

2. Helen Gremillion
3. Hamid Sharifzadeh
4. Leon Tan
5. Aiono Manu Fa'aea (proxy Loloa Alatini)

Total apologies: 4 members + 1 MIT representative

Absent

1. Xinxin Wang

Total apologies: 1 member

MOTION

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

Moved: Kristie Cameron

Seconded: Sana Saleem

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 (proxy for Aiono Manu Fa'aea), MIT Research Committee

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

MOTION

That the committee approves the minutes of the 2025-08-14 meeting as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Lian Wu

Seconded: Kristie Cameron

MOTION CARRIED

Item 2.3 Mahia Atū | Matters Arising

Agenda Item(s)	Action	Responsible	Outcome
2.3 & 4.2	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. Rosanne Ellis is scheduled to attend the Oct URC meeting. See additional notes below.
	Schedule a further discussion of this matter when the new Research Director is in attendance.	Brenda Massey	

2.3	Work with the Head of Applied Business to recruit a new committee representative from the school.	Hadley Brown	In progress. Hadley Brown and Rosanne Ellis are meeting with the school soon to ascertain what support they need from the Research Office, and the committee vacancy will be raised again then.
2.3	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.
3.1	Attend to amending the minor typos in the updated Scholarly Communication Guidelines and send them to Arun Deo. Arrange for the updated guidelines to be published on Te Aka The Nest.	Helen Gremillion Arun Deo	Complete Complete
3.2	Arrange for the updated Pacific Research: Guidelines for Social & Cultural Responsiveness to be published on Te Aka The Nest.	Daisy Bentley-Gray	Complete
4.3	Schedule a further discussion of the opportunities/concerns that the Unitec/MIT merger could represent, in the research space when the new Research Director is in attendance.	Brenda Massey	In progress. Rosanne Ellis is scheduled to attend the Oct URC meeting.

Item 2.3/4.2: Hadley Brown was unable to attend last month's meeting but shared his thoughts on the criteria for setting up a research centre to be recorded:

- Research Centres need to have a succession plan in place so that if a Centre Director leaves or something happens, there is someone able to maintain the centre.
- Currently Research Centres are dependent on the Research Office for decision-making. Research Centre Directors need to be able to transition to greater autonomy of decision making and financial delegations.

Item 2.3: regarding provision for projects led by senior researchers that include researchers who need support to achieve research outputs for the RPTL, it was raised that some Research Leaders are trying to mentor less experienced researchers, but this can be challenging within their Research Leader time allocation.

Kristie Cameron advised that the Royal Society operates a mentorship programme whereby they have volunteers from their Fellows as mentors and ECRs apply to be mentees. There are models out there that we could take inspiration from.

Kristie also commented that researchers from her School have expressed a desire that mentor/mentee arrangements are formalised, i.e. written into ADEPs so that there is accountability.

For the next meeting, Rosanne Ellis, Director Research & Enterprise, would like to take the opportunity to meet with the committee in person. There will be a chance to discuss some of the matters arising that are currently marked 'in progress' then. The meeting will be less procedural, with a chance for open discussion and workshoping.

SECTION 3 – MEA HEI WHAKAAE | ITEMS TO APPROVE

N/A

SECTION 4 - WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO | ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Section 4.1 University Advisory Group Final Report: The future of New Zealand's university system

The committee responded to Rosanne Ellis' request that they undertake a SWOT analysis of the final report from the UAG and the changes to the sector that the government has recently announced. The committee's analysis will inform the MoE's upcoming consultation with some of Te Pukenga's Research Office leaders, including Rosanne, the focus of which is to inform the MoE's upcoming advice in early October to Ministers on:

- changes to the External Research Income (ERI) component of the TREF, including the weighting of funding sources;
- the weighting of the three components (Research Degree Completions (RDCs), ERI, and a metrics-based component); and
- the planned introduction of a Research Plan component of Investment Plans for research active TEOs.

A summary of the discussion is as follows:

The ERI Component	
Strengths/Opportunities	Weaknesses/Threats
Unitec has an opportunity to increase ERI capture by refocusing its efforts on industry and community clients where it has established networks. These ERI opportunities often don't come with an overhead provision so the continuation of a weighted funding mechanism to offset the financial risk associated with these contracts would be welcome.	Unitec's ERI performance is weaker compared to its performance in the area of RDCs.
Unitec has a relatively high success rate in securing Kaupapa Māori research contracts. This can only be retained/sustained if Unitec	With current low ERI performance compared to universities, an increase in ERI weighting could further disadvantage Unitec.

more broadly embraces Te Au, Tikanga, Mātauranga Māori practices.	
Retention of ERI is directly correlated to key staff retention with an opportunity to align Tāmaki strategy, policies, systems and infrastructure to uplifting the overall research operating environment.	Unitec has failed to look after its healthy ERI contracts, with many large contracts having been novated to other institutions. Unitec’s operating environment is often perceived by researchers as adverse, being overly bureaucratic and orientated to teaching and learning.
	The contestable grant space is becoming increasingly competitive, and funding pots are shrinking.
The RDC Component	
Strengths/Opportunities	Weaknesses/Threats
Unitec is doing well in the RDC space, with both Computing and Business growing. If we can maintain, and grow, our provision of 90+ credit research degree completions, and a higher weighting is given for RDCs, this would be beneficial to Unitec	Recommendation 25 in the UAG’s final report “In general, research degrees should be restricted to universities and wānanga, with other tertiary providers approved to offer research degrees only in exceptional circumstances” is concerning, especially if RDCs are going to be an important component of the TREF.
Will the RDC component give visibility to how many of our graduates go off into industry? Most of our PhD graduates have undertaken applied research.	If a Unitec staff member co-supervises a degree that is completed at another institution, this doesn’t count as a Unitec RDC.
The Metrics-based Component	
Strengths/Opportunities	Weaknesses/Threats
Unitec has some highly performing, experienced researchers. Depending on how citations are measured, there is an opportunity for Unitec to grow in this area.	Utilising citations as one of the metrics under consideration will advantage citation-heavy STEM fields and globally indexed outputs but risks marginalising practice-led, Indigenous, applied, and community-based research. For polytechnics, this could undermine recognition and resourcing unless alternative measures for applied/industry/creative impact are established. Qualitative and quantitative measures need to sit side by side.
Unitec’s strengths lie in our community and industry partnerships, and there should be a metric to measure that.	Citations are not a proxy for impact, and not all citations are created equal. Publishing in an excellent journal with a high impact factor is more impressive than publishing in a low impact journal.
Much of our research is mission-led, i.e. it’s fulfilling a specific request. We need the ability to somehow measure the outcomes of our research from a stakeholder perspective.	Are citations a fair measure for an ITP that does applied research when some of our research contracts get no dissemination, they are to provide the client or stakeholder with the answer to a specific research question that the client may want to hold confidential and not disseminate publicly.

There is an opportunity to employ a measuring mechanism that captures more widely a range of outcomes and impacts, including and equally valuing community and iwi engagement. For Kaupapa Māori, community engagement is very much a part of the bigger outcomes and impacts.	How are citations going to be measured? Unitec doesn't receive citation reports from every journal Unitec researchers publish in.
	ITP researchers generally have much higher teaching loads than university researchers, and therefore reduced capacity to research and publish.
General	
Strengths/Opportunities	Weaknesses/Threats
There is strength in numbers and if we maintain networks across the ITP sector we will have a parallel system in terms of advocating for funding.	Our voice is very small compared to that of the universities. It's going to get even smaller. The UAG is recommending a system for the universities including that universities will have an influential say in how funding is allocated back to them. In the meantime, we're leaving a consortium of ITPs and standing alone with MIT.
We get to have a say in defining what 'research' is and what 'applied research' is.	Equitable opportunities. If ITPs are further disadvantaged, Pacific research in the ITPs is going to be even more marginalised because already, Pacific researchers are a marginalised group.
	We could be in a situation that our funding could shrink, and we could lose more of our established researchers.
	We may have less funding to move people through the continuum of emerging to early career to senior researcher.

SECTION 5 - NGĀ TUKUNGA | ITEMS TO RECEIVE

Section 5.1 2025 Early Career Research Fund Progress Reports

The committee received progress reports from the recipients of 2025 Early Career Researcher (ECR) Funding. There were no concerns expressed about the progress of any of the projects.

SECTION 6 - KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA | CLOSING

Section 6.1 Ētahi Kaupapa Anō | Any Other Business

On the 22 October MIT and Unitec will be holding the first joint 3-Minute Research Spiel competition. The competition aims to enhance researchers' skills in communicating their thesis projects and work in impactful and concise ways.

This year's competition is open to:

- Masters, Doctoral and Undergraduate Students undertaking research and enrolled at MIT or Unitec
- Early career and emerging research-active staff at both divisions.

The three-minute presentations, supported by the use of a single static slide, are judged on accessibility, communication skills, engagement and comprehension.

The winner of each category will receive \$1,000 with \$500 awarded to runners up.

Section 6.2 Komiti Self-Assessment

Any feedback about this meeting, or about how the committee is operating in general, should be directed to Delphine Gesche dgesche@unitec.ac.nz.

General comments or queries are also 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: 1430 h

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

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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. Schedule a further discussion of this matter when Rosanne Ellis is in attendance.	Hadley Brown Brenda Massey	
2.3	Work with the Head of Applied Business to recruit a new committee representative from the school.	Hadley Brown	
2.3	Discuss with Rosanne Ellis 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	
2.3	Schedule a further discussion of the opportunities/concerns that the Unitec/MIT merger	Brenda Massey	

	could represent, in the research space when Rosanne Ellis is in attendance.		
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