NMIT RESEARCH POLICY

Section	Research		
Approval Date	30.11.2011	**Approved by**	Academic Board
Next Review	18.02.2021	**Responsibility**	Executive Director - Learning Innovation and Delivery
This review	14.02.2019	**Key Evaluation Question**	4

PURPOSE

NMIT's vision is to become a significant and influential centre for applied research. NMIT is building research capability of staff and providing them with the time and resources facilitating a self-sustaining research culture. Thus advancing knowledge, supporting student learning and contributing to social and economic development. This policy outlines our strategy to realise this vision.

INTRODUCTION

All degree and postgraduate programmes at NMIT are approved and NMIT is accredited by NZQA to deliver them. Within the approval and accreditation process, it is an NZQA requirement that degree programmes demonstrate sufficient research activity. Research outputs are monitored as part of the NMIT quality assurance process and research is a strategic priority of NMIT. Furthermore, because of the benefits of building a robust research culture, NMIT has set a quantitative goal of growing the research culture and year-over-year increasing PBRF-qualifying research outputs.

SCOPE

All degree and degree-related programmes delivered by NMIT either directly or through sub-contracted arrangements.

DEFINING RESEARCH AND OUR EXPECTATIONS

There are two key definitions for research in New Zealand:

- The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) definition which applies to educational institutions:
- The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) definition which underpins the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF).

For the sake of clarity NMIT uses the PBRF definition of research, which also fulfils the NZQA definition of research.

PBRF DEFINITION OF RESEARCH

Research is an original, independent investigation undertaken to contribute to knowledge and understanding and, in the case of some disciplines, cultural innovation or aesthetic refinement.

Research typically involves inquiry of an experimental or critical nature driven by hypotheses or intellectual positions capable of rigorous assessment by experts in a given discipline.

Research includes work of direct relevance to the specific needs of iwi, communities, government, industry and commerce. In some disciplines, research may be embodied in the form of artistic works, performances or designs that lead to new or substantially improved insights. Research may include:

1. contributions to the intellectual underpinning of subjects and disciplines (for example, dictionaries and scholarly editions)
2. the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products, communications or processes
3. the synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

Research findings must be open to scrutiny or formal evaluation by experts within the field. This may be achieved through various forms of dissemination including, but not limited to, publication, manufacture, construction, public presentation, or provision of confidential reports.

Activities that are part of routine standard practice and do not embody original research are excluded, such as:

1. routine testing
2. data collection
3. preparation for teaching
4. the legal and administrative aspects of intellectual property protection and commercialisation activities.

PBRF DEFINITION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

PBRF definition of a Quality Assured (QA) research output:

 "research output for which a formal quality-assurance process has been successfully completed before its final version is first made available in the public domain"

This means the output has been subject to formal, independent scrutiny by those with the necessary expertise or skills or both, to assess its quality. This may include, for example, its rigour, logic, clarity, originality, intellectual significance, impact, applications and artistic merit.

RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

All staff allocated research time are expected to produce at least one Quality Assured research output per year.

PRINCIPLES

Ensure NMIT meets, and exceeds, legislative requirements:

1. NMIT will meet the requirement of the Education Act 1989 s254 (3a): that degree programmes should be delivered mainly by people engaged in research to inform the teaching process.

2. NMIT will strive to become a significant and influential centre for high-quality, applied research.

3. Staff and students will undertake research with a shared commitment to excellence and best practice and to projects that are ethically and methodologically sound.

4. All research will be conducted within the Research and Ethics Guidelines set by that Committee.

Support and build the research capabilities of our staff:

1. NMIT will invest in providing practical training and mentoring to build the research capabilities of our staff, as well as supporting degree-teaching staff to obtain further post-graduate education.

2. Research will be a key consideration in the hiring decision of degree level staff and will be considered in building the research capability of our degree-level programmes.

3. Either the Research Manager or a research professor will be consulted with and involved in the hiring process of Degree and post-graduate teaching staff

Ensure accountability and recognise research success:

1. Research outputs of staff and the institute will be reported, benchmarked where possible, and celebrated.

2. Research activity, outputs and quality will be a consideration and in all academic staff career progression and a key factor in the career progression of degree-teaching staff members.

3. We will reward our effective researchers with more research time, while reducing research time and expectations for staff not interested in research or that do not meet institute expectations.

4. We will strive to publicise and promote our researchers and their research efforts.

Provide Research Time:

1. NMIT recognises that research takes time. Time will be given in allocations that are sufficient to allow our staff to generate quality-assured outputs

2. Research time will be protected for effective research activity by Directors, CMs and Staff.

3. In the event that staff secure extramural funding to support their salary for research, their NMIT position will be retained for them.

Provide Research Funding:

1. NMIT recognises the need to invest in research. Sufficient funding will be provided to ensure research time is effectively used and research is disseminated widely.

2. Securing external funding will be widely encouraged and invested in.

3. NMIT will ring-fence and reinvest all external research funding, including PBRF funding and indirect costs associated with funding, to further grow research capabilities and the benefits this provides. These funds will be managed by the NMIT Research Trust.

Build and nurture a self-sustaining research culture:

1. NMIT will also support the research activities of its non-degree teaching staff to reflect NMIT's commitment to fostering applied research to benefit the institute and the community.

2. The need to build and support our research capabilities is recognized, and will be supported, by the Directorate, CMs, Staff and the Research Office.

3. NMIT will strive to reduce the barriers and difficulties to research to become a Host institution of choice for leading research collaborations and teams.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- **The Executive Director - Learning Innovation and Delivery** will monitor overall Institute performance relating to research and resource support for research activity within budgetary constraints. They will ensure:

  1. Research is being actively supported, pursued and of a high quality that informs teaching and learning in degree courses
  2. Research time allocations are sufficient for each degree programme and effectively utilised
  3. The majority of staff teaching in each degree course are actively involved in research
  4. Research is a key consideration in any hiring decision of degree level staff
  5. Staff members continue to meet legislative requirements for teaching degrees

- The **Curriculum Manager** for degree and post-graduate programmes will be responsible for ensuring:

  1. Research is a key consideration in any hiring decision of degree level staff
  2. The allocation of research time to staff is sufficient to allow quality research to be conducted
  3. This research time allocated to staff is protected and utilized effectively
  4. All staff with research time allocations develop yearly personal research plans and these are reviewed and approved by themselves
  5. All staff with research time allocations complete a 6-monthly and full year research progress report that is reviewed by themselves
  6. Research performance is a key consideration during staff performance conversations and reviews. This will include ensuring staff meet institute research expectations
  7. Staff report research outputs as required for PBRF and NMIT internal and external reporting purposes
  8. The performance of the programme's research activity and outputs is reviewed and assessed as part of the annual SAR process
  9. Managing the programme's allocated research budget

- The **Research Manager** will be responsible for:
  1. Informing and supporting the Executive Director - Learning Innovation and Delivery to achieve their responsibilities
  2. Informing and supporting each of the CMs to achieve their responsibilities
  3. Support research staff to achieve high quality research outcomes
  4. Reporting on Institute Research activity and outputs
  5. Managing all aspects of the PBRF for the Institute
  6. Managing the Institute research budget
  7. Ensuring timely feedback is provided to Managers during the hiring process of degree-teaching staff.

- The **Research Professors** will be responsible for:

  1. Providing research mentoring and guidance to staff
  2. Informing the Research Manager of opportunities or challenges with staff research projects
  3. Developing and maintaining a research education tool for use at NMIT and other New Zealand tertiary institutions.
  4. Maintain an active exemplar individual research programme
  5. Generate at least one QA output per year. Output goals will be specific to each professor, reflecting FTE and duties.

REFERENCES

INTERNAL

Code of Ethical Conduct for Research
NMIT Code of Ethical Conduct – Animal Welfare
Intellectual Property Policy