



agenda

Combined Meeting of Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee & Te Komiti Rangahau o MIT | MIT Research Committee (Special Meeting)

Date:	2025-11-13
Scheduled Start:	1230h
Scheduled End:	1630h
Location:	180-2043 (Te Puna, Mt Albert) and MS Teams

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

SECTION 2 **RAUTAKI RANGAHAU – CO-CREATION WORKSHOP: DEFINING OUR RESEARCH**

Section 2.1 Rautaki Rangahau | Research Strategy Co-Creation Workshop

Facilitated by Dr Galia Barhava, an external co-creation and knowledge mobilisation expert, and Dr Rosanne Ellis, Director Research & Enterprise. Introduction and scene setting by Professor Martin Carroll, Deputy CE Academic, Unitec+MIT

Refer to [pg3](#)

SECTION 3 STANDING ITEMS

Section 3.1 Ngā Whakapāha | Attendance, Apologies & Quorate Status

RECOMMENDATION

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

Section 3.2 Pitopito Kōrero o Ngā Hui | Minutes Of The Previous Meetings

refer to [pg10](#)

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee approves the minutes of the URC meeting of 2025-10-09 and the minutes of the MIT Research Committee meeting of 2025-10-16.

SECTION 3.3 MAHIA ATU | MATTERS ARISING

refer to [pg19](#)

SECTION 4 MEI HEI WHAKAAE | ITEMS TO APPROVE

Section 4.1 2025/2026 Unitec School Research Plans

refer to [pg20](#)

SECTION 5 NGĀ TUKUNGA | ITEMS TO RECEIVE

Section 5.1 2025 Early Career Researcher Progress Report – Dr Sameh Shamout

refer to [pg22](#)

SECTION 6 KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA | CLOSING

Section 6.1 Ētahi Kaupapa Anō | Any Other Business

Section 6.2 Komiti Self-Assessment

refer to [pg27](#)

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>

Rautaki Rangahau – Co-Creation Workshop: Defining Our Research

Date: Thursday 13 November 2025

Time: 12:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Location: In person (Unitec Building 180, Level 2, Room 2043) plus Teams option available

Facilitators: Dr Galia Barhava & Dr Rosanne Ellis

Hosted by: Unitec | MIT Research Committees

Session Type: Co-Creation Workshop (Applied Research Strategy)

Workshop Purpose

To collectively define what research means across the merged Unitec | MIT organisation, identify what makes it unique and impactful, and explore the supports and enablers that will allow our research culture to thrive.

This session will blend storytelling, reflection, and collaboration to generate the foundations of our shared Rautaki Rangahau / Applied Research Strategy (2026-2028).

It is important that we take a co-created approach to developing our Rautaki Rangahau. A number of co-creation workshops will be held into mid-2026 to ensure a wide range of views, including and especially Māori and Pacific views, are heard and captured, and that decisions are data informed, and data driven.

Desired outcomes

By the end of the session, participants will have:

1. **A shared understanding of what “our research” means**
 - Clarity on the defining features of applied and practice-based research in the Unitec | MIT context.
 - Agreement on what sits within and outside our scope of research activity.
2. **A collective sense of pride and identity**
 - Recognition of existing strengths and achievements across Māori, Pacific, and applied disciplines.
 - Stories that illustrate the lived impact of our research on communities, learners, and industry partners.
3. **Emerging unifying narrative for the merged organisation**
 - Language and imagery (e.g., the woven waka) that express how diverse research strands come together as one.
 - Early articulation of the values, purpose, and “why” that underpin the new Rautaki Rangahau.

4. **Actionable insight into how we can enable research to thrive**
 - Identification of the conditions, supports, and processes that make strong research possible.
 - “How might we...” questions that capture practical opportunities for growth, connection, and capability-building.
5. **Momentum and ownership for the next phase**
 - Stronger relationships across both institutions’ research communities.
 - Commitment to continue shaping the strategy together — grounded in pride, curiosity, and a shared sense of purpose.

Prework

Before the workshop, please:

- **Reflect on a piece of research you are most proud of** from the past five years.
 - What made it meaningful or distinctive?
 - Who benefited from it?
 - What made it possible or supported?
- Bring one or two short notes or images that capture your story — these will be shared in small groups.
- Arrive ready to listen, contribute, and co-create ideas for how we can shape the future of applied, practice-based research together.

Important:

The more specific and concrete your examples, the more valuable they will be. Please avoid generalisations — focus on real, observable moments.

Workshop Run Sheet

TIME	ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME SOUGHT	WHO?
12.30	Room set up	There is a class in the room immediately before the hui.	Venue set up for workshop format.	All
12:40 - 1:00	Mihi / Independent Karakia	Opening karakia led by host; acknowledge both institutions and the shared kaupapa of applied research. Brief introductions around the room.	Engagement	Local Kaimahi Rosanne/ Galia
1:00 - 1:15	Welcome from Martin Carroll	Provide context, reflection, ELT’s visions, and an update on the merger and what it means for research.	Context	Martin Carroll

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1:15 - 1:20	Framing & Purpose Of The Day	Outline the session objectives and flow. Explain the Appreciative Inquiry process and why we are using it. Connects to wider context: merging cultures, sector reform, and why defining “our research” now matters.	Clarity and buy-in	Rosanne/ Galia
1:00 – 1:45	Group break out	Explained on the day	Bringing researchers together, seeing expanded opportunities, starting to weave groups together	All
1:45 – 2:15	Share back	Each table to present their key themes and insights from the discussions.	Emerging themes, strengths and areas where the energy is	Galia/ Rosanne
2:15 – 2:30	BREAK	Light refreshments will be available.		All
2:30 – 3:00	Front-Page Exercise	Explained on the day	Areas of passion and energy, what is exciting, where we can create impact	Galia to set up and work in groups
3:00 – 3:20	‘How Might We...’ generation	Explained on the day	Identifying barriers	Galia to set up and work in groups
3:20 – 3:40	Share back	Explained on the day	Themes emerging.	Galia/ Rosanne
3:40 – 4:10	Closing and next steps	Recap key themes, offer some synthesis, reflect back what we heard, explain next steps, and acknowledge participants contributions.	Integration	Rosanne and Galia
4:10 – 4:25	Unitec & MIT Research Committee business as usual	Attend to usual committee business, i.e. ratification of the minutes of the last meetings etc.	Complete the Research committees’ formal requirements	Rosanne and Brenda

In partnership with 

4:25 – 4:30	Karakia / Poroporoaki	Closing karakia and thank- yous		
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Integrated Summary and framework: Research Strategy Development – Unitec & MIT

1. Context and Purpose

The merged organisation is at a pivotal moment — both structurally and strategically. The new **research strategy** must align two very different cultures (Unitec and MIT) while also responding to **national changes in the tertiary and science sectors**.

The strategy will define:

- **What our research is** (and is not).
- **How we support it** through people, systems, and processes.
- **How it differs from university research** and delivers value to industry, communities, and learners.

The approach combines **bottom-up co-creation** (through appreciative inquiry workshops) and **top-down alignment** with government policy shifts.

2. Top-Down Drivers (External System Changes)

Several external imperatives make this work both urgent and strategic:

- **Sector Reform & Investment Planning:**
 - The government is reshaping the **science and research system**.
 - Each **tertiary research provider** must negotiate annual investment plans with TEC.
 - From **2027**, those plans **must include an approved research strategy**.
- **Funding & KPI Reform:**
 - The **PBRF/TREF** redesign and associated scoring systems are under review.
 - New KPIs and assessment metrics will distinguish **ITPs from universities**, valuing **applied, practice-based, and impact-focused research**.
 - The shift emphasises **commercialisation, growth, and community impact** over purely theoretical work.
- **Government Engagement:**
 - The organisation is actively advising officials from **TEC** and the **Ministry of Education** on these reforms, ensuring vocational research is represented.
 - This strategy will demonstrate **our point of difference** to policymakers and strengthen credibility in future funding negotiations.
- **National Leadership Ambition:**
 - The merged Unitec–MIT entity will be **the largest and most research-active ITP**, positioned to model excellence across the vocational sector.
 - There are future plans to consider broader collaboration of **research services and capability-building** to less research-active ITPs.

3. Bottom-Up Co-Creation Approach

The research strategy will be built through an **Appreciative Inquiry (AI)** process focused on what already works and where potential lies.

Guiding Questions

1. **What is our research?**
 - Define its nature, scope, and boundaries.
 - Identify examples that people are most proud of in the last five years.
 - Clarify what makes our research unique and distinct from that of universities.
2. **How do we support our research?**
 - Map functions, processes, and enablers.
 - Identify barriers, gaps, and opportunities.
 - Learn from moments when support worked exceptionally well.

Design Philosophy

1. Workshops are designed as **co-creation processes**, blending bottom-up and top-down input.
 2. The approach focuses on **strengths, pride, and potential**, using positive framing before moving to barriers and “how can we” solutions.
 3. The process aims to yield:
 - A clearly articulated **definition of research** for the new organisation.
 - A set of **enablers and supports** for research activity.
 - A **unifying narrative** rooted in shared values, identity, and purpose.
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4. Workshop Series

Three four to five-hour **co-creation workshops** will run before Christmas, and over Q1/Q2 2026 with 20–30 participants.

Workshops will be recorded (video), with Tūāpapa Rangahau staff capturing themes and ensuring analytic rigour.

5. Cultural Integration & Symbolism

- The strategy will use the metaphor of a **waka** with **woven sails**, representing multiple strands of research woven together across Māori, Pacific, and applied disciplines.
- Future workshops may include a **physical weaving activity**, led by researchers, to symbolise unity and regeneration — connecting research with environmental and cultural renewal. *This is to be confirmed.*
- The goal: a **woven, inclusive research strategy**, not separate Māori or Pacific components, but interwoven throughout while maintaining each strand’s integrity.

6. Implementation & Capability Building

- These workshops will **generate insight and build capability** — enabling internal teams to later run similar sessions independently.
- Insights will shape:
 - A **shared definition of research**.
 - A set of **research-support principles**.
 - **Initial enablers and priorities** for the merged organisation’s strategy.
- The resulting framework will inform:
 - The **2027 investment plan**,
 - **Government engagement**, and
 - The organisation’s **internal research ecosystem** (policies, support structures, and metrics).

7. Tone and Direction

The project blends **trust and autonomy from leadership** with **rigorous, evidence-based design**.

The guiding spirit is **collaborative, practical, and ambitious** — to make this the blueprint for how vocational and applied education in Aotearoa can lead research that is **usable, useful, and used**.



minutes

Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date:	2025-10-09
Scheduled Start:	1200h
Scheduled End:	1500h
Location:	Microsoft Teams

MEETING OPENED:	1200h
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SECTION 1 – NGĀ KUPU ARATAKI | PRELIMINARIES

Item 1.1 Karakia Tīmatanga | Opening Prayer

Item 1.2 Mihi Whakatau | Welcome from the Chair

The chair warmly welcomed members of the Unitec and MIT Research Committees and MIT Research Leaders to the meeting.

SECTION 2 – STANDING ITEMS

Item 2.1 Ngā Whakapāha | Attendance, Apologies & Quorate Status

Members Present

1. Rosanne Ellis (Chair)
2. Rokosiga Morrison (proxy for Daisy Bentley-Gray) (until 2pm)
3. Anna Wheeler (proxy for Sana Saleem) (until 2pm)
4. Arun Deo
5. Hinewai Reihana-White
6. Kristie Cameron (online)
7. Lian Wu (online)
8. Dion Enari (proxy for Helen Gremillion)
9. Hamid Sharifzadeh
10. Xinxin Wang (until 2pm)
11. Kathryn George
12. Linda Kestle (online) (from 1pm)

Total members represented: 12 members

Apologies

1. Leon Tan
2. Helen Gremillion
3. Sana Saleem
4. Daisy Bentley-Gray

Total apologies: 4 members

MOTION

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

Moved: Arun Deo

Seconded: Hinewai Reihana-White

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. Hadley Brown, Tūāpapa Rangahau
3. Evangelia Papoutsaki, Tūāpapa Rangahau
4. Maia Topp, MIT (until 2pm)
5. Rob Shaw, MIT
6. Deb Heke, Ngā Wai a Te Tūi
7. Mel Wong, MIT
8. Aiono Manu Fa'aea, MIT (until 2.30pm)

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

MOTION

That the committee approves the minutes of the 2025-09-11 meeting as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Hinewai Reihana-White

Seconded: Arun Deo

MOTION CARRIED

Item 2.3 Mahia Atū | 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
	Schedule a further discussion of this matter	Brenda Massey	

	when Rosanne Ellis is in attendance.		
2.3	Work with the Head of Applied Business to recruit a new committee representative from the school.	Hadley Brown	In progress
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	In progress
2.3	Schedule a further discussion of the opportunities/concerns that the Unitec/MIT merger could represent, in the research space when Rosanne Ellis is in attendance.	Brenda Massey	Complete - on agenda

More than 30 entries have been received for the joint Unitec/MIT 3 Minute Thesis Competition, a fantastic response. The event will be held on 22 October at Te Noho Kotahitanga.

SECTION 3 - WHAKAWHITI KÖRERO | ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Section 3.1 Changes across the tertiary and science+innovation system, e.g. Tertiary Education Strategy and PBRF/TREF changes

A summary of the discussion is as follows:

- The Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) is being replaced by the Tertiary Research Excellence Fund (TREF).
- Research degree completions (RDCs), external research funding (ERI) and a quality evaluation (QE) will remain components of the TREF. However, previously based on individual researcher portfolios, the QE component of TREF will adopt a metrics-based assessment approach. This shift is intended to streamline evaluation processes, reduce administrative burden, and better align research assessment with national priorities around impact, scale, and return on investment.
- The government is looking to support research that delivers economic, social and industry-benefits; Unitec and MIT, with our strengths in applied research and our strong partnerships with industry, are well placed to respond to the system changes.
- The government has acknowledged that the research that is undertaken by universities is different to the research that is undertaken by ITPs and vocational education training (VET) providers. They have signalled a strong interest in developing differentiated KPIs and metrics that reflect the distinct missions and contributions of different types of tertiary institutions, including those focused on VET.

- As part of this shift, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and Ministry of Education (MoE) will begin a new round of consultation from late October into November. This process will help shape the future direction of how Unitec and MIT's research outputs and impact are defined, measured, and rewarded within TREF.
- Current PBRF funding allocations will stay the same for 2026 and 2027. So, we have a two-year window to lift our research productivity in preparation for TREF 2028.
- It is thought that unlike the PBRF, the TREF assessment timeline won't be every six or eight years, it will be on a more regular basis. So, as we increase our research activity, there's not going to be a lag, and we can start to budget and think more strategically about how we invest in research.
- As part of the new Tertiary Education Strategy (TES), all TEOs will have to have a Research Plan as part of their annual Investment Plans. Therefore, we will have to have our new Research Strategy in place ready to form part of the 2027 Investment Plan.
- We have our two Academic Committees coming together, maintaining their separate Terms of Reference (ToR) for now. It was proposed that the URC and MIT Research Committees should follow this lead.

Section 3.2 Approach to co-development of the Unitec/MIT Research Strategy

A summary of the discussion is as follows:

- Everything about the current strategy is up for review, including current research support processes and procedures.
- It is important that we take a co-created approach to developing a new Rautaki Rangaha-Applied Research Strategy (2026-2028). A number of co-creation workshops will be held to ensure a wide range of views, including and especially Māori and Pacific views, are heard and captured, and that decisions are data informed, and data driven.
- It is key that Māori and Pacific culture, practice, voice is embedded throughout the strategy.
- The development of a new strategy provides an important opportunity to reframe and redefine our research. The strategy needs to define what our research is and what our unique value proposition is.
- The strategy will be developed from a bottom up, top-down perspective. This means engagement and consultation, reviewing institutional support structures and functions, and then achieving a grounded definition of research.
- The Research Strategy will guide the creation of a new combined research committee and its ToR.
- There was support to apply a Waka Hourua model to the development of the new strategy.
- Tūāpapa Rangahau has started to look at its research support structures, and the current return on investment. This includes identifying who our active researchers are, where the internal research investment is going, whether it is going to the right places, and whether its systems and processes are fit for purpose to achieve what our institutions want to achieve.
- It's crucial that the Rautaki Rangahau-Research Strategy that is developed works for the communities we work with.

Some of the topics and themes that were identified as needing to be considered as part of creating the new Research Strategy were:

- What do our researchers need

- Unitec's support systems, HR, Finance, IT etc, must enable research
- Measures and metrics; outcomes and impact measures
- Compliance, e.g., TEC and MoE
- Ethics
- Students, community, industry
- The teaching/research nexus
- Support and resources
- Values
- Capability building
- Transparency and equity
- Students as active research contributors
- Publishing
- Ecosystems and environment
- Multiple entry points/pathways for researchers
- Aspirations
- Support for priority group researchers
- Support for new and emerging and early career researchers
- What networks and alliances we will need; who we will need to partner with
- Valuing research groups and transdisciplinary research
- Not losing what we are already doing well
- Different levels of research maturity

It was noted that rautaki is a Māori kupu for strategy.

Section 3.3 Research SWOT, e.g. opportunities, barriers, aspirations, collaboration opportunities

Covered as part of Section 3.1 and 3.2.

Section 3.4 Planning for the next committee meeting

Rosanne Ellis and Rob Shaw will table bringing the two research committees together at the next MIT Research Committee. It is likely that the November meeting will be a combined meeting.

SECTION 6 - KUPU WHAKAMUTUNGA | CLOSING

Section 6.1 Ētahi Kaupapa Anō | Any Other Business

N/A

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

**Research Sub-Committee Report
Open Session Minutes**

Purpose

To provide Academic Committee with the open session minutes of the Research Sub-Committee meeting held on 16 October 2025.

Commentary

These minutes cover the usual reporting and conversations about providing research support to staff in the months to come.

Recommendation

That the Academic Committee receives the open session minutes of the Research Sub-Committee meeting held on 16 October 2025.

Responsible for Report:

Rob Shaw

Interim Research Director

Recommended by:

Research Sub-Committee Chairperson



**Manukau Institute of Technology
Research Sub-Committee**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday 16 October 2025, 4.00pm

Present

Rob Shaw (Chair)
Rosanne Ellis

Tom Qi
Aiono Manu Fa'aea

Mel Wong

In Attendance

Apologies

Kylie Smith, Hadley Brown, Maia Topp

PRELIMINARIES

Apologies; Kylie Smith, Hadley Brown, Maia Topp

Minutes to previous meetings;

Moved Tom Qi

Seconded Rob Shaw

REGULAR ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

RS 08/1. **Chair's Report**

Rob outlined the discussion held at the Unitec Research committee where it was proposed to hold joint MIT and Unitec research committee meetings for the remainder of 2025. This is to follow the example set by the MIT and Unitec Academic Committees. This is a good opportunity for the research committees to demonstrate their intent to come together as one as will be happening from early 2026. As the MIT research committee has struggled in the absence of consistent administrative support through 2025 it is a logical move to bring the committees together and pool the resources. This proposal was well received by both the Unitec and MIT membership.

RS 08/2. **Director's Report**

Update on changes across the tertiary and science+innovation system – Tertiary Education Strategy and PBRF/TREF changes.

A summary of the discussion is as follows:

- The Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) is being replaced by the Tertiary Research Excellence Fund (TREF).
- Research degree completions (RDCs), external research funding (ERI) and a quality evaluation (QE) will remain components of the TREF. However, previously based on individual researcher portfolios, the QE component of TREF will adopt a metrics-based assessment approach. This shift is intended to streamline evaluation processes, reduce administrative burden, and better align research assessment with national priorities around impact, scale, and return on investment.
- The government is looking to support research that delivers economic, social and industry-benefits; Unitec and MIT, with our strengths in applied research and our strong partnerships with industry, are well placed to respond to the system changes.
- The government has acknowledged that the research that is undertaken by universities is different to the research that is undertaken by ITPs and vocational education training (VET) providers. They have

signalled a strong interest in developing differentiated KPIs and metrics that reflect the distinct missions and contributions of different types of tertiary institutions, including those focused on VET.

- As part of this shift, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and Ministry of Education (MoE) will begin a new round of consultation from late October into November. This process will help shape the future direction of how Unitec and MIT's research outputs and impact are defined, measured, and rewarded within TREF.
- Current PBRF funding allocations will stay the same for 2026 and 2027. So, we have a two-year window to lift our research productivity in preparation for TREF 2028.
- It is thought that unlike the PBRF, the TREF assessment timeline won't be every six or eight years, it will be on a more regular basis. So, as we increase our research activity, there's not going to be a lag, and we can start to budget and think more strategically about how we invest in research.
- As part of the new Tertiary Education Strategy (TES), all TEOs will have to have a Research Plan as part of their annual Investment Plans. So we will have to have our new Research Strategy in place ready to form part of the 2027 Investment Plan.
- When we merge, we will be the most research active ITP, so we have to have a voice in positing that our metrics need to align with what we actually do.
- We have our two Academic Committees coming together, maintaining their separate Terms of Reference (ToR) for now. It was proposed that the URC and MIT Research Committees should follow this lead.
- The new Research Strategy will inform what any new ToR look like.

RS 08/3. **Heads of Schools Meeting**
No update

RS 08/4. **Pacific/Māori Research Projects**
No update

OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Committee Membership

No changes or updates are now proposed to the current committee membership as this will need to be revisited in early in 2026 to reflect the new entity and associated changes to committees

GENERAL BUSINESS

No general business

The meeting was closed with a karakia at **4.30** pm.

Chairperson: Rob Shaw

Date: 16th October 2025



Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of Te Komiti Rangahau o Unitec | Unitec Research Committee

Date of Meeting: 13 November 2025

Title	2025/2026 Unitec School Research Plans
Provided by:	Arun Deo, Research Advisor
For:	APPROVAL

Recommendation/s

That the process of updating 2025/2026 Unitec School Research Plans is deferred to enable alignment with the upcoming Unitec/MIT merger and to ensure that future School Research Plans align with the new Applied Research Strategy 2026-2028 currently under development.

Purpose

The annual update of the School Research Plans is a scheduled item in the committee’s Workplan. The updated plans are typically due to be received by the committee in September or October.

Background

Earlier this year (February–March), all Schools completed an interim update to their research plans to incorporate the newly introduced concept of group-based research dissemination funding. This initiative was successfully embedded across Schools and marked a significant step in fostering collaborative research outputs.

For the 2025/2026 cycle, substantial progress has already been made. A draft version of the updated School Research Plans was presented to the committee at its July meeting, receiving strong initial support from committee members. However, during the August Research Leaders’ hui, concerns were raised regarding the timing and strategic relevance of proceeding with the update in light of two major institutional developments:

- The forthcoming merger between Unitec and MIT, which is expected to bring structural and operational changes to the academic and research landscape.
- The imminent expiry of the current Research Strategy, which will soon be replaced by a new Applied Research Strategy guiding research priorities and investment.

Given these developments, the Research Leaders collectively recommend pausing the 2025/2026 update process. Deferring the update will enable alignment with the upcoming institutional changes and ensure that future School Research Plans are consistent with the new strategic research direction.

Early Career Researcher Fund 2025

Progress Report

Email your completed Progress Report to bmassey@unitec.ac.nz before **5pm on Friday, 29 August 2025**. Instructions in red italics may be removed before submission.

Researcher:	Dr Sameh Shamout
Project Title:	'Window of Palestine': Developing an Architectural 3D-Printed Theatre Experience
Amount of Grant:	\$10,740

Provide an update on the project's overall progress

The project has progressed exceptionally well. While the original proposal anticipated multiple performances, the outcomes organically converged into a single, comprehensive five-day theatrical show with a two-hour storytelling show for every night. This shift proved more suitable from a research perspective, allowing for deeper exploration and refinement of the architectural and performative elements.

In 2024, the project featured several smaller performances that laid the groundwork for future development. However, in 2025—with the support of this research grant—the production matured significantly. The funding enabled the hiring of Unitec students and staff, and professional Māori and Palestinian artists, whose contributions were instrumental in co-authoring the script, developing the 3D printed model, and therefore elevating the show's cultural and disciplinary depth. The result was a richly original, multidisciplinary, and multicultural architectural theatrical storytelling performance.

The show, staged in February 2025 at the New Zealand Fringe Festival in Wellington, was prepared with extensive rehearsals and academic rigor. Unlike the earlier performances, this iteration demonstrated substantial architectural relevance. It moved beyond the use of modular blocks and spoken word, incorporating a thoughtfully co-authored architectural scripts that reflected the project's evolving research goals.

Students played a vital role in the production, contributing to the design and construction of a 3D-printed house as part of the set. Their work was supervised by colleagues from Unitec, further embedding the project within an academic and collaborative framework.

Overall, the grant significantly enhanced the quality and scope of the project, transforming it into a robust research-led theatrical experience that bridges architecture, performance, and cultural storytelling.

Outline progress with respect to the relevant milestones identified in your application for funding

Milestone Date	Anticipated Achievement	Activities and Progress
10 Jan 2025	Phase 1 - Data collection: This includes downloading geo maps combined with data to prepare for drawing a 3D model in Revit.	Completed
17 Jan 2025	Phase 2 -Design: This phase involves defining dimensions,	Completed

	scale, and designing the concept for the multi-scale model. The model should be versatile, allowing for size reduction or partial use to fit different theatre spaces.	
30 Jan 2025	Phase 3 - Consultation: This phase includes holding meetings with key individuals to gather feedback on the design concept and receive approval before moving to the drawing phase	Completed
1 Feb 2025	Phase 4 - Drawing: This phase involves creating the digital model in Revit.	Completed
10 Feb 2025	Phase 5 - 3D Printing: This phase includes printing the physical 3D model.	Completed
Feb – Dec 2025	Phase 6 - The primary research output (a 3D physical model) will be showcased in public exhibitions and performances, including additional performances beyond those listed.	The 3D-model is completed, and is held to be used in future subsequent events
Sept 2025	Phase 7 - Writing and Publishing: This phase involves writing a journal article and news articles to disseminate the research outcomes.	Two news articles were published about the work, one Magazine article from Auckland, and one Te Ao Māori News article along with a Radio brief about the show one week before the show took place. 1- Te Ao Māori News https://www.teaonews.co.nz/2025/01/18/palestine-and-aotearoa-unite-in-art-grief-and-resilience/ 2- Magazine article: https://eyeviewethnictrust.org.nz/index.php/3d-flip-book/e5-discover-people-food-fashion-beauty-wellbeing-art-and-more/ 3- Festival of Architecture, by Asia Kiwi Architects – a poster was presented in the exhibition Also, an academic article draft of 10,000 words has been completed and ready for publication taking the project to a new horizon, linking this research with mental distress and neurodevelopmental disorders.
10 Feb 2025 for the 3D physical model (main output). 1 Dec 2025	Estimated completion dates	Completed

for the performances and exhibitions.		
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Outline any variations to your project [if applicable]

The original proposal of this research funded project anticipated multiple smaller performances throughout the year. However, the project evolved into a single, large-scale theatrical event—a five-day mini-festival—presented as part of the New Zealand Fringe Festival in February 2025. This variation allowed for a more cohesive, storytelling-driven experience rooted in 3D-printed architectural design along with the use of wooden blocks. The shift enabled deeper integration of inter-cultural narratives and spatial experimentation, aligning more closely with the project's research goals from an architectural and artistic point of view.

Outline any new opportunities to come from this project so far

The *Window of Palestine* project has generated a range of new opportunities that extend beyond its original scope. Thanks to the research grant, Sameh and his team were featured in *Te Ao Māori News* and *Eyeview Ethnic Trust Magazine*, significantly increasing public outreach and visibility. This media exposure led to multiple invitations for performances and presentations throughout the year. While many were declined due to time constraints balancing research and teaching, plans are underway to pursue these opportunities in the coming 2026 and 2027 years.

One of the most impactful outcomes has been the formation of new connections with high-profile artists, particularly within Māori, Pākehā, and kiwi Arab communities. These collaborations have enriched the project's cultural depth and opened doors for future interdisciplinary work.

The integration of 3D printing into theatrical storytelling has inspired other artists to explore architectural elements in their own productions. This innovation has positioned Unitec and Sameh's team as pioneers in merging spatial design with live performance, creating an impact across the creative sector in the multi-ethnic community of New Zealand.

Importantly, the project has begun to intersect with mental health research. The immersive nature of the theatre show drew attention to Sameh's artistic approach as a potential tool for alleviating mental distress. Invitations have been extended to present at mental health-focused theatre events next year, and the work is being explored as a medium for enhancing the diagnosis and understanding of neurodevelopmental disorders.

This expansion into therapeutic and diagnostic applications marks a significant new horizon for the project. A 10,000-word academic article has been completed and is ready for publication, linking the architectural and performative aspects of the research with mental health and neurodiversity. When published, This research paper aims to serve as a foundation for future collaborations across disciplines, including psychology, architecture, and performance studies.

These opportunities could be pursued further through:

- Continued partnerships with theatre and artists networks.
- Connecting with Creative New Zealand to get future funds for the project.
- Finding dedicated funding applications focused on therapeutic and diagnostic innovation
- Cross-disciplinary research projects involving Unitec teams and external collaborators
- Expanded public engagement through festivals, exhibitions, and academic conferences

The project's evolution demonstrates its potential to influence not only architectural and theatrical practices but also broader societal conversations around wellbeing and cultural expression.

Financial Update

Item	Amount approved	Amount spent to date ¹	Remaining funds (i.e. amount approved less amount spent to date)	Anticipated amount to be spent by the end of the funding term*
Personnel – research assistants (2 x students @ \$26 p/hr x 120 hours each) to assist with data analysis, drawing and 3D printing	\$6,240			
Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shipping costs for materials required for data analysis, drawings, and 3D printing \$200 • 60 kgs of 3D printing material (\$40 p/kg), which includes the making of a base for the 3D prints \$2,400 	\$2,600			
Travel (ticket to Wellington to attend five-day mini festival at the New Zealand Fringe Festival)	\$400	Changed with items of higher priority to the research outcome		
Equipment	\$1,500	Changed		
Main co-author and storyteller and performer (Palestinian)		\$500		
Main co-author and performer (Māori)		\$920		
Main c-author and performer (Māori)		\$810		
Social media support and advertisement		\$600		
Production crew – theatre technical Support over five days – two hours each day + rehearsals		\$518.75		
Shipping cost of the 3D model from Auckland to Wellington		\$170.54		

¹ If you are unsure, you can check these figures with Asma Muir amuir@unitec.ac.nz

Purchase of a professional Wireless Microphone		\$749		
		\$4,267		
Total	\$10,740			

* If the anticipated amount to be spent by the end of the funding term is more or less than the amount approved, please explain why:

The anticipated expenditure by the end of the funding term is slightly higher than initially approved due to the multidisciplinary nature of the project, which combined architecture, theatre, and artistic collaboration. The creation of a five-day festival from scratch required additional resources not fully accounted for in the original budget.

Key factors contributing to the variation include:

- Payment of minimum fees to participating artists for their time and creative input
- Purchase of essential equipment such as microphones
- Hiring of a sound technician to ensure professional audio quality throughout the performances

These costs were in addition to the core expenses related to the 3D printing process and the development of the architectural model, which involved active participation from Unitec staff and students.

The expanded scope and ambition of the final production demanded a more comprehensive budget to maintain quality and deliver a meaningful research outcome. The slight increase in spending reflects the project's growth and its successful integration of technical, artistic, and academic elements.

Self-assessment: The Early Career Researcher Fund aims to develop early career researchers' capability, capacity and career progression as a Principal Investigator on a high-quality applied research project. How well do you believe you have managed your project to date?

The project has been managed to a high standard, successfully fulfilling and exceeding the expectations of the Early Career Researcher Fund. As Principal Investigator, I led the development of a multidisciplinary, architectural theatre experience that culminated in a five-day mini-festival within the prestigious New Zealand Fringe Festival—an achievement that reflects both artistic ambition and research excellence.

The project gained notable public recognition, including features in *Te Ao Māori News*, a multi-ethnic magazine in Auckland, and a Wellington-based radio station. These media engagements significantly expanded the project's outreach and visibility, demonstrating its cultural relevance and impact.

Managing this initiative from the ground up involved coordinating artists, students, and technical teams, while fostering connections with social activists and high-profile creatives. These collaborations enriched the research and opened pathways for future interdisciplinary work.

Overall, the project has strengthened my capability and capacity as a Principal Investigator, showcasing my ability to lead a high-quality applied research project that bridges architecture, performance, and community engagement.

Do you wish to highlight any other matters relevant to this project?

Yes

No

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