

# NMIT RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE STRATEGY

Section	Research		
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Key Evaluation Question	4	ITPNZ Quality Standard	11

## THE NMIT VISION FOR RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

**NMIT's Research Vision is to focus on expanding its research capability and encouraging a self-sustaining culture which will advance knowledge, support student learning and contribute to social and economic development through effective knowledge exchange.**

**The overall aim of our research strategy is to undertake activities which build NMIT's research culture across the organisation and at all levels to improve learning, teaching and the student experience, contribute to the professional development of staff, and build effective knowledge exchange relationships within NMIT and with our regional communities, businesses and industry.**

## INTRODUCTION

This strategy focuses on five important issues that NMIT must address if it aims to become a significant and influential centre for applied research, creative activity and knowledge exchange:

- a) build the research culture within NMIT
- b) improve NMIT's ability to secure external funding for research and development
- c) support staff across the organisation to engage in research and/or knowledge exchange
- d) encourage organizations to engage with NMIT in these activities
- e) further define the parameters for research and knowledge exchange at NMIT.

## SCOPE

All degree programmes at NMIT are approved and accredited by NZQA. Within the approval and accreditation process degree programmes must demonstrate sufficient research activity to meet the NZQA requirements and must continue to do so. This is monitored as part of the NMIT quality assurance processes and is a priority.

NMIT also recognises however, that research activity is not necessarily confined to staff teaching on degrees, and that research, resultant research outputs and knowledge exchange by non degree staff and non teaching staff should also be encouraged, acknowledged, and supported.

## DEFINING RESEARCH

There are two key definitions for research in New Zealand. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) definition which applies to educational institutions (New Zealand Qualifications Authority – February 1998) and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) definition which underpins the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF). This plan is based primarily on the NZQA definitions for research.

## NZQA DEFINITION OF RESEARCH

Research may be found in the following contexts although they are not mutually exclusive:

- (a) Basic or fundamental research: experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge without any particular application or use in view.
- (b) Strategic research: work which is intended to generate new knowledge in an area which has not yet advanced sufficiently to enable specific applications to be identified.
- (c) Applied research: work which develops or tests existing knowledge and is primarily directed towards either specific practical objectives or towards the evaluation of policies or practices. Work which involves the routine application of established techniques on routine problems is unlikely to constitute research.
- (d) Scholarship: work which is intended to expand the boundaries of knowledge and understanding within and across disciplines by the analysis, synthesis and interpretation of ideas and information, making use of a rigorous methodology.

This part of the definition draws on that developed by the United Kingdom Council for National Academic Awards, *Handbook*, 1991-92 (ISBN 0 903471 68 X).

- (e) Creative work: the invention and generation of ideas, hypotheses, images, performances or artefacts, including design, in any field of knowledge, leading to the development of new knowledge, understanding or expertise.

Activities which may be equivalent to research if they meet one or more of the definitions (a-e) outlined above include:

- (f) Consultancy, which involves the deployment of existing knowledge and the application of analytical and investigative skills to the resolution of problems presented by a client, usually in an industrial, commercial or professional context.
- (g) Professional practice, some of which overlaps with consultancy when conducted at an advanced level. In certain subject areas and professions the theorisation and effectiveness of professional practice are advanced by academic staff who practise and participate in it.

NZQA does not regard activity mainly concerned with keeping abreast of new developments in subjects nor in teaching and assessment as 'research'.

All research activities must be conducted in accordance with recognised ethical standards.

## DEFINING KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Excerpt from the definition of Knowledge Transfer agreed by the Research Councils UK (RCUK), Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS, previously OSI) and the Research Councils:

*"Knowledge Transfer encompasses the systems and processes by which knowledge, expertise and skilled people transfer between the research environment (universities, centres and institutes) and its user communities in industry, commerce, public and service sectors."*

Excerpt from a discussion and overview of the literature on the economic impact of knowledge transfer. Report prepared for Universities UK, August 2007, Ursula Kelly:

*"Knowledge transfer" is now used more frequently than "technology transfer" – but "knowledge transfer" is, in turn, beginning to be superseded by the term "knowledge exchange". **The latter is often used to try to reflect a belief that***

*the processes involved may be two-way. However there are a very wide range of additional associated terms being used, e.g. knowledge transfer, knowledge exchange, knowledge exploitation.”*

Source: website of University of the West of England (UWE) Bristol  
<http://rbi.uwe.ac.uk/intranet/KnowledgeExchange/definitions.asp>

NMIT prefers to use the term Knowledge Exchange to recognise and reflect that in its normal activities in teaching and learning, staff and students develop knowledge and skills that are of potential benefit to those, such as businesses and community groups, who are outside the contractual relationship that NMIT has with its learners.

Knowledge, developed in this way, will have a high degree of credibility, transferability and sustainability.

We define ‘knowledge exchange’ as a two way sharing of knowledge gained from research and experience that occurs both between tutors, non teaching staff, students and the wider community, and is based on the concept of “moving knowledge into action”.

The following activities may be included within the scope of knowledge exchange:

- The provision of advice or opinion compatible with the definition of research
- Scientific or technical information services
- Standards development
- Feasibility studies (except into research and experimental development projects)
- Publishing (individual or joint)
- Presenting at Conference and attending conferences
- Performance, exhibition, installation, screening or other sharing of new creative work
- Reviewing
- Community group projects involving the exchange of expertise
- Organising conferences
- Organising networks
- Educational resource development
- Curriculum development
- Advisory Boards
- Post course placements
- External secondments
- Collaborative RKE projects with external organisations
- Other activities that come within the scope of knowledge exchange

## PRINCIPLES

- NMIT will abide by the requirement of the Education Act 1989 s254 (3a) that degree programmes should be delivered mainly by people engaged in research. Accordingly, NMIT will provide an environment where degree teaching staff members are actively engaged in research, and that this research actively informs the teaching process.
- Recognising that research and knowledge exchange takes time, if these activities are to be effective, time needs to be allocated and dedicated to it.
- NMIT will support the research endeavours of its degree teaching staff to ensure the long-term investment and interest in research reflects NMIT’s commitment to degree programmes.
- NMIT will also support the research and knowledge exchange activities of its non degree staff and non teaching staff, to reflect NMIT’s commitment to fostering the exchange of knowledge between the institute and the community
- Research objectives will reflect NMIT Strategic Objectives and embrace the diversity of interests and requirements in our teaching and non teaching departments.

- The focus of NMIT's research activity will be research that informs professional and vocational practice and generates useful knowledge exchange with communities, business and industry.
- The development of research projects will be a consideration in academic staff career progression.
- Action based research in teaching and learning will be encouraged.
- NMIT aspires to create centres of research activity that are topical, collaborative and of high standard and which reflect issues pertinent to NMIT and/or the teaching strengths of NMIT.
- Staff and students will undertake research with a shared commitment to excellence and best practice and to projects that are ethically and methodologically sound.
- . Research outputs of both degree and non degree staff, and both teaching and non teaching staff, should be formally reported annually and publication of research outputs will be encouraged as a means to increase knowledge exchange.

## THE MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER ACTIVITY

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Director of Planning, Quality & Learner Services will monitor overall Institute performance relating to research and knowledge exchange and resource support for research activity within budgetary constraints: .
- Group Managers will monitor the research outputs of degree teaching staff within their areas of responsibility, and ensure that the outputs demonstrate that:
  - research is being used to inform teaching and learning in degrees
  - at least 50 per cent of staff teaching in each degree are actively involved in research
  - research links to business and community needs and there is clear evidence of community engagement
  - staff members continue to meet legislative requirements for teaching degrees
- The Programme Area Leader (in the case of degree teaching staff) or Line Manager (in the case of non teaching staff) will be responsible for:
  - ensuring degree teaching staff develop personal research plans
  - ensuring staff applying for funding or time allocations develop personal research plans
  - allocation of time to support research activity
  - monitoring progress in achieving planned outcomes
- New research and development projects of real or potential interest to local Iwi will, in their formative stages, be communicated for consultation through the office of the Director of Māori Education.
- The Director of Planning, Quality & Learner Services will manage central research mentoring and/or co-ordination roles and other institute-wide research and knowledge exchange projects.
- Group Managers will manage staffing for research and knowledge exchange mentoring and/or co-ordination roles.

### PLANNING

- Research projects by staff members will not be supported unless they have a personal research plan approved by their line manager.

- Each year Programme Area Leaders with responsibility for degree programmes will present a Research Plan for their curriculum area to the Research and Ethics Committee.

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## COMMUNICATION & REPORTING

- All research will be reported to the NMIT R&E Committee and conducted within the Ethics and Research Guidelines set by that Committee. The Director of Planning, Quality & Learner Services will chair that committee. The committee structure is specified in the NMIT Academic Statute.
- Research outputs of NMIT staff members in degree-awarding departments continue to meet legislative requirements for teaching degrees.
- An NMIT Research database will be set up and made accessible internally and externally:
  - Degree teaching staff will keep their evidence portfolios up to date and available on NMIT Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) Databases.
  - Staff members who have received funding or time allowances for research will keep their evidence portfolios up to date and available on the NMIT RKE Database.
  - Other staff members who are engaged in research activities will be encouraged to keep their evidence portfolios up to date and available on the NMIT RKE Database whether or not they have received funding or time allowance.
- Knowledge exchange projects will be reported to the Director of Planning, Quality & Learner Services annually.
- Staff will be encouraged to present research findings at conferences, workshops and/or seminars, either within NMIT or outside
- Staff will be encouraged and supported in presenting their knowledge, skills and successes in RKE to local schools, industry and communities.

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## FUNDING APPLICATIONS AND APPROVALS

- Research project funds will be released to the curriculum areas containing degree programmes, following the approval of their curriculum area's annual RKE Plan by the NMIT Research & Ethics Committee.
- Once the area's RKE Plan is approved the PAL or delegated Research Co-ordinator will take responsibility for:
  - the management of the RKE annual project funding budget
  - circulating RKE project funding application information to staff
  - ensuring staff have the opportunity to apply for research project funding.
  - the presentation to the R&E Committee of the Programme Area's contribution to the Annual Report

## REFERENCES

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### INTERNAL

Approval and Publication of Research  
Ethical Considerations for Research,  
Ethical Approval for Student Research

Intellectual Property  
Building a Research Culture (Pending approval)