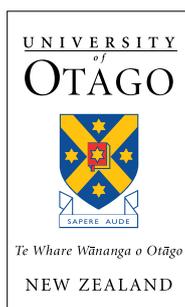


UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

# Research Action Plan

2008 TO 2012



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The University recently identified six major imperatives for Strategic Direction to 2012. These were elaborated by several working parties to include a number of actions relating to Achieving Research Excellence, Achieving Excellence in Research-Informed Teaching, Ensuring Outstanding Campus Environments and Student Experience, Contributing to the National Good and to International Progress, Strengthening External Engagement, and Building and Sustaining Capability. The recommendations were finalized by the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group, and many were implemented. The following Research Action Plan draws these together, where there are direct implications for the development of excellence in research and its application. A few recommendations developed by the Research Committee have been added. Key performance indicators are not included because the specific criteria for the Performance Based Research Fund in the areas of Quality Evaluation, Research Degree Completion, and External Research Income apply in all instances. The purpose of disseminating this Action Plan is to convey to members of the University the scope of research-related initiatives being undertaken by the Research Committee and in the Divisions.

PROFESSOR GEOFF WHITE  
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH)  
JUNE 30, 2008

## VISION

A research-led University with an international reputation for excellence

The following seven research goals have been identified by the University:

**Invest in outstanding staff**

**Instil a strong research culture**

**Develop and sustain key areas of international research strength**

**Achieve a productive balance between teaching and research**

**Attract and nurture high-calibre research students**

**Foster research and partnership with Māori**

**Promote research as a community benefit**

## GOAL 1 INVEST IN OUTSTANDING STAFF

- 1.1. Recruit excellent research-qualified staff.  
Action: PVCs, HODs
- 1.2. Encourage a greater willingness not to appoint to academic positions in instances where there are no applicants with a strong potential to become good-quality researchers.  
Action: PVCs, HODs
- 1.3. Introduce confirmation/permanent employment for current and future Research Professors and Research Associate Professors.  
Actioned 2/08: DVC(R), DVC (A&I), Director (HR)
- 1.4. Extend eligibility for University Superannuation to research staff on fixed term contracts once their continuous employment with the University extends beyond two years.  
Actioned 3/08: Director (HR)
- 1.5. Ensure that succession planning is in place for key research leaders.  
Action: PVCs, DVC(R)
- 1.6. Support early-career staff through postdoctoral fellowships.  
Action: DVC(R), Research Committee

## GOAL 2 INSTIL A STRONG RESEARCH CULTURE

- 2.1. Strengthen and support research leadership of Heads of Departments and Schools.  
Action: DVC(A&I), DVC(R)
- 2.2. Align the documentation requirements for academic promotion and progression with those for PBRF Quality Evaluation.  
Action: DVC(R), DVC (A&I), Director (HR), Academic Staffing Committee
- 2.3. Ensure that concerns in respect of research funding are taken into account in the development of a new resource allocation model for the University.  
Action: COO, Director (FS), DVC(R), Directors (R&E)
- 2.4. Re-establish cost centres within various schools in the Health Sciences Division to increase transparency in the recovery and management of research costs.  
Actioned 1/08: PVC (Health Sciences)
- 2.5. Encourage transparency at cost centre level, in the management of indirect costs.  
Action: DVC(R), PVCs, HODs
- 2.6. Encourage transparency in the cost-centre management of allocations from the Performance Based Research Fund.  
Action: PVCs, HODs

## GOAL 3 DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN KEY AREAS OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH STRENGTH

- 3.1. Ensure that research achievement is the focus for University of Otago Research Centres and Research Themes.  
Action: Research Committee
- 3.2. Identify opportunities for grouping grant proposals into programmes, such as HRC programmes.  
Action: DVC(R), Directors (R&E)
- 3.3. Identify international sources of funding and match potential collaborators.  
Action: Directors (R&E)
- 3.4. Increase the quality of grant applications and funding bids through peer review prior to submission.  
Action: DVC(R), Directors (R&E), PVCs
- 3.5. Increase the University's share of funds in portfolios of external funding agencies that are underbid.  
Action: DVC(R), Director (R&E)

## GOAL 4 ACHIEVE A PRODUCTIVE BALANCE BETWEEN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

- 4.1. Promote effective workload models in Departments that include blocks of protected time for research.  
Action: PVCs, HODs
- 4.2. Proactively manage time-relief as part of research contracts (cf. HRC requirements).  
Action: HODs, PVCs, DVC(R)
- 4.3. Reduce unnecessary administration tasks and internal compliance requirements, and clarify compliance requirements of Government.  
Action: Directors (R&E), HODs
- 4.4. Develop and implement a researcher-friendly system for financial reporting, research administration, and contract management.  
Action: Directors (R&E), Director (FS), Director (ITS)

## GOAL 5 ATTRACT AND NURTURE HIGH CALIBRE RESEARCH STUDENTS

- 5.1. Foster a postgraduate research community through the development of greater co-ordination of support for graduate research students.  
Action: Director (GRS), DVC(R), PVCs
- 5.2. Increase the proportion of Masters and PhD research students to 10% of total EFTS by 2012.  
Action: HODs, PVCs, DVC(R)
- 5.3. Increase the number of PhD scholarships by at least 20 per year in order to achieve a total of no fewer than 180 by 2012, and maintain their competitiveness.  
Action: DVC(R), Scholarships Committee
- 5.4. Improve conditions for graduate student research including accommodation, conference support, national and international collaboration, and publishing workshops.  
Action: Director(GRS), HODs, PVCs, DVC(R)
- 5.5. Encourage publication during PhD research.  
Action: DVC(R), Director (GRS), HODs
- 5.6. Improve research student selection processes, the student-supervisor match, and training for supervisors.  
Action: Director (GRS), HODs, PhD Advisory Committee
- 5.7. Support research groups and research-only staff to undertake graduate student supervision even where student projects are not aligned with research contracts.  
Action: DVC(R), HODs

## GOAL 5 FOSTER RESEARCH AND PARTNERSHIP WITH MĀORI

- 6.1. Support the objectives of the Māori Strategic Framework – Te Rangahau Māori – Strategies by
  - a. Ensuring Māori research is strengthened and co-ordinated to create a solid research base with a more cohesive research picture.
  - b. Promoting kaupapa Māori research, research into Te Ao Māori, and research which contributes to Māori development and well-being.
  - c. Promoting research conducted, written or produced in te reo Māori at the University of Otago.
- 6.2. Consult with Māori communities regarding research, specifically in relation to The Treaty of Waitangi through communication with the Ngāi Tahu Research Consultation Committee.  
Action: Facilitator Research Māori, DVC(R)
- 6.3. Encourage Māori participation in research through scholarships for Māori graduate research students and support for Māori students applying for external funding.  
Action: Director Māori Development, Director (GRS), DVC(R)
- 6.4. Support research relevant to Māori through indentifying and supporting research programmes of high interest to Māori.  
Action: Facilitator Research Māori
- 6.5. Provide ongoing professional development for academic staff, including support for consideration and engagement with Māori perspectives in the planning and conduct of their research programmes.  
Action: Facilitator Research Māori

## GOAL 7 PROMOTE RESEARCH AS A COMMUNITY BENEFIT

- 7.1. Transfer research knowledge and promote the value of research to the community through broad engagement with community eg. Schools, Boards, policy advice to government.  
Action: PVCs, HODs
- 7.2. Transfer the commercial benefit of research quickly by requiring milestones and timelines for projects undertaken by Otago Innovation Limited (OIL).  
Actioned 11/07: Director(E), DVC(R)
- 7.3. Nationally and internationally publicise, promote, and celebrate the University's research strengths.  
Action: Director (M&C), Directors (R&E), DVC(R)
- 7.4. Advance innovation and economic benefit through entrepreneurial activities.  
Action: DVC(R), Director (E)