



## Faculty of Health – Te Wāhanga Tātai Hauora Research Strategy

### Background

The Faculty of Health (Te Wāhanga Tātai Hauora), Victoria University of Wellington is an ambitious new Faculty. Our Faculty has coalesced existing and new Schools and Centres that cover a broad and heterogeneous set of initiatives and lines of research with a focus on the health and well-being of communities. The synthesis of these efforts has been successful, primarily due to our talented and hard-working colleagues who operate at a high level of excellence.

### Strategic Goals

The main strategic research goals are to:

1. Increase the quality, quantity, intensity of research activities - enable and support world-class research and innovation through the development and use of University and Faculty research and innovation support mechanisms and resources;
2. Enable the development of talent with a collegial and supportive environment which complements our existing teaching programmes and research strengths. We also welcome new research approaches which challenge our thinking as well as that of our broader disciplines;
3. Promote the Faculty (embedded within the University and wider Wellington region) as a world-leading Faculty for innovative research e.g. for proof of concepts with the potential to generate significant social, commercial and academic value;
4. Support the University to capture and generate value from our research to innovate future health delivery and operations.

Our Research Strategy involves developing a flexible, shared infrastructure that enables new forms of research and innovation to take advantage of New Zealand's rapidly growing and diverse health sector. This will support new collaborative initiatives with a range of internal and external partners, including from government, public sector organisations and industry (including start-ups and SMEs). We will work with the guidance laid out by the University [Māori strategy](#) acknowledging Te Tiriti O Waitangi. Our research will feed into teaching and supervision, creating an innovative research intensive teaching environment for our students. This research strategy will complement the Faculty's mission and vision.

## Key Principles

Our key principles are the following:

1. Building a **strong research environment** that will maximise research and innovation across the entire Faculty;
2. Undertaking research in a **collegial** manner that includes constructive intellectual critique and debate, but also mentorship and peer support;
3. Supporting **collaboration** across the widest possible sets of partners, intramurally, regionally and internationally;
4. We will strongly **encourage and promote** teamwork in the Faculty;
5. Establishing **strong and transparent governance structures** that encourage broad participation by stakeholders, ethical and data protection-compliant collection and use of data, and research for social good.

The Faculty Management Team will support research, development and innovation. In conjunction with input from colleagues, we will ensure that grant submissions (and subsequent papers and reports) are of the highest quality, projects will be delivered successfully leading to more effective underpinning of the [University Research Strategy](#).

## Actions to achieve strategic goals

### Increase the quality, quantity, intensity of research activities

We aim to develop, support and champion research in our Faculty.

**Action:** Highlighted Faculty research activities will be compiled for recognition e.g. School and Centre Newsletters will be an avenue to promote and communicate our research excellence to e.g. Senior Leadership Team and others;

**Action:** We will further develop lunch events for our staff and students to present and discuss their research in a supportive environment.

We will utilise the University's developments for researchers and students to engage in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori referring to the University [Māori strategy](#) and Komiti Pasifika referring to the University [Pasifika strategy](#).

**Action:** We will engage and work with the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori) re: Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori engagement. We will also work with the Research Development Advisor (Māori) to ensure co-ordination and interface with University [Māori strategy](#) and embed this within the work of the Faculty;

**Action:** We will utilise the University's developments for researchers and students to engage in [Komiti Pasifika](#), together with the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika).

We will support all staff to have access to University wide infrastructure developments, training and support.

**Action:** Sign-posting e.g. use of Office 365 Sharepoint or Faculty webpage for documentation and Faculty wide communication events will be organised.

### Fostering research

We will look at strategic recruitment that aligns with University strategy to grow and strengthen the scholarly community, with a focus on emerging, mid-career and research leaders. Professional development, capacity building and succession planning will also be key to the Faculty going forward.

**Action:** Our recruitment will be strategic – we will seek to recruit, retain and encourage promotion of all individuals to achieve excellence (including our students). Our overarching objective is to support early career researchers to move into permanent positions;

**Action:** We will create a succession planning strategy within the Faculty;

**Action:** Academic staff will be mentored via a staff development programme, and a range of support mechanisms available to us (PDCP, Peer Support, Research Mentor programme) that will identify their specific needs in relation to the research and publication process. This will ensure that a research academic staff development programme, and career progression support mechanisms are in place for research;

**Action:** We will identify and support talented Māori, Pasifika and other students to develop research strengths and projects in line with their individual interests and the collective interests of their cultural groups.

### Promote the Faculty as world-leading in innovative research

We will further build partnerships with government and non-government agencies in Wellington and with our networks throughout New Zealand and internationally. We have already started to work with a variety of organisations outside the University, including community groups, the public sector, NGOs, local SMEs and other organisations.

**Action:** We will continue to work together with other organisations in building a Faculty for all our collaborators, partners and stakeholders, our staff and students that values transparency, democracy and social innovation.

The importance of eHealth and Data-Driven Innovation has been highlighted as one of the key enablers of greater productivity in the healthcare sector and there are also other innovative research areas of staff interest. Funding initiatives are likely to be heavily focused towards greater collaborative activity between academic disciplines, innovation and commercialisation around these topics.

**Action:** We will aim to work with different organisations across the private, public and charity sectors. We will develop our relationships by means of internships and jointly sponsored Masters and PhDs. We will create Memoranda of Understanding - our ambition being to develop exclusive research partnerships with these organisations;

**Action:** Our Faculty will be a key contributor to the University's goal to increase data driven innovation (including: qualitative and quantitative methodologies, human and social change processes as well as technological change);

**Action:** We will build resource for Biostatistics and Health Economics to support these initiatives.

### **Capture and generate value from our research to innovate future health delivery and operations**

Our heterogeneity (across Schools, Centres and Teams) in subject matter focuses the notion for a good distribution of senior investigators (in terms of the spread of expertise across our Schools and Centres), and optimal performance with respect to grant income and publication output. We should widely communicate our successes i.e. researchers and teams within the Faculty that are performing at the highest level.

The Faculty includes very strong teams and 'research clusters'. Our Schools are carrying out important research and the work done by our Centres – the Centre for Women's Health Research (CWHR) and Health Services Research Centre (HSRC) is impressive. In particular, there are great opportunities for our Faculty to become the place to go for NZ to monitor, test, and improve its health care system.

**Action:** We will fully develop our theme of health services research and support our teams and champion excellence;

**Action:** We will carry out an exercise to map key stakeholders in NZ healthcare and beyond, ensuring that the Faculty is maximising its opportunities;

**Action:** We wish to more fully capture the impact and translation of our research and e.g. changes to Government policy and clinical practice.

Overall, the Faculty will benefit from a cohesive branding of its mission that would help guide further growth and consolidation of research efforts - this work can be supported by our Comms team. Currently the Centres and Schools could synchronize their work to exploit any future research opportunities. Branding might also include a Research motto statement that succinctly summarises the vision and aspiration as well as a clear mission statement and set of objectives. This should be supported by a comprehensive communications strategy, based on clarity about the target audiences and the messages to be communicated – in particular to be distinct from other Universities (e.g. Otago, Massey and Auckland). There is also considerable scope for a stronger social media profile.

**Action:** We will work with our Communication and Marketing team around Research branding, a communications strategy, distinctiveness and social media profile.

The Faculty of Health Research and Study Leave Committee (RLC) appreciates the opportunity to support the important work done at the Institute and reflect on the major progress achieved to-date as well as to be given a chance to identify potential areas of focus and to make recommendations. We acknowledge the feedback provided by Faculty staff in creating this document. This strategy will be reviewed annually by the RLC.

Prof. Colin Simpson

Associate Dean Research and Innovation

On behalf of the Faculty of Health Research and Study Leave Committee