

**University of Otago Research Themes**

**Expression of Interest**

**Registration due midday Wednesday 28th February 2024**

**to be emailed to research.committee@otago.ac.nz**

**Name of Proposed Research Theme:**

**Director/Principal Applicant’s Name and Title:**

**Position and Department/Programme/School:**

**Principal Research Theme members, Department/Programme, Role**

*Include non-Otago University people if applicable*

*e.g. Dr Jane Smith, Dept of Surgery, Clinical oversight*

*Mr James Jones, Dept of Pharmacy, Administrative support*

**Has the Research Theme been funded previously (as a Theme, Centre or Network)? Yes No**

**If yes, indicate which years:**

**Summary of the proposed Research Theme’s goals**

*Outline up to three of the Research Theme’s main goals with specific reference to where they align to Otago University’s vision and values as expressed in the Māori, Pacific and Sustainability Strategic Frameworks, Pae Tata, and Vision 2040.*

*Include a justification if the Research Theme does not align with any of these documents.*

*300 words maximum*

**Alignment with proposed University Research Strengths & Aspirations**

*Indicate which URSA the proposed Research Theme will align with. Tick as many as apply.*

*If the Research Theme does not align with the draft URSA list, please add in the ‘Other’ category*

*For explanations on the subjects covered by each draft URSA category please see the end of this form*

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| --- | --- |
|  | **Sustainability, Climate Change and Environments in a Changing World** |
|  | **Kā Kete Mātauraka** |
|  | **Pacific Engaged Research – People, Places and Environment** |
|  | **Mind, Body, Behaviour and wellbeing** |
|  | **Innovation and Technology (including Bioengineering, Genomics, Quantum and Molecular Technologies)** |
|  | **Health Security and Resilience** |
|  | **Other (Please specify)** |

**Expected outcomes**

*Outline what the Research Theme plans to achieve with the funding. For example, to create new collaborations, to continue long term research programmes, to attract specific external funding, to influence government policy, to improve university QS rankings .*

*200 words maximum (bullet pointed list recommended).*

*If requesting re-funding of an existing theme, outline outcomes achieved during the previous period of funding. 200 words maximum.*

**Milestones**

*Describe annual milestones by which progress can be measured (one sentence each). These will be used by Research Committee to help monitor the Research Theme’s progress. Note that Research Themes can run for up to four years.*

**Summaries of Potential URSAs**

1. **Sustainability, Climate Change and Environments in a Changing World**

Climate change represents a clear and present danger to our communities and society, and research at Otago examines how societies, economic and environmental systems might operate within our planetary boundaries. Otago has a strong record in environmental and climate change research, with contributions spread across all our academic divisions informing policy and practices in Aotearoa and globally. This research strength seeks to build upon our existing activity by encouraging new activities and collaborations.

1. **Kā Kete Mātauraka**

When this world was created it was originally devoid of esoteric knowledge. It instead resided in the heavens under the protection of higher-level atua. This research strength references the narrative of the ascension of Tāwhaki (or Tāne-nui-a-rangi) to the uppermost heaven, Te Toi-o-ngā-rangi, to bring this knowledge back to earth for the benefit and enrichment of humankind.

Otago has world-leading strength with mātauraka Māori and kaupapa Māori driven research. Through Kā Kete Mātauraka we can further champion and promote Māori research, Māori researchers and research projects with kaupapa Māori at the core through supporting new activities and collaborations and enhancement of existing research capacity.

1. **Pacific Engaged Research – People, Places and Environment**

Otago has well established Pacific research in the health sciences, humanities, law, business & economic, social sciences, biomedical sciences and sciences, using diverse Pacific and Western methodologies. Through prioritising Pacific-engaged research as an area of strength, we hope to facilitate new activities and collaborations that will develop our Pacific research capacity and make meaningful connections with Pacific peoples in Aotearoa and across the Pacific.

1. **Mind, Body, Behaviour and wellbeing**

Otago is known globally for its contributions to neuroscience, cognition, brain heath and research related to the mind. We have large and successful programmes in related areas, including the neuroscience programme itself as well as in psychology (including clinical psychology) and psychological medicine as well as applications across divisions including economic behaviour modelling, organisational and consumer behaviour.

Otago has considerable strengths in all areas of research regarding the body, it’s health and wellbeing. This includes biomedical & biomechanical research; research into diseases, diagnostics, treatments, and potential cures; genetics and genomic research; sport & exercise science; and diet and nutrition.

1. **Innovation and Technology (including Bioengineering, Genomics, Quantum and Molecular Technologies)**

Otago has national leadership in genomics, genetics, and a wide range of molecular systems that contribute to living systems. Otago also has strong translational research in the molecular sciences, quantum and photonic technologies and bioengineering that can be leveraged, and strong traditions in law, business and the humanities that explore the socio-legal, ethical, entrepreneurial, economic and business model implications of new technologies and processes.

1. **Health Security and Resilience**

Otago can lead innovation and build capacity to prevent and mitigate health threats. Health security considers the full range of health threats and the critical tools for responding, which include epidemiology and risk assessment, communication, community networks, modelling, political science, law, business, economic and environmental studies. It links to many key research areas including pandemic preparedness, response to emerging infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, long term and degenerative diseases and their impact on health systems, environmental health, public health surveillance, population and infrastructure resilience, health equity and access, food security and so on.