s significance and heritage values, it also provided valuable learning opportunities for postgraduate and undergraduate architecture students.

5.3.2 Funding-proposal submissions and success rates

Competition for research funding in New Zealand is highly competitive, with various funding agencies and schemes vying for the best projects. The Marsden Fund, supported by the Royal Society Te Apārangi, is a prominent example, known for its intense competition. MBIE also offers various funding opportunities, including the Catalyst Fund and the Endeavour Fund.

In 2024 the Royal Society Te Apārangi ran an inaugural Tāwhia Te Mana Research Fellowships scheme. The Fellowships were developed to support researchers at different career stages to produce excellent and impactful research and to develop into leaders in their fields. Tūāpapa Rangahau supported three Unitec researchers to submit fellowship applications valued at \$2.8m. Despite the changes to the Marsden Fund (described above), Unitec still submitted two Marsden Fund expressions of interest valued at \$1.2m. In 2024, Unitec was one of several research providers that were restricted to submitting one Endeavour Fund Smart Ideas application. We submitted a strong application valued at \$1m. Unfortunately, none of these large grant requests were successful.

Figure 13 illustrates the number of proposals submitted by Unitec researchers for external funding, the number of successful proposals and the proposal success rates since 2014.

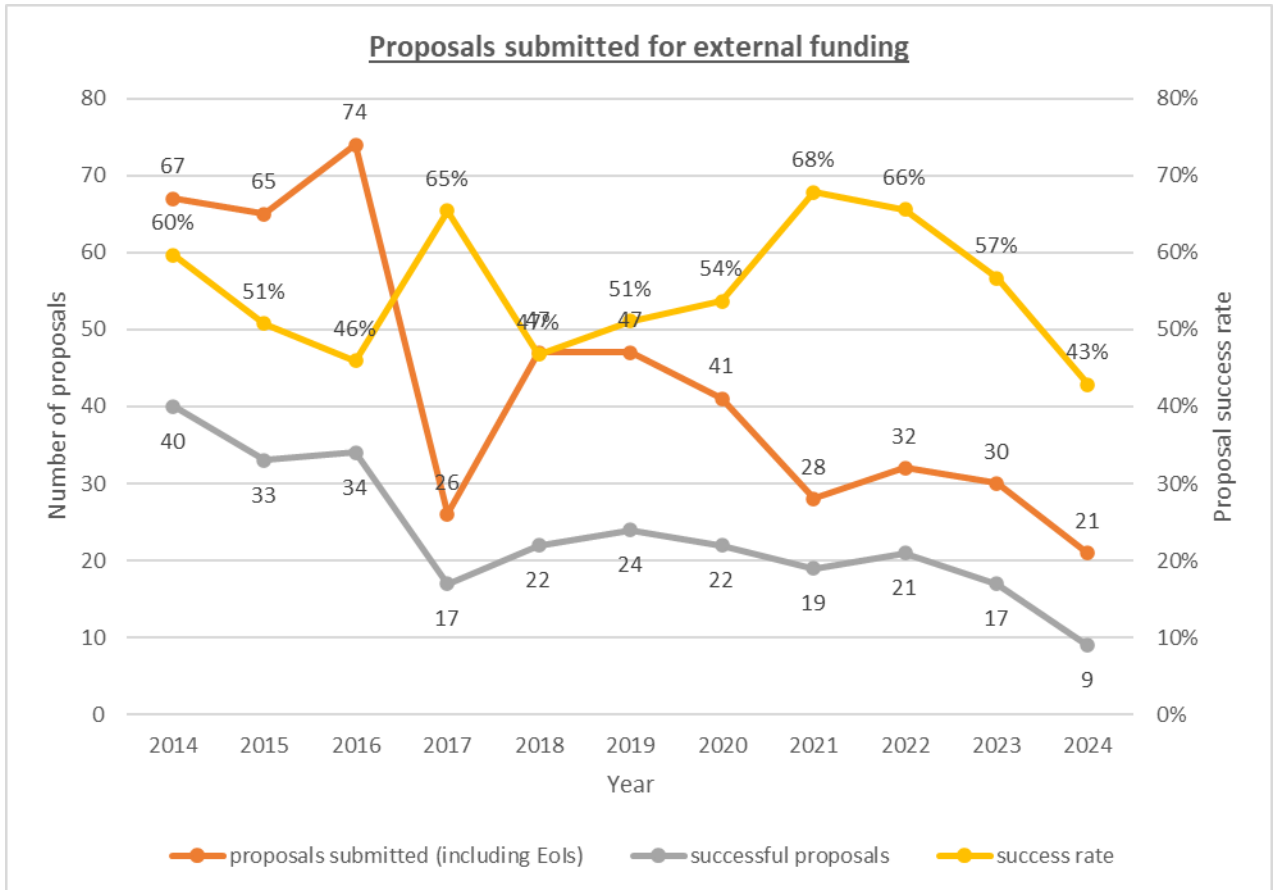


Figure 13: Proposals submitted for external funding 2014–2024.

Figure 14 illustrates the total grants Unitec has won since 2014.

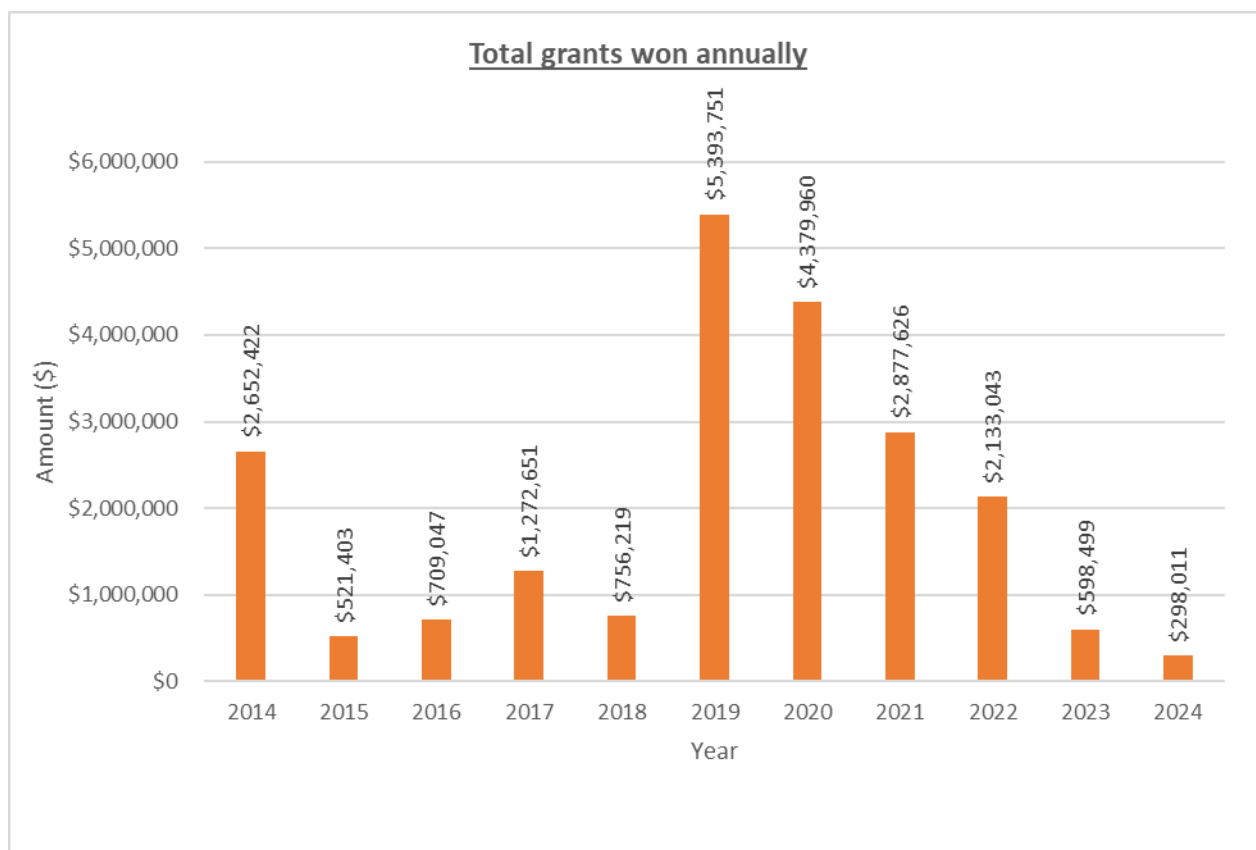


Figure 14: Total grants awarded annually 2014–2024.

NB: At the end of 2024 four grant applications totalling \$1.95m were still awaiting outcomes.

5.3.3 Organisations funding our research

At Unitec external research funding comes from either government or non-government sources. Government funding is funding received from entities defined as Aotearoa New Zealand State Sector Organisations, local authorities (i.e., local government) and council-controlled organisations. Non-government funding includes funding received from public and private companies, not-for-profit entities, iwi and their subsidiaries, industry-based bodies, private individuals and trusts, and cooperatively owned companies.

In 2024 the number of grants received from government and non-government sources were nearly on par (see Table 6 below), however the value of the grants received from government sources was much higher.

The Science System Advisory Group's Terms of Reference note that New Zealand, as a small country, needs to exploit international partnerships in both research and innovation (including access to capital). In 2024 two of Unitec's highest value grants originated from international sources. Tūāpapa Rangahau is keen to support Unitec researchers to develop more extensive and deeper collaborations that may lead to higher value grants from well-resourced international sources such as Horizon Europe.

Funding source	Total funding received	No. of Grants
Non-government	\$32,400	5
Government	\$265,611	6
Total	\$298,011	11

Table 6: Sources of new grants awarded in 2024.

In 2024, \$7m of funding was sought. A breakdown of the outcomes of these applications is depicted in Table 7.

Application status	Total funding sought
Awarded	\$298,011
Declined	\$6,031,455
Awaiting outcomes	\$1,955,466

Table 7: Outcome of submitted applications 2024.

The funders and amounts of Unitec's five biggest grants in 2024 are depicted in Table 8.

Funder	Classification (Govt/ Non-Govt)	Amount	Principal Investigator
Te Pūnaha Hihiko: Vision Mātauranga Capability Fund	Government	\$149,945	Associate Professor Hinekura Smith
Marsden Fund (via novation from Massey University)	Government	\$67,737	Dr Wesley Webb
Catalyst Fund (via novation from Massey University)	Government	\$26,429	Dr Marilou Raduban
German Archaeological Institute	Non-Government	\$15,200	Professor Christoph Schnoor
International Teaching Artist Collaborative	Non-Government	\$10,000	Associate Professor Hinekura Smith

Table 8: Funders and amounts of Unitec's five biggest grants in 2024.

5.4 Delivery of externally funded projects

The successful delivery of an externally funded research project hinges on the Principal Investigator's ability to lead, coordinate and perform the research. Operational and administrative assistance and advice from institutional support teams including Tūāpapa Rangahau, Finance, HR and IMS is vital to ensuring the smooth and timely delivery of contracted research.

In 2024 Tūāpapa Rangahau provided research management and research administration support to Unitec Principal Investigators in the delivery of 26 active externally funded projects worth approximately \$2.8 million in contract value.

5.4.1 Total Unitec external research income (ERI)

The total external research income (ERI) for any given year is a strong indicator of the external value and magnitude of research efforts for that year. For these reasons, it is one of Unitec's KPIs within the Research Strategy, where Unitec seeks to increase the total value of ERI by 10% per annum.

Total ERI is an annual measure of the amount of income Unitec earned delivering research services to external parties. ERI refers to the income earned during a financial year, not the total amount awarded. Unitec measures the ERI earned each year by determining the percentage of progress made that year for each active research project. Each project's percentage is then multiplied by its respective awarded amount to provide the project ERI for that year. Total 2024 ERI is the sum of ERI calculations from all 26 active externally funded research projects.

Longitudinal data from 2010 onwards shows that Unitec significantly increased its external research efforts in the years 2015–17, dropped in 2018, and significantly increased in 2019. The major drop in 2018 was due to the change in the accounting principle that is used to calculate ERI. Due to this new process, the ERI will be low at project start-up but will gradually increase as the percentage of the

project completed increases and is recognised. The investment-plan calculation did not incorporate the complexity discussed above and requires adjustment for future years.

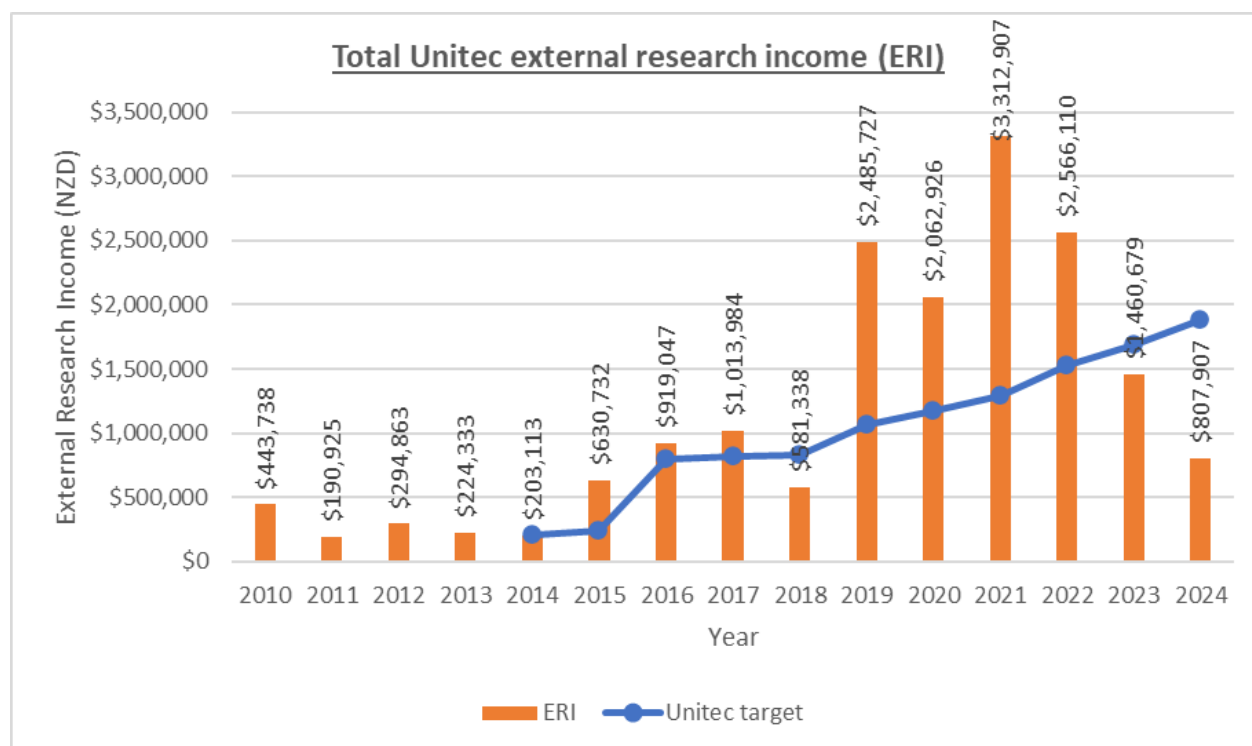


Figure 15: Unitec ERI between 2010 and 2024.

The significant decline in External Research Income (ERI) in 2024 can be primarily attributed to the novation of several high-value research contracts following the departure of key Research Centre Directors.

Most notably, Professor Jenny Lee-Morgan, who led a number of externally funded projects under Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, exited the institution, resulting in the transfer of substantial research funding. Additional losses stemmed from the departures of Professor Terri-Ann Berry from the Environmental Solutions Research Centre and Associate Professor Samantha Heath from the School of Healthcare and Social Practice in late 2023. These exits directly contributed to the downturn in ERI. Furthermore, the departure of these Centre Directors led to the suspension of three research centres in 2024: the Centre of Research in Education for Healthcare Professionals, the Cybersecurity Research Centre, and the Environmental Solutions Research Centre. These centres had previously made significant contributions to Unitec's research profile and external funding capacity. Collectively, these changes highlight the critical need for proactive succession planning and strategic management of research leadership transitions to maintain the continuity of research activity and safeguard external funding streams.

5.4.2 External research income by School and Research Centre

Unitec promotes active involvement in externally funded research at the school level through a reporting system tracking External Research Income (ERI) at both school and research centre levels. This fosters a culture of research excellence and collaboration, providing transparency and accountability while enabling tailored analysis for strategic decision-making.

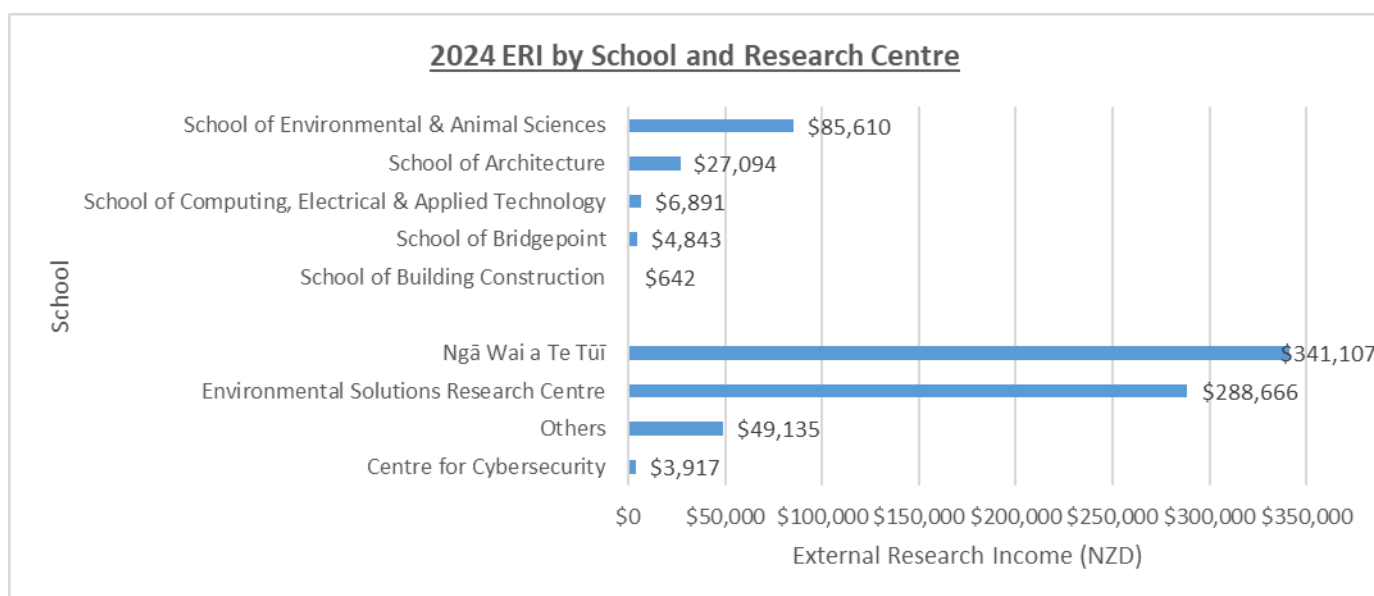


Figure 16: 2024 ERI by School and Research Centre.

In 2024, four out of the eight schools at Unitec that offer degree programmes generated some level of External Research Income (ERI), contributing to the institution's overall research funding portfolio. Additionally, the School of Bridgepoint, which primarily delivers sub-degree programmes, also made a contribution to ERI during the year. However, there was considerable variability in ERI performance across the schools. Reported figures ranged from as low as \$642 to as high as \$85,610 per school. Among the schools offering degree programmes (excluding dedicated research centres), the average ERI amounted to \$15,030 per school. This disparity highlights differing levels of research activity and external funding engagement across the academic units and points to opportunities for strategic support and capacity building in underperforming areas.

Three research centres accounted for 85% of Unitec's total ERI, while schools contributed 15%. Notably, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi (Section 3.1) and the Environmental Solutions Research Centre were the top contributors, with 42% and 36% respectively.

5.4.3 Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) ERI

External Research Income (ERI) is one of the three assessment elements of the Performance-Based Research Fund's (PBRF's) mixed performance-assessment regime. The ERI metric serves as a robust proxy indicator of the quality and relevance of research conducted by tertiary education organisations (TEOs). In 2016 changes were made to the PBRF metric to enhance incentives for TEOs to secure ERI, especially from non-governmental sources. These changes included reducing the weight of the Quality Evaluation portion from 60% to 55% and increasing the weight of the ERI portion from 15% to 20%. Additionally, starting in 2015, the government mandated reporting ERI in four distinct categories based on funding sources. From 2017 onwards, the PBRF funding formula utilised category weightings (Table 9) to calculate PBRF ERI funding allocations.

Funding source category	ERI Weighting	ERI Amount	ERI Percentage
NZ government contestable funds	1	\$590,172	73%
NZ public-sector contract research	1	\$37,392	5%
Overseas research income	3.5	\$28,056	3%
NZ non-government income	4	\$152,287	19%

Table 9: 2024 ERI by PBRF ERI weightings and by funding source.

The amendments to the PBRF by central government highlight the increasing emphasis on externally funded research, particularly in industries and communities. This shift also reflects a governmental push for TEOs to decrease reliance on public funding for research endeavours. These changes are in line with Unitec's Research Strategy for 2020–2024, which prioritises enhanced external engagement, a focus on applied research, and continuous growth in ERI.

Additionally, Table 9 provides a breakdown of Unitec's 2024 ERI by funding source, revealing that approximately 73% of ERI originated from New Zealand Government contestable funds, 19% from non-governmental sources within Aotearoa New Zealand, and the remaining 8% from either public-sector contract research within Aotearoa New Zealand or overseas research income.

5.5 Unitec Research Centres

Research Centres are an important mechanism by which key research targets are prioritised and achieved in the institute. They facilitate the concentration of applied research talent in an area of clearly identified, relevant focus. These are connected to our teaching programmes, comprised of staff from within the institute, and collaborators from other tertiary organisations and are based in strong industry partnerships. The centres leverage their focus and diverse talent pool to seek external research income, enabling the institute to better serve its obligations and strategic aspirations to benefit New Zealand.

In 2024 there were six research centres at Unitec, three were fully operational and three were placed in abeyance by the Unitec Research Committee (URC) due to major changes significantly related to the ongoing disruptions in the ITP sector. This approach by the URC affords the relevant schools hosting these centres time to develop recovery plans which are required by the URC in early 2025. As a consequence, these three centres did not operate and will not provide a report in 2024.

Fully operational in 2024:

- » The Digital Heritage Research Centre – Associate Professor Renata Jadresin-Milic (Director)
- » Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, Māori and Indigenous Research Centre – Associate Professor Hinekura Smith (Interim Director)
- » The Applied Molecular Solutions Research Centre – Dr Sarah Wells (Director)

In abeyance in 2024:

- » The Centre of Research in Education for Healthcare Professionals – in abeyance following the resignation of its Director Associate Professor Samantha Heath
- » The Cybersecurity Research Centre – in abeyance following bad debt from a private sector funded contract
- » The Environmental Solutions Research Centre – in abeyance following the resignation of its Director Professor Terri-Ann Berry

5.5.1 The Digital Heritage Research Centre

The Digital Heritage Research Centre (DHRC) at Unitec is dedicated to the digital recording, modelling, and digital preservation of historic and heritage buildings. Through cutting-edge technologies such as 3D laser scanning, photogrammetry, and Historic Building Information Modelling (HBIM), the DHRC supports innovative conservation practices that safeguard cultural heritage for future generations.

The centre's work bridges education, community, and industry, promoting the integration of digital tools in architectural education and heritage conservation. DHRC's activities include creating digital archives, enabling remote access to heritage sites, supporting disaster remediation, and fostering global collaboration. By combining technical expertise with cultural sensitivity, the DHRC plays a vital role in enhancing heritage awareness and resilience in Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond.

5.5.1.1 Mātauranga Māori

The DHRC's project teams are composed of both tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti core members who are firmly committed to co-designing the research in partnership with mana whenua and manuhiri communities. This collaborative approach is guided by the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, ensuring that research processes and outcomes are shaped through equitable, respectful, and culturally grounded relationships.

The overarching goal of the DHRC's projects is to develop solutions that directly support the preservation of Māori cultural heritage in Aotearoa New Zealand, including the safeguarding of marae and associated taonga. Although a previous proposal to the MBIE Endeavour Fund Research Programme was not successful, the assessment panel acknowledged the critical value of the work, noting: "The project focuses on an important topic of cultural heritage that is fragile but essential in maintaining diversity and cultural values." This endorsement reinforces the importance of the centre's research direction.

The DHRC's methodologies are underpinned by Māori principles of relationality, particularly whakapapa and whanaungatanga, which emphasise interconnectedness between people, communities, and the environment. The centre approaches heritage not merely as static artefacts to be documented, but as living relationships between people and place. This perspective honours the authority and deep, intergenerational connection of mana whenua to their lands, setting the centre's approach apart from conventional models that tend to prioritise recording and presentation over lived experience and cultural continuity.

5.5.1.2 Student Engagement and Capacity Building

Since the establishment of the DHRC, student involvement has been an integral part of its activities. Students actively participate across all stages of the centre's research and project work, including digital recording, data processing, 3D modelling of heritage sites, and the interpretation of cultural data. The centre also contributes to public presentations and engages community members, industry professionals, and other research teams, gaining valuable experience in both academic and applied heritage practices.

- » In 2024, Master of Architecture (Professional) (MARCP) student Arlene Sisarich played a key role in the second phase of DHRC's current project focusing on St David's Memorial Church on Khyber Pass Road in Auckland. Arlene was directly involved in community and industry engagement, and carried out digital documentation, processing, 3D modelling, and visualisation of the site. Through this hands-on experience, she acquired a broad range of digital heritage methodologies alongside traditional historiographic research techniques. Her work contributed to developing heritage resources needed by the community to support the protection and adaptive reuse of the building.
- » MARCP student Hannah Adolf, a recipient of the Unitec Industry Scholarship in 2023, continued to expand her expertise through her involvement in the DHRC's research on Carlile House, a significant heritage site in Grey Lynn, Auckland, built in 1886. Her work has contributed to the documentation and interpretation of this culturally important building while further strengthening her applied research skills in heritage conservation.
- » Former MARCP student Rohan Sadhu remains actively engaged with DHRC and the wider heritage sector. A recipient of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) General Assembly Conference Sydney Scholarship and an ICOMOS ANZ Emerging Professional member, Rohan joined the ICOMOS ANZ Legislation and Policy Committee in 2024. He is now employed full-time at DPA Architects, a firm specialising in heritage architecture, founded by Dave Pearson.

These examples reflect the DHRC's ongoing commitment to mentoring and supporting students in the field of digital heritage. The centre continues to foster long-term engagement with both current and former students. Several academic publications, currently in preparation, further demonstrate the scholarly outcomes emerging from these collaborative efforts.

5.5.1.3 Personnel Changes and Strategic Leadership Development

In 2024, DHRC saw personnel changes that affected the team's structure and capacity. Viola Vadász and Iman Khan, who joined the centre in November 2022, were instrumental in various research activities throughout 2023, including project organisation, data evaluation, and expanding the centre's network. However, due to career shifts, Iman Khan took on a new role as a lecturer in the School of Architecture, while Viola Vadász reduced her involvement before resigning in October 2024.

To maintain momentum, particularly in securing external grants, DHRC engaged Abigail Temby Spence under a Professional Services Contract. Abigail, a former MARCP student with expertise in tangata Tiriti relationships, significantly enriched DHRC's research approach by providing a unique perspective and valuable networks. Her involvement has been successful, adding considerable depth to the centre's work in 2024.

In response to leadership challenges, a series of meetings in late 2024 resulted in the decision to implement a shared leadership model starting in 2025. Associate Professor Renata Jadresin Milic, Professor Christoph Schnoor, and Peter McPherson will take on co-leadership roles, addressing the growing reliance on individual leadership and ensuring the centre's continued success and sustainability. This restructuring aims to enhance collaboration and distribute responsibilities more effectively.

5.5.1.4 Partnerships: External and Internal

Since its inception, the DHRC has experienced significant growth in its network of external and internal collaborations, with substantial developments in 2024. The centre's ongoing partnerships were further strengthened, particularly with Friends of St David's, a charitable trust dedicated to the preservation of St David's Memorial Church. DHRC coordinated with Unitec students and industry partner Woods to provide advanced laser scanning resources, alongside 2D and 3D drawings and models to support the trust's preservation efforts. Additionally, DHRC continued its productive collaboration with ArcLab, a digital preservation platform, enhancing its capacity to apply cutting-edge technologies to heritage conservation.

In 2024, DHRC also established several new relationships. These included Ellen Andersen, Director of Māori Heritage at Heritage New Zealand, and Andrea Goethals, Manager of Digital Preservation and Data Capability at the National Library of New Zealand, who extended an invitation for DHRC's involvement in the iPRES 2025 conference, a leading international event on digital preservation to be held in New Zealand for the first time. DHRC also began discussions with potential partners under the Horizon Europe programme, becoming a registered partner to access EU-funded opportunities for institutional cooperation. Another significant new partnership was formed with the Lake House Trust, a community-driven organisation dedicated to heritage preservation.

Internally, Associate Professor Renata Jadresin Milic, DHRC's Director, continued to play an active role in the heritage sector through her involvement with ICOMOS ANZ, serving as an elected Board Member (2022-2025) and contributing to several specialist committees. Renata's work in 2024 included providing advice to policymakers and contributing to important submissions on heritage-related legislative matters. Additionally, her participation in the ICOMOS ANZ Annual Conference in Ōtepoti Dunedin highlighted DHRC's leadership and visibility within the heritage community. These ongoing relationships and activities exemplify DHRC's growing influence and commitment to fostering meaningful partnerships across the heritage sector.

5.5.1.5 Disseminations

The earlier mentioned partnerships and collaborations are already evidenced by the early dissemination of the centre's collaborative efforts.

In 2024 the centre's research outputs encompassed the publication of three book chapters, four conference and symposium presentations and four disseminations across five industry, professional and community media platforms.

5.5.1.6 External funding applications

In 2024, DHRC focused on securing external funding through various grants and collaborations with central and local government agencies, as well as industry partners. The centre worked closely with Tūāpapa Rangahau to identify funding opportunities, including paid consultancies, student scholarships, and hosting conferences. Key funding applications included the Royal Society Te Apārangi New Zealand Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowship, Te Tahua Taiao Ngā Taonga Lottery Environment and Heritage Fund, and other large-scale research grants such as the Catalyst Seeding General, Marsden Fund, and Endeavour Fund.

While DHRC was unsuccessful in securing funding from these sources, significant effort was placed into developing multi-stakeholder applications and preparing for future opportunities, such as Horizon Europe.

On the international front, DHRC successfully secured the Rome Scholarship in Architecture for 2025-2026 from the British School at Rome. Additionally, the centre anticipates in-kind contributions valued at approximately \$100,000 from industry partners, including professional services, specialist expertise, and access to specialized equipment.

5.5.1.7 External research income

In 2024 the DHRC did not have any active externally funded projects, resulting in no external research income.

5.5.2 The Applied Molecular Solutions Research Centre (AMSRC)

In alignment with Tūāpapa Rangahau's initiative to foster new research groups within schools, the Applied Molecular Solutions Research Center (AMSRC) has redeveloped its strategic goals to reflect its expanded scope and the formal integration of the Unitec Herbarium as well as those of researchers within the AMS lab.

The centre's key aims are to:

- » Build AMSRC's capacity for industry-funded research services and initiatives.
- » Conduct Te Tiriti-informed kaupapa o te taiao.
- » Develop and apply rapid diagnostic molecular tests to aid in species detection, identification, and biodiversity assessment.
- » Apply ecological genetics to inform the centre's knowledge of species ecology, demographics, and evolutionary adaptations.
- » Utilise morphological and molecular approaches to resolve the taxonomic and conservation status of New Zealand's flora and fauna.

5.5.2.1 Vision Mātauranga

AMSRC continues to lead in Vision Mātauranga through strong partnerships with iwi and Māori researchers. Ongoing collaborations with Te Roroa and Dr Nick Waipara from Plant & Food Research have advanced projects like Ngā Roimata o Tohe, co-led by Dr Sarah Wells and Taoho Patuawa. In 2024, hui were held in Waipoua to plan and discuss findings, and Te Roroa representatives took part in a DNA

extraction workshop at AMSRC. This partnership ensured iwi rangatiratanga over their taonga and facilitated skill-sharing in molecular techniques. The project was profiled in Genomics Aotearoa's 2024 Annual Report and featured as a keynote at the NZ Plant Conservation Network conference.

New relationships were also established with Ngāti Kuri, with AMSRC staff conducting joint biodiversity surveys in Te Paki. These visits promoted knowledge exchange and led to future invitations for collaborative research. Meanwhile, the Ngā Roimata o Tohe project has opened new avenues with Te Roroa, who are now also involved in Dr Sarah Wells' gecko hybridisation research. Fieldwork and hui have supported ongoing collaboration, with plans to co-develop and apply for future genomics research funding.

Further partnerships have formed with hapū on the east coast of Northland through Sarah's gecko project. In 2024, fieldwork was conducted with Ngāti Kuta kaitiaki, including the discovery of a green gecko skeleton later submitted to the Auckland Museum under the name of local rangatira Deliah. Mātauranga Māori was also embedded in the centre's asbestos bioremediation project, supported by Mana Whenua ki Mōhua. This led to a successful Department of Conservation research permit and direct involvement of Māori researchers in project design and implementation.

5.5.2.2 Student Engagement and Capacity Building

In 2024, AMSRC supported student development through hands-on research and mentorship. Dr Sarah Wells supervised a third-year Bachelor of Applied Science (Natural Sciences) student on a Negotiated Research project investigating the phylogeny of Sphaeromatidae marine isopods in New Zealand. Funded by AMSRC seed support and Sarah's post-parental leave grant, the student conducted all molecular lab work independently, with the results now being prepared for publication. Although not yet enrolled as a student, School of Environmental & Animal Sciences lecturer Kate Harder received the early career researcher funding for a cat parasite study in the AMSRC lab, with Sarah as mentor. This project has led to Kate's acceptance into a PhD programme at James Cook University (JCU), with Sarah as co-supervisor and lab work to be carried out both at JCU and AMSRC. Additionally, the Unitec Herbarium contributed to student learning by hosting five student volunteers for training in herbarium curation.

5.5.2.3 Personnel Changes and Strategic Leadership Development

In 2024, AMSRC farewelled Research Associate Erin Doyle, who was accepted into a PhD programme at Cranwell University in the United Kingdom. To fill the role, AMSRC welcomed Dr John Yan, formerly a senior scientist at the Ministry of Primary Industry's (MPI) Plant Health and Environment Lab. Dr Yan brings extensive experience in molecular analysis, and the centre looks forward to his contributions to future AMSRC research projects.

5.5.2.4 Partnerships: External and Internal

Most internal and external partnerships outlined in the AMSRC's original application to become a research centre remain active and have continued to grow. Key relationships with Genomics Aotearoa, Auckland Zoo, Auckland Museum, Auckland Council, Massey University, Project Island Song, Babbage Consultants, the Department of Conservation, HRV, Wakatū Incorporated, and Mana Whenua ki Mōhua have been further strengthened.

New collaborations have also been established in 2024 with staff at Landcare Research, the Rega Institute for Medical Research at KU Leuven, the University of Otago, and Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI). As part of the asbestos bioremediation project, AMSRC also built on international partnerships with Professor Mike Manefield at the University of New South Wales, the University of Turin (Italy), and Fox Chase Cancer Center (USA). Dr Sarah Wells has been in ongoing discussions with MPI around a new research contract on the eradication of broad-tailed geckos from Rangitoto Island, with funding delayed due to 2024 budget constraints but expected to progress in 2025. Additionally, former centre director Dr Dan Blanchon secured future AMSRC research contracts with Auckland Council on biocontrol projects targeting climbing asparagus and Selaginella, set to begin in 2025.

5.5.2.5 Disseminations

The earlier mentioned partnerships and collaborations are already evidenced by the early dissemination of the centre's collaborative efforts.

In 2024 the centre's research outputs encompassed the publication of nine journal articles and a conference presentation.

5.5.2.6 External funding applications

In 2024, AMSRC prioritised securing external funding through a range of competitive grants and partnerships with central and local government agencies, as well as industry collaborators. Key funding applications included the Endeavour Fund Research Programme for the Asbestos Remediation project, the Society for Research on Amphibians and Reptiles in New Zealand (SRARNZ) small grants scheme for the Northland geckos project, and an application to Auckland Council to support mycoherbicide research targeting climbing asparagus and African clubmoss. Of these, two applications were successful, resulting in a total of \$156,000 in grant funding secured to support ongoing research activities.

5.5.2.7 External research income

In 2024 AMSRC did not have any active externally funded projects, resulting in no external research income.

5.5.3 Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, Māori and Indigenous Research Centre

Refer to Section 3.1 of this report for details.

5.6 Telling our research stories

Tūāpapa Rangahau promotes Unitec research stories via the research awards at the annual Unitec Excellence Awards, 3-Minute Thesis Competition, the ITP Research Symposium, [Unitec ePress](#) and the [Unitec Research Blog](#).

5.6.1 2024 Unitec Staff Excellence Awards

Through our annual Unitec Excellence Awards, we recognise and celebrate the outstanding contributions of our people to Unitec. Out of the 10 award categories, two are related to research.

5.6.1.1 Excellence in Early Career Research Award

The finalists for the Excellence in Early Career Research Award were:

- » **Kate Harder - Lecturer, School of Environmental and Animal Sciences** - As Unitec Veterinary Nursing Programme Coordinator, Kate Harder seamlessly integrates research into teaching and community outreach within the School of Environmental and Animal Sciences. She has led studies on parasite infections of pets in Tonga, produced two quality assured outputs in 2024, along with a journal article and a conference presentation on canine hookworm presence in Tongatapu, Tonga. Collaborating with Australian universities, Kate has advanced veterinary research in Tonga and New Zealand, earning international recognition for her efforts. By combining fundamental and applied research, she not only strengthens veterinary research in the Pacific but also inspires students to consider veterinary nursing as a valuable research field.
- » **Dr Sameh Shamout - Lecturer, School of Architecture** - Sameh has created a unique medium blending visual art and theatre, carving a niche within the creative scope of the architectural discipline. His original, living architectural-art research has evolved from a poetic novel into a unique fusion of performance art, musical poetry and theatrical storytelling. His solo performance "Whispers from the Windows of Palestine" bridges Māori and Palestinian theatre in a distinctive indigenous innovation. The show toured nationally with performances at events including the Auckland Writers Festival and Auckland Fringe, gaining media coverage and significant online conversation.

The winner was Dr Sameh Shamout from the School of Architecture.



Figure 17: Dr Sameh Shamout (left) with Associate Professor Marcus Williams receiving the Excellence in Early Career Research Award.

5.6.1.2 Excellence in Research Award

The finalists for the Excellence in Research Award were:

- » **Associate Professor Nigel Adams, School of Environmental and Animal Sciences** - Associate Professor Nigel Adams is a dedicated and prolific researcher whose leadership and collaboration have significantly enhanced Unitec's research environment. In an outstanding contribution and extended several times in times of disruption, Nigel has generously served on the Unitec Research Ethics Committee for nearly 10 years, in a range of roles; initially as a committee member, then an extended term as Deputy Chair and finally as Chair. It is true to say that without his contribution and leadership, this important aspect of our academic ecosystem would not have served us as well as it has and with such constancy.
- » **Associate Professor Byron Rangiwai, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, Māori and Indigenous Research Centre** Associate Professor Byron Rangiwai (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Manawa, Ngāti Whare, Ngāi Tūhoe) is an expert in Māori and Indigenous studies, with two PhDs and 14 published articles on Te Umutaoroa. Since joining Ngā Wai a Te Tūi in 2024, he has submitted four external funding applications, securing Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga funding for a summer student intern project on ADHD in Māori communities and awaiting a \$250,000 application outcome to MBIE's Vision Mātauranga Capability Fund for climate adaptation research. He has produced 19 research outputs this year and actively contributes to Unitec's research community, including serving on funding committees and judging panels.

- » **Daisy Bentley-Gray, Interim Manager, Pacific Success** - Daisy Bentley-Gray is a passionate advocate for Pasifika education and research, serving as the Pacific representative on Unitec's Research, Academic, and Research Ethics Committees. In these roles, she influences policies and research standards to ensure cultural sensitivity and inclusivity. Daisy's leadership extends to the Unitec Pacific Research Fono, where she empowers Pacific research among Pacific staff, fostering a research-driven culture that highlights the unique perspectives and contributions of the Pasifika community. Beyond her leadership in committees and research forums, Daisy supports learners through academic literacy, study skills, and Pacific-focused workshops.

The winner for this category was Associate Professor Nigel Adams, School of Environmental and Animal Sciences.



Figure 18: Associate Professor Nigel Adams (left) with Professor Martin Carroll receiving the Excellence in Research Award.

5.6.2 The 3-Minute Thesis Competition

The annual 3-Minute Thesis Competition took place in October and was, as always, a highlight of 2024. This year's event attracted a diverse audience, including students, members of the Senior Leadership Team, supervisors, and support staff from Unitec and Tūāpapa Rangahau. The atmosphere was lively, as participants showcased their research in a concise and engaging manner, reflecting the innovative spirit of the institution.

There were 10 presentations submitted. Students from the following programmes participated in the competition:

- » Master of Architecture (Professional) – 1
- » Master of Applied Practice (Social Practice) – 2
- » Master of Landscape Architecture – 1
- » Master of Applied Technology - 1
- » Master of Applied Business – 5

The judges for this event were:

- » Sue Emerson – (Head Judge) Interim Head of School, School of Bridgepoint and School of Community Studies
- » Associate Professor Byron Rangiwai – Researcher, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi
- » Dr Sarah Wells – Director, Applied Molecular Solutions Research Centre, School of Environmental and Animal Sciences.

The winning presentations were:

- » **Winner:** Jeffrey Wu (Master of Applied Business). Title: Enhancing Academic Performance: A Machine Learning Approach to Predict and Raise Students' GPA. Supervisor: Dr Maojun Wang.
- » Runners up:
 - Christine Fusio (Master of Applied Business)]. Title: Leadership Styles Driving Career Advancement of Women in New Zealand's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Sector. Supervisor: Dr Glenn Simmons.
 - Joseph Bjelic-Webster (Master of Architecture [Professional]). Title: Rethinking Stuff: Toward an Urban Bioregional Materiality. Supervisors: Min Hall and Kerry Francis.



Figure 19: Winner of the 3-Minute Thesis Competition: From left to right - Joseph Bjelic-Webster, Jeffrey Wu and Christine Fusio.

5.6.3 Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) Research Symposium

The 12th annual ITP Research Symposium, formally known as OPSITARA, underwent a significant expansion in 2024. In previous years, the symposium primarily featured participation from three divisions—Otago Polytechnic, Southern Institute of Technology, and Ara Institute of Canterbury. However, in 2024, the event was broadened to include representation from all divisions of Te Pūkenga, reflecting its unified national framework and commitment to inclusive academic research collaboration.

The symposium was convened over five days, from 2 to 6 December 2024, and was structured around three key events:

» **Unitec-MIT and Pacific Symposium**

Date: 2–3 December 2024

Location: Unitec’s Wairaka Campus, Auckland

This component focused on research and innovation from Unitec and Manukau Institute of Technology, and with a particular emphasis on Pacific research themes and community engagement.

» **Virtual Symposium**

Date: 4 December 2024

Format: Online (fully virtual)

Designed to increase accessibility and participation across regions, this online event enabled presenters and attendees from across Aotearoa and beyond to share research findings and engage in collaborative dialogue remotely.

» **OPSITARA Symposium**

Date: 5–6 December 2024

Location: Ara Institute of Canterbury, Madras Street Campus, Christchurch

The concluding segment of the symposium, OPSITARA featured a comprehensive programme of research presentations, workshops, and keynote addresses, showcasing scholarly work from across the three divisions—Otago Polytechnic, Southern Institute of Technology, Ara Institute of Canterbury and Te Pūkenga network.

This expanded format not only enabled broader participation but also highlighted the evolving nature of research collaboration within Te Pūkenga. This collaborative approach is guided by the Rangahau Research Forum, which comprises research directors or leads from all divisions of Te Pūkenga.

A total of **233 presentations** were disseminated during the event, distributed as follows:

- » **Unitec-MIT and Pacific Symposium:** 90 presentations (including 7 posters and 22 Pacific Stream presentations).
- » **Virtual Symposium:** 39 presentations.
- » **OPSITARA:** 104 presentations.

5.6.4 Unitec-MIT and Pacific Symposium Summary

The Unitec-MIT and Pacific Symposium commenced with a **Mihi Whakatau**, welcoming participants and setting a culturally grounded tone for the event. This was followed by a compelling **keynote address** delivered by **Tagaloatele Professor Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop**, a distinguished Pacific educator and researcher.

5.6.4.1 Keynote Speaker

Tagaloatele Professor Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop shared reflections from her distinguished career, which spans teaching, research, and policy development across Aotearoa New Zealand, Samoa, and the wider

Pacific region. Her keynote address highlighted key areas of her lifelong work, including agricultural education, gender and youth equity, and the preservation and documentation of Pacific narratives. Her professional journey includes significant roles such as Lecturer at Wellington Teachers' College, Head of the English Department at Avele College in Samoa, and regional positions with international organisations including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNIFEM, and UNESCO. She has also held senior academic appointments at Victoria University of Wellington and Auckland University of Technology. Currently, Tagaloatele is a member of the Te Pūkenga Council, supervises doctoral students, and remains actively involved in Pacific community development and advocacy.

5.6.4.2 Participation

Over the course of two days, the symposium hosted **27 sessions** featuring a total of **90 research presentations**, reflecting a diverse range of topics and disciplines. Among these sessions was a dedicated **professional development workshop** focused on research funding. Designed specifically for early-career researchers, the workshop provided **practical guidance on securing external funding opportunities**.

5.6.4.3 Award Ceremony

The symposium concluded with a formal award ceremony, led by **Jamie Smiler**, Director of Rangahau and Research at Te Pūkenga. The ceremony recognised outstanding contributions to research across two key categories:

- » the **Non-Pacific Stream**, determined through a People's Choice voting system, and
- » the **Pacific Stream**, evaluated by a panel of judges. The Pacific Stream judging panel included **Daisy Bentley-Gray**, Interim Manager for Pacific Success at Unitec, and **Associate Professor Evangelia Papoutsaki**, also of Unitec.

The awards reflected the symposium's commitment to both academic excellence and cultural responsiveness in research.

In the **Non-Pacific Stream**, three presentations were recognised as runners-up in the People's Choice Award.

- » **Malachy McGarrigle (Unitec)** was commended for his work on developing learning resources for teaching the design of light steel-framed houses in New Zealand.
- » **Becca Wood (Unitec)** was acknowledged for her creative research project *Walking Upstream in Kirikiriroa*, which explored performative methods in public space.
- » **Iman Khan, Associate Professor Renata Jadresin Milic, and Viola Vadasz (Unitec)** received recognition for their collaborative research on the value of digitalisation in Aotearoa New Zealand, derived from focus group discussions.

The **People's Choice Award** winner was **Dr Nigel Pizzini and Dr Geoff Bridgman (Unitec)** for their insightful presentation, *Barriers Male Secondary Students Encounter When Considering Counselling at School*, which addressed critical issues of mental health support and stigma among young males.

In the **Pacific Stream**, two researchers were named **joint winners** for their outstanding contributions.

- » **Flora Apulu-Feausiga (Unitec)** was recognised for *Tamaitai Samoa*, an autoethnographic analysis exploring the cultural principles that support the wellbeing of Samoan young women in Aotearoa.
- » **Genevieve Sang-Yum (Unitec)** received the award for her research *Intersections of Faith and Abuse*, which offered valuable insights into the perspectives of Samoan social work practitioners dealing with family violence.



Figure 20: Winners from the Pacific stream and Pacific postgraduate student. From left to right- Daisy Bentley-Gray, Genevieve Sang-Yum, Lyrck Maiava, Flora Apulu-Feausiga and Tagaloatele Professor Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop)

Additionally, the **Pacific Postgraduate / Student Research / Talanoa Award** was presented to **Lyrck Maiava**, supervised by **Susan Wake (Unitec)**, for her work *Decolonising Play*, a critical investigation into culturally responsive and decolonised approaches to play and learning in Pacific communities.



Figure 21: Unitec-MIT and Pacific Symposium concluding ceremony – group photo.

This symposium successfully showcased the depth and diversity of research within Te Pūkenga, while celebrating Pacific excellence and fostering professional development across the vocational education sector.

5.7 Unitec ePress

Unitec's ePress is an online publisher of peer-reviewed, quality-assured academic work by Unitec staff, students and associates, as well as authors in the wider Te Pūkenga group. It publishes academic work in a range of formats on the ePress website (<https://www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/>) and provides a supportive publishing environment for current and emerging researchers.

2024 was a busy year at ePress. Editor Marie Shannon stepped back in September, and Gwynneth Porter, who had been in the role from 2017–19, stepped back in. Marie will continue to work at Tūāpapa Rangahau in her writing support role. Associate Professor Evangelia Papoutsaki, Executive Publisher of ePress, remains at the helm.

The ePress publishing schedule for 2024 was as follows:

- » One issue of the journal *Perspectives in Biosecurity* (vol. 9) published – 1 journal paper
- » One issue of the journal *Perspectives in Animal Health and Welfare* (vol. 3) published - 2 journal papers
- » One issue of the journal *Perspectives in Biodiversity* (vol. 2) published – 7 journal papers
- » One issues of the architectural journal *Asylum 2024* published – 7 journal papers
- » CITRENZ 2023 Conference Proceedings published – 20 papers.
- » Two Research Reports published
- » Two Occasional and Discussion Papers published.

The completed publications above represent quality-assured research outputs for 80 Unitec staff members, an increase from 2023, and a further 19 staff members from other institutions in Te Pūkenga.

The ePress Editor and Executive Editor, Gwynneth Porter and Associate Professor Evangelia Papoutsaki, are part of Te Pūkenga Publications and Dissemination Work Stream, who are forming a proposal for the future of research publishing in in the ITP sector. The group members offer each other mutual collegial support, and sharing of resources and information as they ensure best practice is followed in all published outputs across the sector.

ePress is committed to giving new and emerging researchers access to an open-source publishing platform, while maintaining high standards of academic integrity through the double-blind peer-review process. The ePress editor is able to support new and emerging researchers by reviewing papers prior to submission and giving authors guidance on writing structure and clarity.

5.8 Unitec Research Blog

The Blog proudly presents our research stories, news and other information about research at Unitec (<https://www.unitec.ac.nz/UnitecResearchBlog/>), and feeds into Tūāpapa Rangahau's social media platforms via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/epressnz>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/UnitecResearch>).

The Blog is an important means of telling our research stories, particularly now that *Advance* is no longer being published.

In 2024, no new activity was recorded on the research blog, primarily due to the departure of the previous editor, Marie Shannon. Her exit, combined with an increased workload across the team,

contributed to the temporary suspension of blog-related operations during the year. As of late 2024, editorial oversight of the research blog has transitioned to Associate Professor Laura Harvey, based in the School of Environmental and Animal Sciences, who has since assumed responsibility for its management and future development.

6 Priorities for 2025

Preparing for the opportunity to work closely with Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) in a much anticipated integrated institute, is an important priority for 2025. The Tūapapa Rangahau team have co-designed a detailed transition plan, the Research Professional Development Suite is shared across both Te Pūkenga Business Divisions in Tāmaki and the Director Research is working on the cross institutional Academic Leadership Team and with the DCE Academic, toward this end.

Another priority is a strategic drive to increase group-based research. For the last 6-7 years, schools have been asked to identify Research Groups in their Annual School Research Plans, requiring quite some detail including that all staff are identified as belonging to a group. In a few schools, this has been quite effective and in one case, led to the development of a research centre. However, in more cases than not, these groups were not much more than a paper exercise and as such the opportunity is presented to facilitate their potential while Te Pūkenga is devolved, the New Zealand research ecosystem is restructured and greater autonomy is very slowly returned to Unitec.

In 2025, a range of new criteria will be added to the rationale required in requests for internal research funding which will serve to prioritise and incentivise researchers toward group based research. Funding will be put aside to facilitate opportunities for Research Groups to strategise and co-write papers etc. Group based research is desirable because the research is;

- » relevant to the nature of the degree that academics teach on
- » relevant to and useful for programme development
- » generating institutional critical mass/focus/reputation
- » born of collaboration and the pooling of resources
- » developmental of emerging and early career researchers
- » better prepared for changes in funding systems and PBRF replacement
- » geared toward the growth and development of research centres.

7 Conclusion

Profound change continues to accelerate for research and innovation in New Zealand, now creeping beyond the vicissitudes of the Te Pūkenga story, to the wider tertiary education and science research funding ecosystem. Yet the potential for Te Tiriti aligned, collaborative, applied, impactful research that is meaningfully partnered into community and industry remains a great opportunity for an integrated Tāmaki Vocational Education and Training provider. With good leadership, the research and rangahau kaimahi in the region have the right stuff to make this happen.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1: Unitec Research Strategy 2020–2024

UNITEC Research Strategy 2020–2024

NB – in keeping with Unitec process on strategies, a separate action plan will outline how we implement the actions, how we show the progress of that implementation and what indicators we use to measure success.

Vision

To undertake research of excellence that aligns to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and has transformative outcomes for the communities we serve.

Mission

We undertake impactful research in order to provide significant economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits to Māori, Aotearoa New Zealand communities, industries and the environment. We do this by igniting the power of our founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, partnering with tangata whenua, our communities and industry. This partnering is at the heart of our value proposition and is fundamental to research, from the beginning of the process through to the dissemination of the outcomes. Unitec's strengths lie in its kaupapa Māori capability, its applied and practical focus, its mixture of programmes involving research and enterprise at postgraduate and undergraduate levels, and its strong relationships with community and industry. We will develop these strengths through focused, sustainable research and enterprise activity that is Treaty aligned, integrated with teaching and learning, and undertaken within networks of stakeholders and partners, enabling effective knowledge transfer. In these networks we aim to contribute to better knowledge bases for decision making, improved wellbeing, socioeconomic resilience, cultural diversity, flourishing communities and improved productivity, policy, technologies, products or processes.

Background

During the 2015–2019 Research Strategy period, three Strategic Research Foci were developed: the Cybersecurity Focus, the Applied Molecular Solutions Focus and the kaupapa Māori Focus. Through mechanisms such as the Research Voucher Scheme, the strategy successfully drove institutional change toward higher levels of industry-partnered research, resulting in many funded projects. Coupled with an emphasis on building staff capability and research leadership, Unitec has experienced growth in its research, with externally funded research increasing by 450%, increased external partnering with 184% more industry-funded projects, improvement in excellence with a 97% success rate through the PBRF Quality Evaluation, and increased NZQA compliance with 91% of degree programmes research compliant. The kaupapa Māori Focus led to the appointment of two highly respected Māori professors, and the establishment of Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, Māori and Indigenous Research Centre, which is now leading numerous externally funded projects, including an Endeavour Research Programme and a National Science Challenge project.

This next strategic period will see Unitec continue investing in our Strategic Research Foci with an emphasis on rangatiratanga, embedding a flourishing, diverse and sustainable research culture and weaving strong, enduring industry/community partnerships.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Te Noho Kotahitanga

Unitec will uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the founding document of our nation, and its principles, through our research. Our commitment to Te Noho Kotahitanga, which expresses Unitec’s Treaty partnership and its principles, underpins the values and kaupapa of our organisation, including our approach to research.




Rangatiratanga – Authority and Responsibility

Whakaritenga – Legitimacy

Kaitiakitanga – Guardianship

Mahi Kotahitanga – Co-operation

Ngākau Māhaki – Respect

 <p>RANGATIRATANGA AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY</p>	 <p>WHAKARITENGA LEGITIMACY</p>	 <p>KAITIAKITANGA GUARDIANSHIP</p>	 <p>MAHI KOTAHITANGA CO-OPERATION</p>	 <p>NGĀKAU MĀHAKI RESPECT</p>
<p><i>E whakarite ana te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka ki te pūtake ake o te rangatiratanga o te Māori me ngā mātauranga Māori.</i></p>	<p><i>E whakarite ana te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka ki te mana o tena, o tena, ki te noho kotahi, ki te puaki i tona ake reo, ki te whakamahi i ngā rawa mo ngā iwi katoa.</i></p>	<p><i>E whakarite ana te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka ki te kaitiakitanga o ngā taonga mātauranga.</i></p>	<p><i>E whakarite ana te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka kia tau he ngākau māhaki i roto i ngā mahi katoa.</i></p>	<p><i>E whakarite ana te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka ki te whakanui i ngā taonga tuku iho o ngā ao e rua, a hikoi ki mua. Ko te Māori me te Pākehā e mahi tahi ana mo Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka.</i></p>
<p>Unitec accepts the principle that Māori have authority over and responsibility for all teaching and learning relating to the Māori dimensions of knowledge.</p>	<p>Unitec believes that each partner has a legitimate right to be here, to speak freely in either language, and to put its resources to use for the benefit of all.</p>	<p>Unitec accepts responsibility as a critical guardian of knowledge.</p>	<p>Unitec affirms that a spirit of generosity and co-operation will guide all its actions.</p>	<p>Unitec values each partner’s heritage and customs, current needs and future aspirations. Māori and Pākehā working together within Unitec.</p>

Vision Mātauranga

Unitec acknowledges and actively supports staff in engaging with the Vision Mātauranga policy as outlined by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. The policy aims to unlock the innovation potential of Māori knowledge, resources and people to assist New Zealanders to create a better future.

Code of Practice and Research Ethics

Research at Unitec will function within Ngā Tikanga Whakahaere (Unitec's Code of Conduct) and the research-specific Code of Professional Standards and Ethics developed by the Royal Society Te Apārangi. All human research is conducted with guidance from the Unitec Research Ethics Committee, an accredited research ethics committee, and animal research is overseen by an approved committee.

Priorities

The Unitec Research Strategy 2020–2024 has three key priorities that underpin our goals, our actions and the way we measure success:

Priority One – Research that is aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Priority Two – A flourishing, collaborative research culture

Priority Three – Partnered research and innovation

Priority One – Research that is aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Unitec will ensure that its support for research, governance and processes is aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In this way, Unitec will exemplify leadership in Māori research in the NZIST sector and in Aotearoa. The principle of rangatiratanga expressed through our partnership document, Te Noho Kotahitanga, will apply to research at Unitec: that Māori will have authority over and responsibility for all research related to Māori dimensions of knowledge. Vision Mātauranga will be integrated into all research processes and researchers will be supported to understand and fulfil these requirements. We will resource and grow the numbers and capability of Māori researchers, including Māori supervisors on our postgraduate programmes. We will actively seek and maintain partnerships with iwi, hapū, Māori businesses, institutions and peak Māori bodies. We will evolve our research office appropriately to ensure Māori research governance and rangatiratanga.

GOAL ONE:

Unitec has strong Māori research leadership, capability, excellence, partnerships, processes and governance

Actions:

- Review research policy, guidelines and processes to ensure rangatiratanga
- Review all funding frameworks, guidelines and processes to incorporate Vision Mātauranga
- Increase Māori postgraduate supervisors and student scholarships
- Provide professional development by Māori for Māori researchers and postgraduate supervisors
- Support and resource Ngā Wai a Te Tūi appropriately
- Review capability and plan for institutional research co-governance and leadership
- Tell stories of Māori research projects, outcomes and success

Priority Two – A flourishing, collaborative research culture

Unitec will grow a productive, diverse, student-integrated, engaged and sustainable research workforce with the necessary resourcing and infrastructure. There will be an inclusive pipeline of support for developing the capability of our people and empowering them toward transformative outcomes for our communities, from the beginnings of their research independence through to leadership at the highest level, as expressed in Unitec’s Research Competencies. Grounded in Te Tiriti and Te Noho Kotahitanga partnership, this will be inclusive and provide opportunity for the diverse cultures and individuals who make up our institution and the varied nature of that activity we call research and its related enterprises. This pipeline will be aligned with and actively support the initiatives at the heart of Te Manaakitia te Rito, Unitec’s Renewal Strategy.

GOAL TWO:

The diverse people of Unitec have fit-for-purpose capability development and support toward sustainable, collaborative research productivity and excellence

Actions:

- Provide high-quality, diverse, multi-level research professional development
- Implement formalised research planning at individual and School levels
- Support degree teachers to be research engaged
- Increase research excellence and productivity
- Develop Research Groups in every School offering degree programmes
- Develop Research Centres, facilitate concomitant business planning and annual evaluations
- Support Strategic Research Foci
- Support emerging and early-career researchers; grow leaders
- Collate, authenticate, sustainably disseminate and publicise research
- Support and resource postgraduate student research
- Increase student involvement in research
- Foster research into Wairaka, our place, its natural environment, history and wairua
- Embed sustainability into all funding guidelines

Priority Three – Partnered research and innovation

Research at Unitec will concentrate on opportunities and problems identified by Māori, industry and community partners. Strong, enduring partnerships will be facilitated and valued, with investment in capacity building, innovation and leadership in this space. The reciprocity created by these partnerships will enhance opportunity for student work-integrated learning.

GOAL THREE:**Research that is industry/community partnered and promotes innovation****Actions:**

- Weave, ignite and nurture long-term partnerships across community, academia and industry
- Facilitate subsidised research consultancy
- Implement industry/community-partnered postgraduate research scholarships
- Provide industry partnering, IP, innovation and commercialisation advice and practical support
- Develop reputation through the establishment of Research Centres with strong partnerships
- Identify areas of future importance and opportunity; Research Sandpits

Glossary

Ngā Tikanga Whakahaere – Unitec’s Code of Conduct

NZIST – the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology incorporating 16 Institutes of Technologies and Polytechnics

Research Centres – Formally structured research institutes governed by the Unitec Research Committee

Research Competencies – Detailed description of what it means to be research competent at Unitec

Research Groups – Informal groups of researchers around a theme, identified in School Research Plan

Research Sandpits – Areas of future research importance and opportunity

Strategic Research Foci – Research Centres that receive seed funding from Unitec

Te Manaakitia te Rito – Unitec’s Renewal Strategy 2019–2022

Te Noho Kotahitanga – Unitec’s Partnership agreement under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand

8.2 Appendix 2: Unitec Research Strategy Action Plan

Priority One	Goal One	KPI	Action Summary	Actions
<p>Research that is aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Unitec will ensure that its support for research, governance and processes is aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In this way, Unitec will exemplify leadership in Māori research in the NZIST sector and in Aotearoa. The principle of rangatiratanga expressed through our partnership document, Te Noho Kotahitanga, will apply to research at Unitec: that Māori will have authority over and responsibility for all research related to Māori dimensions of knowledge. Vision Mātauranga will be integrated into all research processes and researchers will be supported to understand and fulfil these requirements. We will resource and grow the numbers and capability of Māori researchers, including Māori supervisors of our postgraduate programmes. We</p>	<p>Unitec has strong Māori research leadership, capability, excellence, partnerships, processes and governance.</p>	<p>Rangahau Māori productivity; outputs demonstrate excellence in Vision Mātauranga; outputs by Māori staff; funded projects with named Māori researchers; accredited Vision Mātauranga and Kaupapa Māori professional development.</p>	<p>Review research policy, guidelines and processes to ensure rangatiratanga.</p>	<p>Consult with Māori researchers on how we do the management of contracts and the appropriate appointment of Māori researchers for these projects.</p> <p>At the appropriate interval, review policy to ensure rangatiratanga.</p> <p>Review funding frameworks to update Vision Mātauranga sections.</p>
			<p>Review all funding frameworks, guidelines and processes to incorporate Vision Mātauranga.</p>	<p>Review guidelines and processes as above.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate Māori representation on research funding application assessment panels.</p>
			<p>Increase Māori postgraduate supervisors and student scholarships.</p>	<p>Appoint an expert Kaupapa Māori Supervisor/Advisor.</p> <p>Work with the Postgraduate Committee to increase Māori scholarships.</p> <p>Develop strong Mahi Kotahitanga between programme and Māori scholarship committees.</p> <p>Facilitate writing retreats for Māori postgraduate students.</p>
			<p>Provide professional development by Māori for Māori researchers and postgraduate supervisors.</p>	<p>Support and provide administrative backup to the Kaupapa Māori Supervisor/Advisor to provide professional development for Māori researchers and supervisors.</p> <p>Provide administrative support for the Māori and Pacific Postgraduate Support Rōpū.</p>
			<p>Support and resource Ngā Wai a Te Tūi appropriately.</p>	<p>Provide contract oversight, compliance support and administrative expertise.</p>
			<p>Review capability and plan for institutional research co-governance and leadership.</p>	<p>Consult with Ngā Wai a Te Tūi on a research governance model in line with Te Tiriti.</p> <p>Consider research office structure in line with above.</p> <p>Consult with Unitec Research Committee on this.</p> <p>Submit a relevant proposal to ELT.</p>

<p>will actively seek and maintain partnerships with iwi, hapū, Māori businesses, institutions and peak Māori bodies. We will evolve our research office appropriately to ensure Māori research governance and rangatiratanga.</p>			<p>Tell stories of Māori research projects, outcomes and success.</p>	<p>Advocate to Unitec Corporate Comms for Māori research stories. Publish Māori research in ePress. Include Māori research stories in the Unitec Research Blog.</p>
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Priority Two	Goal Two	KPI	Action Summary	Actions
<p>A flourishing, collaborative research culture. Unitec will grow a productive, diverse, student-integrated, engaged and sustainable research workforce with the necessary resourcing and infrastructure. There will be an inclusive pipeline of support for developing the capability of our people and empowering them toward transformative outcomes for our communities; from the beginnings of their research independence through to leadership at the highest level, as expressed in Unitec's Research Competencies. Grounded in Te</p>	<p>The diverse people of Unitec have fit-for-purpose capability development and support toward sustainable, collaborative research productivity and excellence.</p>	<p>QA outputs; student-integrated research; research-engaged programmes.</p>	<p>Provide high-quality, diverse, multi-level research professional development.</p> <p>Implement formalised research planning at individual and School level.</p> <p>Support degree teachers to be research engaged.</p> <p>Increase research excellence and productivity.</p>	<p>Provide a range of research-blended workshops. Provide research master classes. Run writing retreats. Offer developmental research for emerging researchers.</p> <p>Provide continuously improved templates for Individual Research Plans. Support and oversee compliance. Implement a School Plan review and improvement process.</p> <p>Monitor Research Traffic Light to identify staff most needing support. Prioritise Research Dissemination funding to improve Traffic Light. Run writing retreats. Offer developmental research funding for emerging researchers. Run an externally engaged research symposium</p> <p>Monitor ROMS to identify staff most needing support. Prioritise Research Dissemination funding to build strong portfolios. Run an internal review and publicity campaign in preparation for PBRF. Provide Research Partners. Provide support for the professoriate.</p>

<p>Tiriti and Te Noho Kotahitanga partnership, this will be inclusive and provide opportunity for the diverse cultures and individuals who make up our institution, and the varied nature of that activity we call research and its related enterprises. This pipeline will be aligned with and actively support the initiatives at the heart of Te Manaakitia te Rito, Unitec's Renewal Strategy.</p>			<p>Develop Research Groups in every School offering degree programmes.</p>	<p>Provide Research Partner support to develop Research Groups in schools. Structure the Unitec symposium around Groups.</p>
			<p>Develop Research Centres, facilitate concomitant business planning and annual evaluations.</p>	<p>Provide Research Partner support to Research Centres. Provide expert administrative, contractual and IP support. Implement annual reviews and tri-annual re-accreditation as per the procedure. Publicise to Groups the procedure to become a Research Centre.</p>
			<p>Support Strategic Research Foci.</p>	<p>Provide research assistants and associates. Provide research materials and equipment. Help resolve accommodation, facility and branding needs. Provide support with publicity.</p>
			<p>Support emerging and early career researchers; grow leaders.</p>	<p>Provide expert administrative, contractual and IP support to ECRs. Provide ECR research support funding (Parental Leave Support, etc.). Provide ECR contestable research funding. Provide ECR Research Fellowships. Provide support to PIs of ECR-funded projects toward external funding. Support ECRs with external funding grant development and writing. Support the ECR Forum. Fund ECR Forum Chair to attend Royal Society meetings. Provide Emerging Researcher Start-Up Funding. Provide comprehensive PD opportunities for emerging researchers.</p>
			<p>Collate, authenticate, sustainably disseminate and publicise research.</p>	<p>Publish double-blind peer-reviewed papers with ePress. Publish five journals at ePress: Whanake, Perspectives in</p>

			<p>Biodiversity, Perspectives in Biosecurity, Perspectives in Animal Health and Welfare, Asylum.</p> <p>Publish Unitec Research Symposium proceedings.</p> <p>Provide advice to manage predatory and vanity publishing risks.</p> <p>Oversee Research Output Management System and verify all research outputs.</p> <p>Report research outputs in the Annual Research Report.</p> <p>Monitor research at programme level for Research Traffic Light.</p> <p>Liaise with Corporate Comms to publicise Unitec research.</p>
			<p>Support and resource postgraduate student research.</p> <p>Lead and administer the Postgraduate Research and Scholarship Committee.</p> <p>Administer all scholarships.</p> <p>Review the effectiveness of scholarships.</p> <p>Review the accessibility of scholarship processes for students.</p> <p>Implement improvements which emerge from the reviews.</p> <p>Promote all scholarships.</p> <p>Offer specialist scholarships to Māori and Pacific students.</p> <p>Offer Bold Innovator Scholarship and mentor the recipient.</p> <p>Ensure high-quality professional development for supervisors.</p> <p>Facilitate writing retreats for Pacific postgraduate students.</p> <p>Offer and maintain high-quality, specialist postgraduate study space.</p> <p>Provide specialist research software for postgraduate students and related PD.</p>
			<p>Increase student involvement in research.</p> <p>Offer contestable Industry Scholarships with strong partnerships criteria.</p> <p>Develop criteria for fifth research goal – Student-Integrated Research.</p> <p>Ratify a fifth research goal at</p>

				<p>Academic Committee for Student-Integrated Research. Modify ROMS to allow input of Student-Integrated Research data.</p> <p>Monitor and report productivity of this goal in Annual Research Report.</p> <p>Offer expert administrative support for Research Studentships.</p> <p>Ensure Student-Integrated Research is a criterion for Research with Impact Award.</p> <p>Ensure Student-Integrated Research is a criterion for internal contestable funding.</p>
			<p>Foster research into Wairaka, our place; the natural environment, history and wairua.</p>	<p>Liaise with Rōpū Kaitiaki, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, Sustainability Manager and Pae Arihi.</p> <p>Pilot a 2021 contestable fund, Wairaka – natural environment, history and culture.</p> <p>Create an ongoing fund, Wairaka - natural environment, history and culture.</p>
			<p>Embed sustainability into all funding guidelines.</p>	<p>Review all internal funding documents to ensure sustainability questions are asked.</p>

Priority Three	Goal Three	KPI	Action Summary	Actions
<p>Partnered research and innovation. Research at Unitec will concentrate on opportunities and problems identified by Māori, industry and community partners. Strong, enduring partnerships will be facilitated and valued, with investment in capacity building,</p>	<p>Research that is industry/community partnered and promotes innovation.</p>	<p>Industry/community-funded research. External research income.</p>	<p>Weave, ignite and nurture long-term partnerships across community, academia and industry.</p>	<p>Seed fund industry-partnered conferences and seminars at Unitec.</p> <p>Encourage strong industry partnerships in contestable funding frameworks.</p> <p>Provide expert industry partnership support (Research Partner Enterprise).</p> <p>Provide expert legal, contractual and administrative support.</p>
			<p>Facilitate subsidised research consultancy.</p>	<p>Fund and administrate the Research Voucher scheme.</p> <p>Assist in growing resulting partnerships.</p>
			<p>Implement industry/community-</p>	<p>Create guidelines for Industry Scholarships.</p>

<p>innovation and leadership in this space. The reciprocity created by these partnerships will enhance opportunity for student work-integrated learning.</p>			<p>partnered postgraduate research scholarships.</p>	<p>Fund and administrate Industry Scholarships. Assist in growing resulting partnerships.</p>
			<p>Provide industry partnering, IP, innovation and commercialisation advice, and practical support.</p>	<p>Provide expert commercialisation support (Research Partner Enterprise). Provide expert legal, contractual and administrative support. Ensure contracts and agreements protect IP appropriately as per policy.</p>
			<p>Develop reputation through the establishment of Research Centres with strong partnerships.</p>	<p>Provide funding to Research Centres which are Strategic Foci. Work with the Unitec Communications Team to publicise achievements. Provide support to develop funding applications. Provide support to maximise collaboration between Research Centres.</p>
			<p>Identify areas of future importance and opportunity; Research Sandpits.</p>	<p>Ensure school plans have Research Groups. Keep schools aware of the Research Sandpits and other areas of priority in Auckland, New Zealand and the Pacific.</p>

Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date of Meeting: 14 August 2025

Title	New Director Research & Enterprise
Provided by:	Hadley Brown, Chair
Authored by:	Brenda Massey, Secretary
For:	INFORMATION

Recommendation

That the committee be advised that Dr Rosanne Ellis will be joining Unitec on Monday, 18 August as the new Director Research & Enterprise, Unitec & MIT.

Key Facts

Dr Roseanne Ellis is joining us as Director of Research & Enterprise on 18 August. Most recently, she has been University of Waikato, Director of Innovation and Impact. Prior to that, Roseanne served as Associate Pro Vice Chancellor, Research Engagement & Management at AUT and General Manager, Industry Partnerships for UniServices.



Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee Self-Assessment

Purpose: NZQA requires the committees of Te Komiti Mātauranga | Academic Committee to provide evidence of self-assessment.

Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec Self-Assessment Provocations

- Can we improve the way the committee is run?
- Is time well managed?
- Are issues under discussion well-handled and resolved?
- Are the agenda and minutes well handled?
- Are the perspectives of committee members respected and heard?
- Are actions completed and accounted for?
- Were there matters raised and dealt with in the meeting that were particularly helpful or unhelpful?
- Does the committee oversee and ensure compliance within its mandate?
- Does the committee show foresight and proactively engage in continuous improvement?
- Does the committee review and improve the relevant policies, guidelines and regulations?

How to Provide Feedback: Any feedback members of the committee may have in relation to any of the above provocations should be directed, in confidence, to Delphine Gesché, Secretary of Te Komiti Mātauranga: dgesche@unitec.ac.nz