



Academic Policy and Procedures Manual

13d Conduct of Research and Advanced Practice

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Linkages to Unitec’s Quality Management System

The aim of this policy is to support Unitec’s mission and the principles that govern the Unitec Quality Management System. The principles that primarily underpin this policy are those from the following areas of activity and associated principles:

Student and Staff Research

- Unitec undertakes applied research that is founded in critical reflection
- Links between research, teaching and learning are promoted and supported

- Research is conducted ethically
- Peer review is undertaken by people who are both independent and informed
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Resource Provision

- Wise stewardship of resources ensures the needs of students and staff are met, encourages new initiatives and promotes excellence in research and scholarship
- Resource provision and accountability mechanisms are monitored appropriately to ensure they meet legislative requirements

1 Introduction

The conduct of research and advanced practice is fundamental to the activities of Unitec as a dual sector institution. Unitec has high standards, recognised and in use internationally, for research and advanced practice which apply to all staff members. It must be understood that departure from these standards constitutes serious misconduct that will result in disciplinary action.

Members of staff of Unitec adhere to high standards in their pursuit of new knowledge and interpretation because failure to do so damages the investigator, his or her colleagues, the reputation of Unitec, and could affect the professions, industries and the communities with which the institution interacts. Unitec cannot permit the integrity of its research and advanced practice programmes to be placed in doubt, nor open itself to risk and criticism 'after the fact' when contracts are signed off by person(s) not authorised to commit the Institute.

2 Other relevant Unitec policies:

- 12a Code for Supervision of Postgraduate Student Research
- 12g Code for Supervision of Undergraduate Students Undertaking Research Projects
- Intellectual Property Policy
- 13b Documenting Research Outputs
- 13c Application for External Research Funding
- HR22 Academic Workload Policy
- HR23 Outside Work Policy
- Admin 13 Privacy of Information Policy and Procedures
- 13a Research Ethics Committee Policies and Procedures

3 Guidelines

3.1 Internationally accepted standards

Investigators and practitioners must be committed to the highest international standards of professional and personal integrity in undertaking and supervising research and advanced practice. (Research is undertaken in accordance with Vancouver Protocols.) Relevant staff also have a duty to maintain the highest standards in research and advanced practice applicable to their discipline, profession, industry and community. This protects their own good name, and that of Unitec.

3.2 Limitations on research and advanced practice

Investigators and practitioners should claim expertise only in areas where they have proven competence. They should also ensure that there is appropriate disclosure of any limitations on their work due to insufficient resources. This disclosure should be made in writing to the Head of School and to the Vice-President, Research as the manager of the contract through the Research Office.

When in doubt, investigators and practitioners should seek assistance with their projects from their colleagues and peers. Debate on, and criticism of, research and advanced practice are essential parts of the investigative and creative process.

3.3 No manipulation of results

Investigators and practitioners must not manipulate the results of the work to meet the perceived needs or requirements of funding agencies or other interested parties, nor condone such manipulation by others.

3.4 No duplication of outputs

It is anticipated that researchers will follow best practice in their disciplines in regard to duplication of outputs. It is implicit that work that is reproduced is appropriately referenced and not misrepresented as new knowledge.

*Note that although research presented in a dissertation or thesis is considered in some circumstances to be 'quality assured', dissertations and theses are referred to as 'unpublished' in recognition that the quality assurance is on specific parameters to do with academic requirements.

3.5 Publicly funded research

Investigators and practitioners should ensure wherever possible, the public dissemination of all research work which is publicly funded. Results and methods should be open to scrutiny through appropriate professional publication or exhibition.

Identify speculation and interpretation

Investigators and practitioners should ensure that all speculative and interpretive statements in their work are identified as such.

3.6 Commercial or confidential research

The issue of commercial confidentiality of results from research and advanced practice projects requires careful consideration. The project must be subject to a specific agreement covering the exchange of information and publishing of results.

Where data of a commercially confidential nature have been obtained, commercial confidentiality shall be observed and researchers/advanced practitioners shall not use such information for their own personal advantage or that of a third party.

In the particular cases of student or staff research where there are issues of commercial confidentiality and ownership of intellectual property (IP), reference should be made to the Unitec Policy on Intellectual Property.

3.7 Authorisation of contracts and other formal agreements

Investigators and advanced practitioners may not sign contracts or other agreements with sponsoring agents on behalf of Unitec. In the case of research and advanced practice contracts, the Research Office obtains the signature of the Vice-President, Research, or the relevant signing authority.

3.8 Milestones and deadlines in contracts and other formal agreements

It is expected that all contracted work, whether internally or externally funded, will be completed within the period of the contract, and that all milestones will be met. Delays in meeting objectives should be signalled to the Research Office and, where these are material, explanations are to be provided to the funding body, either by the lead researcher or by the research co-ordinator in the Unitec Research Office. Failure to meet agreed deadlines and milestones constitutes a non-performance issue.

3.9 Ethics

Unitec operates under national and international standards for ethical research, embodied in Unitec's Research Ethics Committee accreditation to the Ministry of Health's National Operational Standard. Ethical approval for all research or advanced practice projects involving or affecting humans must be obtained prior to the commencement of the project. Unitec Research Ethics Committee processes are covered in Policy 13a, Research Ethics Policy & Procedures.

Research likely to involve animals should gain ethics approval through the University of Auckland's Research Ethics Committee.

3.10 Physical Safety

Investigators and practitioners must ensure the safety of all those associated with the project, in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health in Employment Act and Unitec's health and safety requirements. All safety procedures should be followed.

3.11 Retention of data

Original data on which published material is based should be kept for the period of time specified by Unitec's data retention policy or as indicated by the research funding body. Unitec staff are responsible for the retention of their data. Long term retention of personal data that contains personal information needs to be justified to avoid a breach of Privacy Principle 9: "that an agency that holds personal information shall not keep that information for longer than is required for the purposes for which the information may be lawfully used." Researchers should refer to Unitec's Admin 13 Privacy of Information Policy and Procedures.

3.12 Expectation for publication

The creation of books, papers, articles and other new works is an important expectation of each Unitec staff member whose contract requires advancing knowledge through the process of research and advanced practice.

Staff and students must ensure that plagiarism is avoided by referencing material from others carefully. It is also important that all authors listed in the publication have contributed significantly to the work.

3.13 The role of supervisors of postgraduate student research

The Postgraduate Division and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that postgraduate student research is properly supervised. Individuals given responsibility for research supervision must be sufficiently competent in the field at the level of supervision required and have the time to supervise appropriately.

Research supervisors must ensure that their students are made aware of the ethical standards relevant to their work, which includes the nature of intellectual property. Supervisors should ensure that the work submitted by the students is the students' own and that all data have been validly obtained.

Supervisors have a duty to ensure that research students are made aware of the existence of relevant regulations, policies and procedures. They must also reach agreement with the student on a mutually suitable working relationship, and reach agreement on such matters as joint publication. See Policy 12a, Code for Supervision of Postgraduate Research, and Policy 12g, Code for Supervision of Undergraduate Students undertaking Research Projects.

3.14 Misconduct in research and advanced practice

The following matters are deemed to be serious misconduct in relation to research and include:

1. Not gaining ethical approval prior to the commencement of research.
2. Implementing, without further ethical approval, changes in research procedures that represent a significant departure from the project approved, particularly around issues of consent, confidentiality, sensitivity and potential harm to participants.
3. Not adhering to ethical standards of research and intentional infringements of the guidelines issued by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee and its provision for human subjects and any other relevant professional practice and code of ethics.
4. Not ensuring the safety of those associated with a research project.
5. Fabrication of data, including claiming records where none have been identified.
6. Falsification of data, including fraudulent changing of records.
7. Manipulation of results to meet the perceived needs or requirements of funding agents.
8. Plagiarism, including the direct copying of textual material, the use of other people's data without acknowledgement, the deliberate use of published or unpublished ideas obtained from other people without adequate attribution.
9. Misleading ascription of authorship, including listing authors of unpublished research without their permission.
10. Attributing work to others who have not, in fact, contributed to the research.
11. Failing to acknowledge work primarily produced by a research student/trainee/association.
12. Not identifying speculative and interpretive statements.
13. Not appropriately disclosing any limitations on a researcher's work.
14. Claiming expertise in an area where a researcher does not have full knowledge.
15. Clear duplication of outputs.
16. Not retaining appropriate data for at least six years.
17. Not signing contracts or other agreements with sponsoring agents on behalf of Unitec.
18. Not meeting milestones and deadlines in contracts and other formal agreements
19. Failure to maintain high standards of research and advanced practice applicable to the researcher's discipline, profession, industry and community.
20. Inappropriate stewardship of research funds provided by either an internal or external source.
21. Other research practices that are likely to bring the Institute into disrepute.

Misconduct, however, does not include honest errors or honest differences in the interpretation of data or conclusions drawn from them. Honest errors may, nevertheless, incur censure and instructive or remedial measures.

If misconduct is identified, contact will, in the first instance, be made with the Vice-President of Research who is normally the Chair of the Unitec Research and Advanced Practice Committee. The Vice-President of Research will ensure that processes will follow Unitec's HR 17 Disciplinary Policies & Procedures.

3.15 Sanctions

A Unitec staff member, as the researcher, may incur sanctions for misconduct. Where misconduct is likely to result in a disciplinary outcome, the processes will adhere to HR 17 Disciplinary Policies & Procedures.

4 Contact information

Appointment	Name	Contact Details
Vice-President, Research	Prof Gael McDonald	Ext 7735
Chair, Unitec Research and Advanced Practice Committee	Prof Gael McDonald	Ext 7735
Chair, Unitec Research Ethics Committee	Ms Deirdre Milne	09 623 2025
Research Co-ordinators	Portia Richmond Doug MacLeod	Ext 7254 Ext 7760

Appendices

Glossary of terms and acronyms particular to this document

Term or Acronym	Expansion	Definition
Standard Unitec terms	For an explanation of official or common terminology at Unitec follow the link ->	Link to \\Kiwi\share\STAFF_Core Information\Terms & Definitions\Terms&Definitions.xls

Revision History

Date	Version	Description/Comments	Author
28-Jun-06	0.1	Policy approved by Academic Board 21 Sep 04	Jacqueline Rowarth

Internal Documents that are related to this document

Author	Date	Hyperlink to other related documents
		Academic Policy Documents - 12a Code for Supervision of Postgraduate Student Research
		Intellectual Property Policy.doc
		Academic Policy 13b Documenting Research Outputs
		Academic Policy Documents - 13c Applications for External Research Funding
		Outside Work Policy
		12b Publication from a Thesis or Dissertation or Research Project.