TE ARA RANGAHAU MĀORI

AUT Māori Research Guidelines

He Aratohu mā ngā Kairangahau Māori

TE RANGA TUKUTUKU
AUT MAORI RESEARCH NETWORK

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

HE KUPU TAKAMUA

FOREWORD



Kei ngā manu ketuketu o te wao nui a Tāne-te-wānanga, tēnā koutou

He whakapapa tō ngā mea katoa. He whakapapa tō te reo, he whakapapa tō te mātauranga, he whakapapa hoki tō te rangahau.

Excellent research requires an understanding of the context from which knowledge emerges. In research involving Māori, that context is fundamentally relational, and these relationships carry whakapapa, tikanga, and obligations. Te Ara Rangahau Māori was developed to bring these considerations into view from the beginning of a research project, rather than addressing them retrospectively. It has been written primarily for Māori researchers, but also for others at AUT whose research engages with Māori people or knowledge.

It is important to recognise that there is no single Māori research context. Working with a hapū is different from working with Māori organisations, just as research that centres intergenerational knowledge held within whānau differs from research focused on statistical data relating to Māori. Approaches that are appropriate in one context may not be appropriate in another. These guidelines are not intended to provide a prescriptive formula. Rather, they are designed to support researchers to ask better questions, understand the context in which they are working, and engage with the right people before decisions are made, rather than seeking their involvement after the fact.



All of this relates to a fundamental question: What kind of research culture do we want at AUT?

Māori research should not sit at the margins of the University, and Māori researchers should not be expected to carry the responsibility for making sure research is culturally sound on their own. If we want Māori research to thrive, the systems and structures surrounding it need to provide meaningful support. That means clear guidance and somewhere obvious to go when you are not sure. It also means an institution willing to listen, reflect, and continue learning.

The whakataukī 'whaowhia te kete mātauranga' encourages us to fill the basket of knowledge, to keep learning. It has broad application to all of those embarking on a research journey, and to all Māori researchers regardless of where they may be on their own cultural and linguistic journey.

These guidelines have been developed to be as inclusive as possible of our diverse Māori research community at AUT. Some arrive with deep knowledge of te reo and tikanga. Some are reconnecting. Some bring specialist expertise and are working out how it sits alongside Māori knowledge. A research community strong enough to hold all of that will grow faster than one that expects everyone to arrive the same way.

As the Māori research community at AUT continues to grow, these guidelines should grow alongside it. New researchers will bring whakaaro and perspectives that are not represented here, while new disciplines will raise questions that have not yet been considered. Some of our current thinking may also change. That is what a healthy research culture looks like.

Ideally researchers will use these guidelines actively and critically, reading it early in their work, returning to the document as the kaupapa develops or changes, and discussing it with colleagues and communities. Where something does not fit, I encourage researchers to question it. Where something is missing, I hope they will tell us. In this way, the guidelines can remain a living resource that develops alongside the research community it is intended to support.

My hope for these guidelines is simply that Māori knowledge is approached with care and respect, and that Māori researchers are supported to be ambitious about the possibilities for, and future directions of their work.

If these guidelines help to create those conditions, then they will have made a meaningful contribution.

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HE KUPU WHAKATAKI

BEFORE WE BEGIN

Across AUT, Māori researchers are working in classrooms and on marae, in boardrooms and in laboratories. Much of what that work asks of them is invisible to the institution. Relationships have to be maintained. People are expected to speak for a whole population in rooms that were not built for them. The cultural load is real, and it is rarely counted (Smith, Le Grice, & Fonua, 2022).

These guidelines exist because the work deserves a foundation. They are not a set of rules handed down. They are a shared framework, built from what Māori researchers at AUT already know and already do.



The research itself may not be the hardest part. The pressure often comes from carrying teaching, cultural guidance, translation, representation, and advocacy at the same time.

These guidelines are written for you, and not as another compliance requirement. They exist because the work is hard, and because you should not have to carry it alone.

This document is a living taonga. It will grow as our community grows. Researchers, tauira, kaumātua and community partners should tell us where it is wrong and where it is thin. Write to **terangatukutuku@aut.ac.nz**, or visit **terangatukutuku.aut.ac.nz.**

HE KŌRERO KI NGĀ TAUIRA MĀORI
A NOTE TO OUR MĀORI STUDENTS

If you are an undergraduate or master's student wondering about PhD research or a career in academia, this section is written especially for you.

You may be questioning your readiness. Perhaps you feel unsure about your reo, your cultural grounding, or whether you belong in the university at all. You may even wonder if research is a path for people like you. Those doubts do not mean you do not belong. They are often part of the beginning.

We want to say clearly: Māori research needs you.

Your life experience is part of your intelligence. What you have seen across whānau, work, marae and everyday life can become the ground a research question grows from. A kaupapa often starts before it has any academic language: a pattern you keep noticing, or a problem your community has carried for years.

Academic language can be learned. What matters just as much is the ability to listen deeply and to stay accountable to the communities the research is meant to serve. Postgraduate study is where your questions and your experience become research that serves whānau, hapū and iwi.

Many Māori researchers enter postgraduate study carrying uncertainty. Some are the first in their whānau to take this path. Others arrive without te reo Māori, without knowledge of their hapū or their whakapapa connections, or without the grounding in te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori that they were never given the opportunity to receive. Others return after years of work, parenting, supporting whānau, and managing responsibilities that never appear on a transcript. None of this is a deficit. It is the ordinary consequence of colonisation and of full lives, and it often makes the research sharper (Reweti, 2022).

We need more Māori in academia, not because the university is the only place where knowledge lives, but because decisions are made here and resources are distributed here. Māori voices must be present wherever knowledge is produced, funded and used. Every Māori student who steps into research makes the path wider for the next one.

Ko tō mahi rangahau, he taonga.
Ko tā tēnei aratohu, he tautoko.
Your research is a treasure.
This guide is a support.

WHO THESE GUIDELINES ARE FOR

These guidelines are written for Māori researchers at every career stage, from those just beginning their research journey to professors, and across every discipline. They speak to researchers deeply embedded in marae life and to those reconnecting with whakapapa after generations of distance. They are also relevant to supervisors supporting Māori students, non-Māori researchers working with Māori communities, and institutional leaders responsible for the conditions in which Māori research occurs.

These guidelines were shaped through the wānanga of Te Whakaruruhau, the governance body of Te Ranga Tukutuku | AUT Māori Research Network, whose members include Māori researchers, doctoral candidates and professional staff. They were also shaped by the experiences of the community partners those researchers have worked alongside. Those voices are present in every principle and every caution. The document will keep growing through wānanga and community review.

For staff researchers and early career researchers, these guidelines address a different institutional reality: fewer structured supports, heavier teaching workloads, more immediate pressure to publish, and often the expectation of research leadership without the protected time to exercise it. For senior Māori academics, they address the particular weight of being both researcher and institutional resource. Mentoring, tikanga guidance on demand, committee representation and cultural translation absorb real time, and none of it appears in a workload model (Love & Hall, 2026). Readers are encouraged to move through the phases in the way that fits their career stage and research context, not to follow a single prescribed path.

These guidelines bring together tikanga, mandate, institutional literacy and research practice into one guide, grounded in the realities of Māori research at AUT. The purpose is practical and relational: to help Māori researchers begin well and finish with the kaupapa intact, knowing they are not walking alone.

WRITING IN THE COLLECTIVE

This document is written in the first-person plural. The use of 'we' is deliberate. It reflects a collective stance. Māori research is rarely undertaken in isolation; it is informed by whakapapa and sustained by relationships (Henry & Pene, 2001). If we are Māori researchers engaging with this framework, we are part of the 'we'. This document belongs to us collectively. It speaks for us, and we are invited to speak back into it.

WHAT THESE GUIDELINES DO NOT DO

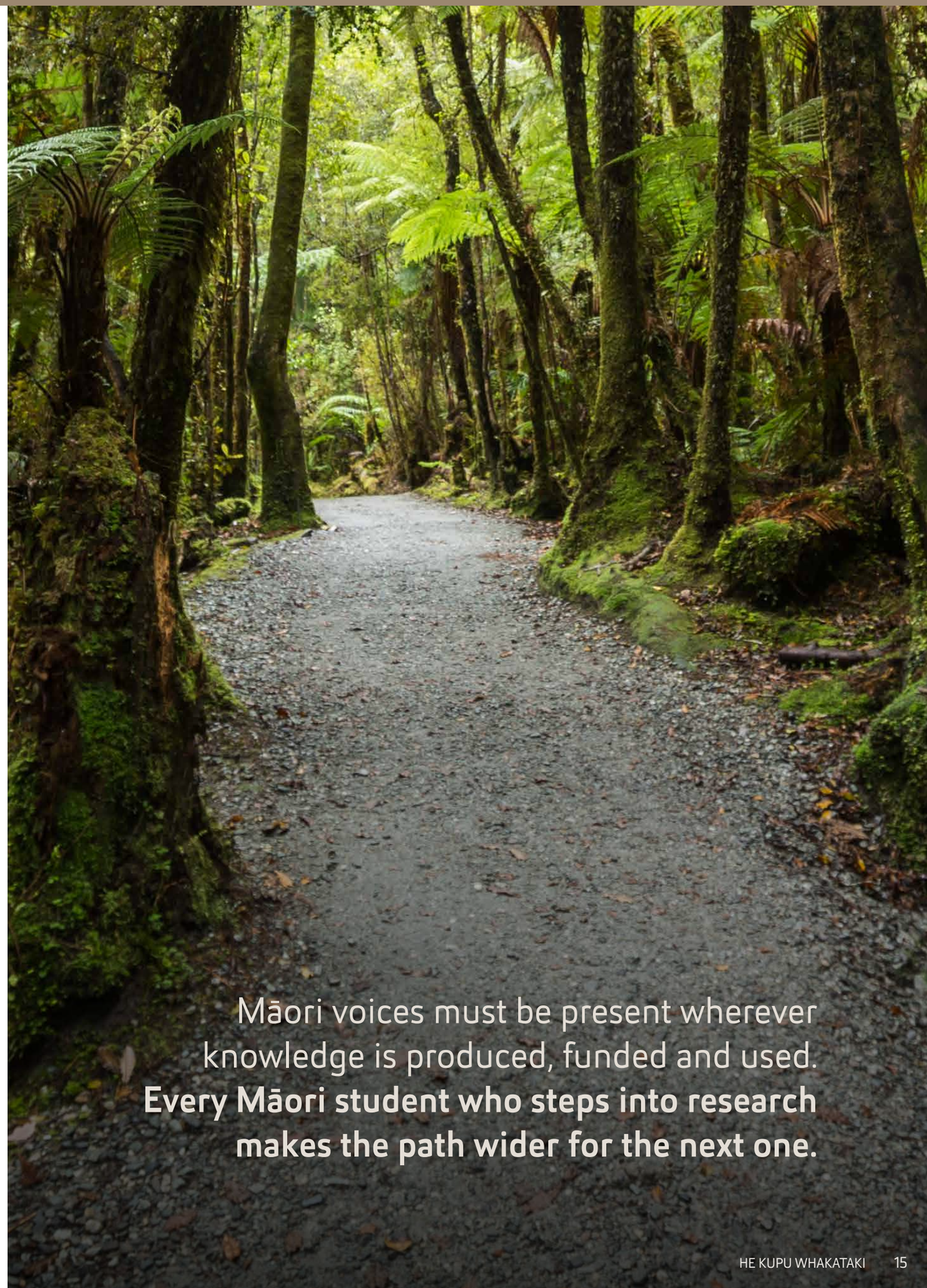
- They do not replace formal ethics approval through AUTEC.
- They do not override local iwi, hapū or community protocols. Those always take precedence where they apply.
- They do not provide step-by-step instructions for every research scenario. Research with Māori communities is too varied and too context-dependent for a single prescription.
- They do not speak for all Māori. Tikanga is not uniform. Researchers must engage with the specific authority structures, protocols, and expectations of the communities they work with.

HEI ĀRAHI
HOW TO USE THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are organised as a pathway. Each phase represents a stage in the Māori research journey. You can read end to end or go directly to the phase that matches where you are right now.

If you are...	Start here
Considering the questions that carry across the research	Questions carried through Te Ara Rangahau Māori (page 18)
New to postgraduate research or considering a PhD	Phase 01: Te Pū (page 20)
Seeking mandate or beginning community engagement	Phase 02: Te More (page 30)
Preparing research design, ethics, or funding	Phase 03: Te Weu (page 42)
Beginning data collection or fieldwork	Phase 04: Te Aka (page 70)
Writing your thesis, a chapter, or a methodology defence	Phase 05: Te Rea (page 78)
Preparing to publish or return findings to communities	Phase 06: Te Wao Nui (page 88)
Post-completion, managing wellbeing, or when things go wrong	Phase 07: Te Wānanga (page 94)
Supervising a Māori researcher	Supervisor Companion Guide (page 117)
Wondering if research is for you	He Kōrero ki ngā Tauira Māori | A Note to our Māori Students (page 11)
A Māori staff researcher or early career researcher designing a funded or unfunded research project	Phase 01: Te Pū (page 20), then Phase 03: Te Weu (page 42)
A mid-career or senior academic reviewing or articulating your research practice	Phase 07: Te Wānanga (page 94), then any phase that reflects your current challenge
A researcher returning to active research after a period of teaching, administration, or leave	Phase 01: Te Pū (page 20)

If you need one thing quickly	Start here
You need to approach a community, iwi, hapū or organisation for the first time	Phase 02: Te More (page 30), with Approach Letter Template (page 120)
You cannot work out who holds authority, or there is no obvious structure to approach	Te Whakamana	Mandate and Authority (page 31) and When There Is No Authority Structure (page 33)
You have been told no, or you are not sure whether a no is final	Phase 02: Te More (page 30) and Cultural Humility in Practice (page 37)
You need to put koha into a budget or an ethics application	Koha, Reciprocity, and Cultural Hospitality (page 52) and Budgeting for Tikanga (page 53)
You are not sure whether your research needs ethics approval, or which type	Ethics Pathways	AUTEC and Māori Research (page 64), with Ethics Preparation Checklist (page 124)
Your methodology has been questioned, or called insufficiently rigorous	Navigating Scrutiny	Methodological Challenge and Review (page 76)
You are in disagreement with a supervisor, examiner or community about tikanga or knowledge	Cultural or Epistemic Disagreement (page 99)
You are carrying cultural work on top of your research and it is affecting your progress	Cultural Labour	When It Affects Your Capacity to Progress (page 103) and The Cultural Load Is Real, and It Has a Name (page 111)
You need to find the right person at AUT and do not know who to ask	Key AUT Contacts and Support Pathways (page 134)



TE ARA RANGAHAU MĀORI
AUT MĀORI RESEARCH GUIDELINES

A connected pathway for carrying research from kaupapa to continuing responsibility.

The seven phases take their names from mōteatea and karakia that describe the creation and development of all things through the metaphor of plant life: Te Pū, the root or origin; Te More, the taproot; Te Weu, the rootlet; Te Aka, the vine; Te Rea, the growth; Te Wao Nui, the great forest; and Te Wānanga, the forum, recalling Tāne-te-wānanga, atua of Te Wao Nui, and his quest for ngā kete o te wānanga.

These phases support researchers to design, conduct and complete research in ways that uphold Māori authority, create genuine benefit, and maintain responsibilities beyond formal completion.

{01}

TE PŪ
Grounding the Kaupapa

Locate the origins, purpose, positionality, worldview, and research positioning of the kaupapa.

- Origins
- Purpose
- Positionality
- Te Tiriti
- Tikanga

{02}

TE MORE
Establishing Authority, Mandate, and Relational Legitimacy

Determine who holds authority, what mandate is required, and how relationships should be entered and maintained.

- Mandate
- Authority
- Participant contexts
- Kanohi ki te kanohi
- Relational engagement

{03}

TE WEU
Designing the Research

Shape the Māori authority, expertise, leadership, methodological, relational, funding, ethical, and data foundations of the research, including how reciprocity, consent, and responsibility for what is entrusted will be carried.

- Māori authority
- Leadership
- Methodology
- Kaupapa Māori
- Interface research
- Funding | Koha
- Ethics | AI tools
- Research travel
- Data sovereignty
- Consent

{04}

TE AKA
Conducting the Research with Care

Carry the kaupapa through the active research, tending relationships, tikanga, ethical responsibilities, and the integrity of the work as it develops, is interpreted, and written.

- Engagement
- Ethics
- Analysis
- Writing
- Supervision
- Documentation
- Relational accountability

{05}

TE REA
Bringing the Research Together

Draw the research into scholarly form through analysis, writing, examination and te reo Māori provisions.

- Writing
- Research Proposal
- Examination
- Te reo Māori
- Support pathways

{06}

TE WAO NUI
Returning, Publishing, and Sharing Knowledge

Return knowledge to the people and communities connected to the research, then publish and share it responsibly.

- Community benefit
- Community return
- Publishing
- Dissemination
- Journal strategy
- Knowledge return

{07}

TE WĀNANGA
Continuing Obligations, Wellbeing, and Future Stewardship

Honour the obligations that continue after formal completion, including stewardship, cultural labour, researcher wellbeing, and repair when things go wrong.

- Stewardship
- Cultural labour
- Wellbeing
- AUT commitments
- Common pitfalls
- Cultural or epistemic disagreement
- Higher doctorate
- Senior academics
- Timeframes

NGĀ RAUEMI TAUTOKO
Tools and Templates

Practical resources to support you at each stage of the research pathway

- Supervisor Companion Guide
- Approach Letter Template
- Ethics Preparation Checklist
- Funding Preparation Checklist
- AUT Māori PhD Process Checklist

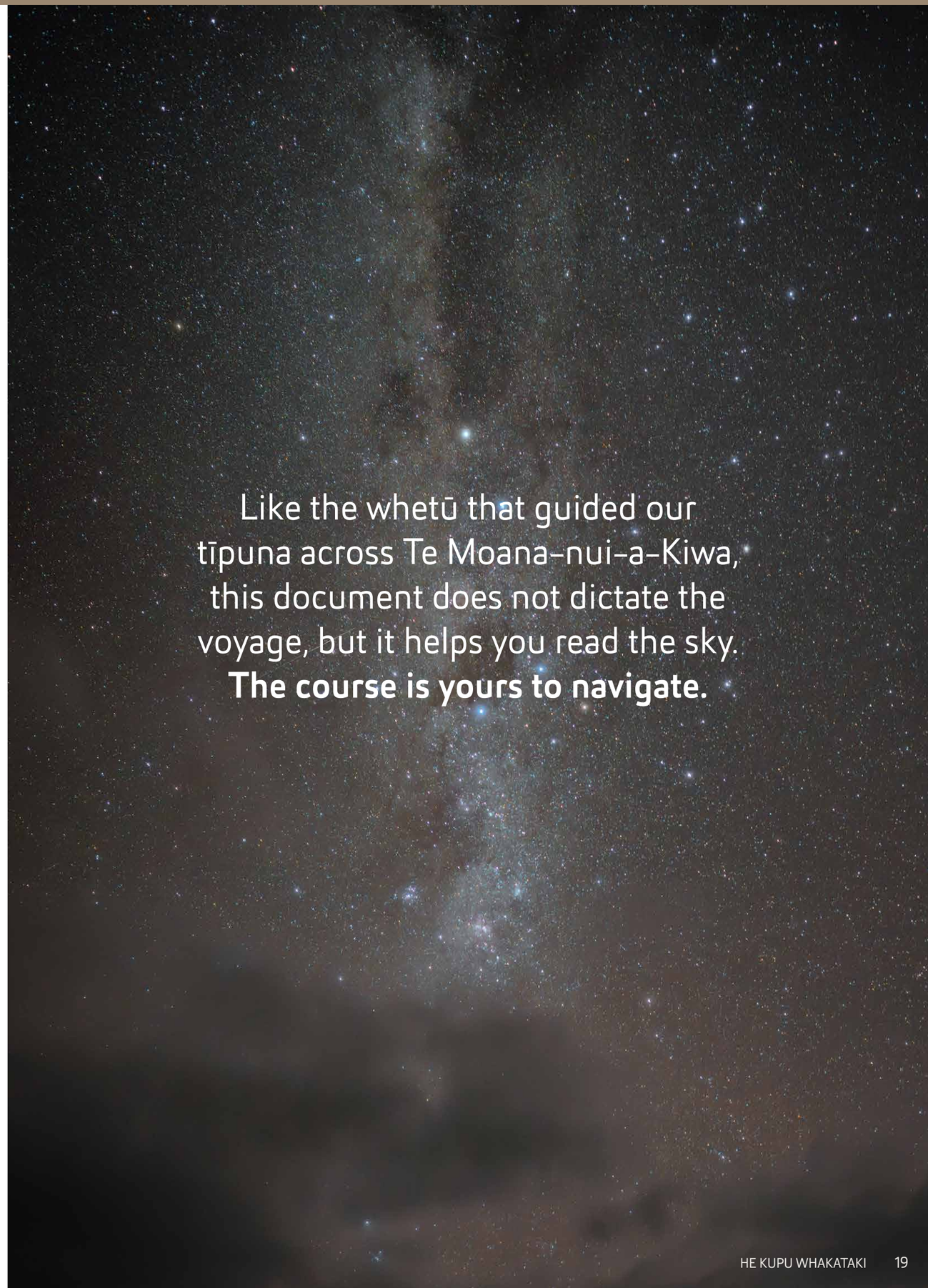
QUESTIONS CARRIED THROUGH TE ARA RANGAHAU MĀORI

Māori as tangata whenua hold an Indigenous constitutional status grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. That status carries responsibilities for how Māori research is positioned, governed, conducted, and returned (Hudson & Russell, 2009). Across the research, some questions need to be returned to more than once. Their answers may develop as relationships deepen or as responsibility shifts. Te Ara Rangahau Māori carries six questions across the research:

- **Research positioning**: Which knowledge systems are in scope, how is the research positioned, and how will those knowledge systems be engaged?
- **Authority and leadership**: Who holds the relevant Māori authority, mandate, expertise, and decision-making role, and how will that authority shape the project?
- **Māori-centred design**: Where research is Māori-centred, how do Māori priorities, perspectives, participation, decision-making, and anticipated benefits shape the research?
- **Community benefit**: What benefits are recognised by the Māori communities concerned, and how will they be returned, shared, or sustained?
- **Tikanga and cultural integrity**: Which tikanga and community-specific protocols govern the work, and how will they be maintained as the research develops?
- **Governance and accountability**: Who holds responsibility and decision-making authority for the research, data, mātauranga, interpretation, dissemination, and the resolution of cultural or epistemic disagreement?

These questions do not sit outside the ara. They are taken up throughout it: in grounding the kaupapa, establishing mandate, designing and conducting the research, returning knowledge, and meeting the obligations that continue afterwards.

Each part of Te Ara is grounded in Te Ara Tika (Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell, & Smith, 2010): whakapapa, tika, manaakitanga, and mana. These principles help researchers ask the right questions as the research develops. Te Ara is not a rigid sequence. Researchers may move back and forth across its parts as relationships develop, scope changes, ethics questions emerge, or obligations continue beyond completion. What matters is that the kaupapa stays grounded and protected throughout.



{01}
TE PŪ

GROUNDING THE KAUPAPA

Grounding the kaupapa means resisting the rush to turn an idea into a research design too quickly. It is the careful work of tracing the question back to its origins and recognising the people and places it is connected to. Pursuing it also carries responsibilities, and those need to be understood. Before the research can move forward with integrity, the kaupapa needs to be properly located, and so does the researcher (L. T. Smith, 2012).



This phase is not about completing an administrative step. It is about locating the kaupapa properly before moving into mandate, methodology, ethics, funding, data collection, analysis, publication, or return. A kaupapa that is not well grounded can become fragile later, especially when institutional timelines, supervisor expectations, funder priorities, or community responsibilities begin to pull in different directions.

The central question of this phase is: what is the whakapapa of the kaupapa, and what does that whakapapa require of the researcher?

Te Ara Tika Check | What this phase asks

Principle	Guiding question
Whakapapa	Where did this question come from, and who is connected to the knowledge, people, or place it concerns?
Tika	Is this the right kaupapa to pursue, and has Māori voice helped shape how it is framed?
Manaakitanga	Does the kaupapa uphold the dignity and wellbeing of the people it concerns, and is the researcher's own position named honestly?
Mana	Whose authority is implicated by this question, and what benefit is the research expected to return?

THE WHAKAPAPA OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Every research question has a whakapapa. It may arise from lived experience, whānau concern, community aspiration, professional practice, mātauranga, new knowledge, disciplinary gap, policy failure, institutional issues, or a need Māori communities have carried for a long time. Tracing that origin is an act of research integrity (Nicholson, 2020).

A question can appear academically sound and still be poorly grounded if the people most affected by it have not shaped its framing (L. T. Smith, 2012). Before the project moves forward, researchers should be able to explain who named the problem, whose experience is centred, whose authority is implicated, and what benefit the work is expected to return.

Not every kaupapa engages a formally constituted governance body. Read the guidance below against the structure that actually holds authority for your research, rather than assuming an iwi-level process applies in every case.

Extraction often begins at the question-formation stage. If a project claims to serve Māori but has been framed entirely inside the academy, the whakapapa of the question needs careful attention before the research proceeds.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Research the governance structure of the iwi, hapū, or organisation you are working with before you make contact. Most iwi have publicly available information about their governance structure. If you cannot find it, ask.
- Trace who is connected to the knowledge, the people, or the place your question concerns, and write that down before you design anything. Who holds authority here is a Phase 02 question; see Te Whakamana | Mandate and Authority.
- Ask what the research will require people to give, and what it will return to them. If you cannot answer the second question, the kaupapa is not ready to move into design.
- Name honestly where the question came from: your own experience, a community concern, your professional practice, a gap in the literature, or a funding call. People will ask, and answering before you are asked is a signal that you understand what you are doing.
- If the people most affected by the question have not shaped how it is framed, go back and involve them before the design is locked in. A question can be academically sound and still be poorly grounded.

Grounding question	What it helps clarify
Where did this question come from?	Whether the kaupapa arose from Māori priorities, community need, lived experience, professional practice, academic gap, or institutional agenda.
Who is connected to this knowledge or issue?	The people, whānau, hapū, iwi, organisations, communities, places, histories, or data that may be affected by the research.
Who has helped shape the question?	Whether Māori voice has influenced the kaupapa before the design is locked in.
What does the research ask people to give?	Time, knowledge, access, trust, reputation, cultural authority, data, stories, or mātauranga.
What will be returned?	The benefit, in whatever form, that should flow back to those connected to the research.

POSITIONALITY
WHERE THE RESEARCHER STANDS

Grounding a kaupapa also requires the researcher to locate themselves. Positionality is not a confession or a performance of identity. It is a clear account of where the researcher stands in relation to the kaupapa and the people it concerns. It names the responsibilities the research creates (Mikahere-Hall, 2017).

Many Ways of Being Māori

There is no single cultural biography that legitimises contribution to Māori research. Some researchers are raised within marae communities and speak te reo fluently. Others are reconnecting with whakapapa after generations of disconnection, have grown up outside Aotearoa, are first-generation university graduates, or have come to Māori research after long careers in other fields (Reweti, 2022).

Colonisation, migration, economic difference, and educational access have shaped Māori pathways in different ways. These differences do not diminish whakapapa or invalidate contribution (Reweti, 2022).

Māori research is strengthened by the range of experiences we bring to it. Technical expertise, commercial insight, scientific training, creative practice, community knowledge, and lived experience all have a place. Legitimacy does not depend on one fixed expression of Māori identity. It rests on the integrity of the work and the relationships that hold it. What matters is whether the research is accountable to Māori communities and grounded in Māori values (Henry & Pene, 2001).

Researchers who come to Kaupapa Māori research later may carry uncertainty about belonging, yet that pathway often gives them a sharper view of the work.

He tangata i tipu ake i te ao Māori

For Māori researchers raised in te ao Māori, with te reo, tikanga, marae and collective responsibility as part of everyday life, the challenge is often not cultural grounding but institutional recognition (Smith, Le Grice, & Fonua, 2022).

The reo, tikanga, whakapapa, marae practice, and iwi or hapū responsibilities carried into research are not simply background or identity markers. They are forms of knowledge and accountability that shape the whole research process, from the question asked to the return of the knowledge (Moko-Painting et al., 2023).

For Māori researchers i tipu ake i te ao Māori, the question is not whether te ao Māori belongs in research. It belongs already. The work now is to make the institution capable of recognising research carried through te reo Māori, tikanga, whakapapa and collective obligation as rigorous and complete on its own terms.

Māori researchers i tipu ake i te ao Māori often carry te ao Māori into institutional spaces that still do not fully recognise its authority. They may be asked to translate tikanga, explain mātauranga, support others, and make systems more workable for Māori, while also completing their own research (Love & Hall, 2026). This work matters, but it must be recognised as work, not absorbed as an invisible expectation.

Challenge	Practical response
Creating pathways that do not yet exist	Document the barriers encountered and the solutions created. Where research is written, presented, or examined in te reo Māori, make the process visible so the next researcher does not have to start from nothing.
Being expected to explain te ao Māori to the institution	Be clear about what can be explained, what requires cultural guidance, and what does not need to be translated for institutional comfort. Not all knowledge has to be made fully available to be valid.
Having te reo Māori treated as a complication	State clearly that te reo Māori may be the language of the thinking, method, analysis, relationships, and kaupapa itself. It is not an add-on or a problem to be resolved through translation.
Carrying cultural labour alongside research labour	Name this labour in supervision, ethics, workload, authorship, timelines, and reporting. Mentoring, advising on tikanga, translating concepts, and opening pathways are work.
Being positioned as representative for all Māori	Locate the research from particular whakapapa, iwi, hapū, marae, whānau, and lived experience. Being deeply grounded in te ao Māori means speaking from somewhere, not for everyone.
Protecting tikanga and mātauranga	Use cultural governance early. Work with kaumātua, iwi advisors, Māori supervisors, Te Ipukarea, Te Ara Poutama, Taupua Waiora, Te Ranga Tukutuku, or appropriate Māori units where needed to protect the kaupapa and the people connected to it.

For Reconnecting Māori Researchers

For Māori researchers whose connection to iwi, hapū, or marae is partial, developing, or interrupted by colonisation, uncertainty about tikanga, te reo, or marae connection should be treated as part of the research context, not as a lack of legitimacy (Reweti, 2022).

Disconnection is not a personal failing. It is a structural consequence of colonisation, and it may be part of what the research itself is working to address. A researcher who has navigated both worlds can bring a perspective the kaupapa needs, provided the position is named honestly and held with accountability (Reweti, 2022).

Challenge	Practical response
Being honest about positionality	Name the position clearly in the research. A Māori researcher reconnecting with iwi through the kaupapa has a legitimate stance, but it must be declared rather than hidden.
Finding cultural guidance	Look within iwi, Te Ipukarea, Te Ara Poutama, Taupua Waiora, Te Ranga Tukutuku, or appropriate Māori networks for someone willing to walk alongside the research. The role is guidance and accountability, not identity validation.
Starting with what is known	Begin with whakapapa, whānau, and the relationships already present. Whanaungatanga is the orientation, not a requirement to arrive fluent in everything.
Allowing time and documenting it	Relationship-building may take longer where connection has been interrupted. Record this work in progress reports. It is not delay; it is part of the method.
Being challenged on first approach	Expect it, and do not read it as a no. A pointed question is frequently a test rather than a refusal: who are you, who sent you, what do you actually want, what happened to the last researcher who came here. Answer plainly, do not become defensive, and come back. Persistence held with humility is part of the answer.

When You Do Not Know Your Whakapapa

This document asks researchers to locate themselves, and it asks more than once. Name your maunga, awa, waka, iwi, hapū and marae. For a researcher who was never given those, the instruction can read as a test they have already failed.

Whakapapa is recoverable more often than people expect, and it is ordinary work rather than a special claim. The Māori Land Court holds succession and block order records that name ancestors and the land they were connected to. Most iwi maintain a registration process and many hold whakapapa research units that will help a descendant. Archives New Zealand and the Alexander Turnbull Library hold Native Land Court minute books. Birth, death and marriage records connect a known name backwards a generation at a time.

Where whānau are the barrier, and they often are, that is a reason to go slowly rather than a reason to stop. Some of what was not passed on was withheld deliberately, for reasons that made sense at the time.

- Start with the oldest name you are certain of and work backwards, rather than starting with the iwi and working down.
- Do this as yourself before you do it as a researcher. Reconnecting through a research project makes the research the reason for the relationship, which is the wrong way round.

Your Cultural Advisor | A Second Line of Guidance

If you are early in your research journey, reconnecting with te ao Māori, or working with a supervisor who is not Māori, a cultural advisor is not an optional extra (Mikahere-Hall, 2017). It is the relationship most likely to keep you and your kaupapa safe.

A supervisor is accountable for the academic quality of your thesis and for your progress through the institution. A cultural advisor is accountable for whether the way you are doing the work is tika. These are different jobs, and one person cannot always do both. A non-Māori supervisor may be an outstanding methodologist and still be unable to tell you that the koha you are planning is inadequate, that the person you are about to approach is not the right person, or that a hui went badly in a way nobody said out loud (Hudson et al., 2010).

Find your advisor early, before ethics, and before your first approach to a community. Look within your iwi, or through Te Ara Poutama, Te Ipukarea, Taupua Waiora, Te Pou Māori, or Te Ranga Tukutuku. What you are looking for is someone who will tell you honestly when something is wrong, not only when things are going well. The role is guidance and accountability. It is not validation of your identity, and it is not a substitute for the mandate of the communities you work with.

Check in with your advisor before:

- your first approach to an iwi, hapū, rōpū, or marae;
- a wānanga or kanohi ki te kanohi hui;
- finalising your koha plan and budget;
- submitting your ethics application;
- your Research Proposal or Confirmation of Candidature;
- returning findings to a community;
- publishing anything that includes mātauranga shared with you.

Name the relationship and resource it. With their permission, name your advisor in your Research Proposal and your ethics application. Record the guidance you received and how it shaped your decisions; that belongs in your methodology chapter, not in a private notebook. And budget for it. An advisor's time is expert time, and asking for it repeatedly without koha or an honorarium reproduces exactly the unpaid cultural labour this document names elsewhere. Include it in your budget from the outset. If you are not sure how to establish or fund this relationship, contact Te Ranga Tukutuku or your Associate Dean (Māori) before you begin. Research integrity does not require being the most connected Māori in the room. It requires honesty and accountability in relationships. That is learnable.

TE TIRITI, TE ARONUI, AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Grounding the kaupapa also means understanding that Māori research at AUT does not sit only within personal or cultural responsibility. Relational accountability, protection of mātauranga, respect for mandate, and recognition of Māori authority are institutional responsibilities grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Hudson & Russell, 2009).

At AUT, this responsibility is articulated through Te Aronui, AUT's Te Tiriti Framework. Te Aronui positions Te Tiriti as a living framework at the centre of university life and commits AUT to Tiriti-honouring actions, support for Māori aspirations, and an environment in which tangata whenua succeed alongside tangata Tiriti, mō ngā mokopuna me ngā uri katoa.

For research, this matters because the knowledge, relationships, data, language, and mātauranga engaged through Māori research are not neutral academic materials. They are connected to taonga, whakapapa and collective authority, and must be treated accordingly (Hudson & Russell, 2009).

Te Tiriti article	What it asks of researchers
Kāwanatanga (Article 1)	The institution governs its own systems: ethics, funding, supervision, workload and policy. It is answerable for whether those systems enable or obstruct Māori research. Where an institutional process cuts against tikanga, that is an institutional problem to fix, not a researcher's problem to absorb. (Institutional documents sometimes express this as 'partnership'.)
Tino rangatiratanga (Article 2)	Māori retain authority over Māori knowledge, data, whakapapa, language, and taonga. Māori voice must shape the research question, design, methodology, governance, interpretation, and outputs, rather than being consulted once the design is fixed. Māori participation must mean decision-making authority, not presence alone: the power to shape the work, to change it, and to stop it. Mandate, data sovereignty, and intellectual property all sit here. (Sometimes expressed as 'protection' and 'participation'.)

Te Tiriti article continued	What it asks of researchers
Ōritetanga (Article 3)	Māori researchers and Māori communities are entitled to access conditions that result in the same measurable successes as anyone else: equity-focused access to funding, supervision, time, and institutional support, and research that produces benefit those communities recognise as benefit. Engagement must be properly resourced and relationally paced. (Usually expressed as 'equity'.)
Wairuatanga (understood as a spoken fourth article, not in the written text)	Wairuatanga is understood to protect Māori spiritual and cultural practice. In research this means karakia, tapu and noa, wairua as a methodological consideration, and the right to conduct and be examined in te reo Māori without disadvantage. Research should strengthen Māori wellbeing and authority, and should not reproduce deficit framing or extractive practice.

These guidelines work from the articles of Te Tiriti rather than from the Crown-derived principles. The principles are named in brackets because they remain the language of most institutional, ethics, and funding documentation, and researchers will meet them there. The articles carry the obligations more directly.

For non-Māori researchers, working from the articles means approaching Māori knowledge with humility rather than ownership. It means seeking Māori input before design decisions are locked in. It means protecting Māori data and mātauranga, and making sure the work creates benefit for Māori communities as well as for the researcher or institution (L. T. Smith, 2012).

TIKANGA AS THE GOVERNING FRAMEWORK | WORLDVIEW

Tikanga does not sit alongside methodology. It determines whether methodology is legitimate (Mead, 2003).

Tikanga is the normative system that governs Māori life. It is not a fixed set of rules, but a living system of principles shaped through relationship and consequence. When we undertake research as Māori, tikanga governs the way the research is imagined, designed, conducted, interpreted, and returned (Mead, 2003).

Institutional timelines and community timelines do not always align. Tikanga may require researchers to slow down, even when grant, ethics, or publication deadlines create pressure to move quickly.

This matters because tikanga is not only a philosophical position. It is also a practical discipline. It shapes the decisions researchers make every day: when to proceed and when to pause, who to speak with, and what can be recorded..

Tikanga in Research Practice

Tikanga asks researchers to treat every significant decision as both a methodological and relational decision (Hudson et al., 2010). The question is not only 'can this be done?' but 'is this appropriate, in this context, with these people, at this time, and under this authority?' For most researchers, enacting tikanga begins with three habits: pausing before proceeding, seeking guidance rather than simple approval and documenting the process clearly.

STANDING IN THE WHAKAPAPA OF MĀORI SCHOLARSHIP

Habit	What it looks like
Pause before proceeding	Before data collection, before sending a survey, before approaching a community, before publishing, pause and ask whether the right people have been consulted and whether the right authority is in place.
Seek guidance, not just approval	Tikanga is context specific. Seek guidance from kaumātua, community advisors, or cultural peers to understand what is right in this particular context.
Document the process	Record the hui held, the guidance received, the governance processes followed, and the decisions made. Documentation protects the researcher and the kaupapa alike.

One dimension of Māori research that is rarely named explicitly is the intergenerational one. When you publish as a Māori researcher, you are adding to a whakapapa of scholarship, a genealogy of intellectual contribution that connects you backward to the scholars who created the space you are standing in.

That whakapapa includes Te Rangihīroa (Buck, 1949), whose work helped lay the foundations of Māori scholarship, and parts of which later Māori scholars have critically re-examined, which is itself part of the lineage; Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999, 2012) work on decolonising methodologies; Graham Smith's (2003) contribution to Kaupapa Māori theory; Ranginui Walker's (1990) scholarship on Māori identity, history, and political struggle; Mason Durie's (1994, 2001) frameworks for Māori health and wellbeing; Moana Jackson's (1988) landmark work on Māori and the criminal justice system, which has shaped thinking well beyond the legal field; and Hirini Moko Mead's (2003) scholarship on tikanga Māori. It also includes the collective work that produced Te Ara Tika (Hudson et al., 2010), the ethics framework these guidelines are built on, and the Māori data sovereignty scholarship carried by Te Mana Raraunga (2018) and by Kukutai and Taylor (2016).

These scholars made it possible for you to do what you are doing. They did it in less hospitable institutional environments than the one you are entering, and they did it anyway. Your scholarship is in whakapapa with theirs. The work you publish forward extends that lineage.

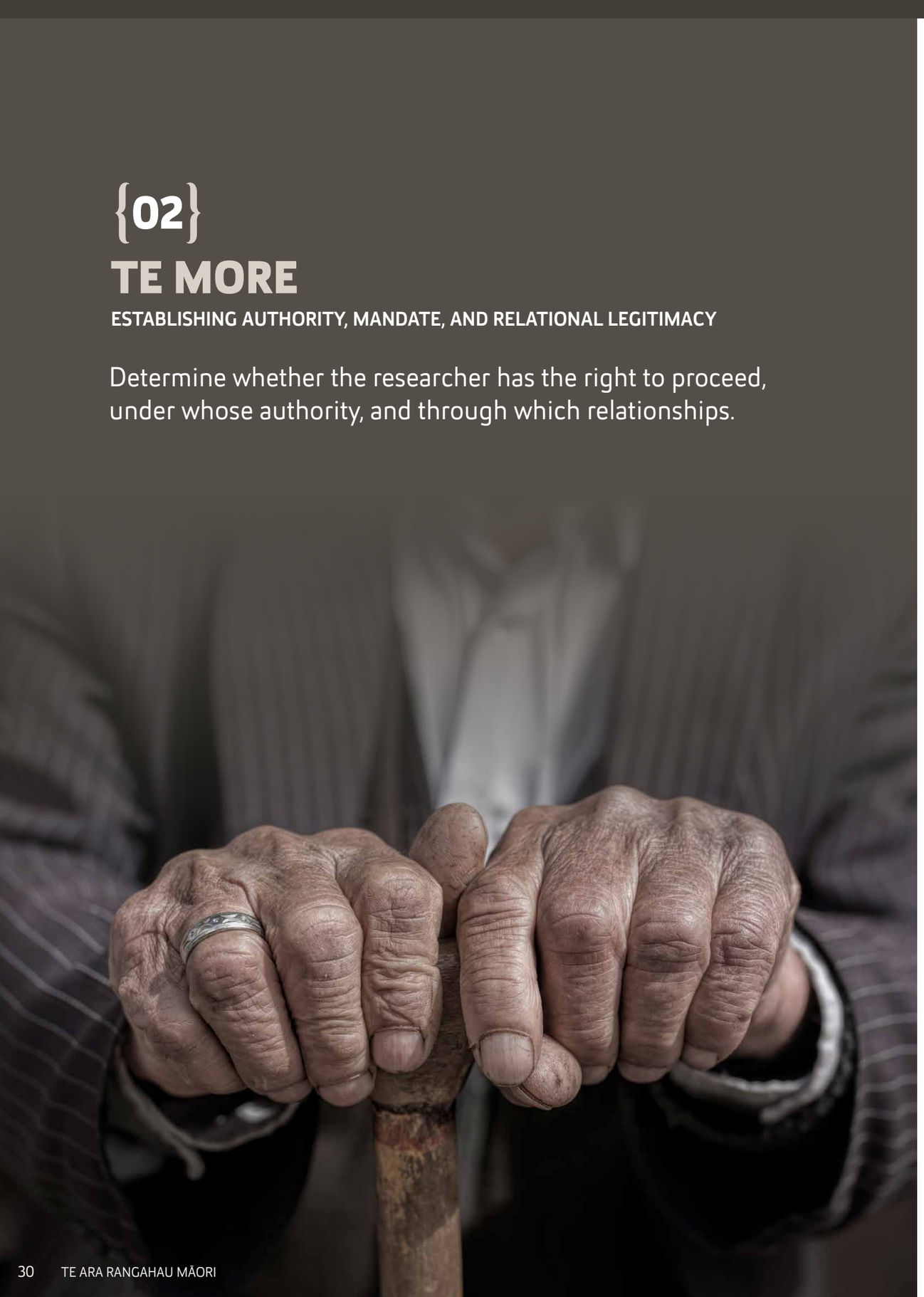
Naming this is not sentimentality. It is an orientation. When your research is reviewed harshly by someone who does not understand your methodology, you are not alone in that moment. You are part of a community that has been navigating this terrain for generations. That community is also your audience and your peer group. Write toward them.

{02}

TE MORE

ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY, MANDATE, AND RELATIONAL LEGITIMACY

Determine whether the researcher has the right to proceed, under whose authority, and through which relationships.



Te Ara Tika Check | What this phase asks

Principle	Guiding question
Whakapapa	Who is connected to this knowledge, place, people, or issue? What authority sits with them?
Tika	Have the right people been approached, in the right way, at the right time?
Manaakitanga	Are relationships being entered with genuine care, humility, and long-term commitment?
Mana	Who has authority to approve, guide, pause, or withdraw? Is that authority being honoured?

TE WHAKAMANA
MANDATE AND AUTHORITY

Mandate is not a procedural step in Māori research. It is what makes the research legitimate in the first place. Without it, a project can be lawful, funded, and ethically approved, and still have no right to proceed (Hudson et al., 2010).

Māori communities have long histories of research conducted without consent, without reciprocity, and without return. Knowledge has been extracted, interpreted through external frameworks, and circulated beyond its originating context. In this environment, mandate cannot be treated as a box to be ticked before the real work begins (L. T. Smith, 2012).

Mandate determines whether research is legitimate or intrusive. It establishes who has the right to define the research problem, who may speak on behalf of a collective, and who holds the power to withdraw support. Without mandate, research may proceed administratively, but it does not proceed legitimately (Johnson, Brewer, & Nelson, 2023).

What You Can Do Before Ethics Approval

This causes real trouble because the answer is rarely explained. Seeking mandate is not research on human participants and does not require ethics approval. Gathering kōrero is, and does.

Approaching a rūnanga, a hapū or a Māori organisation to explain a proposed project and ask whether they would support it is consultation about whether research should happen at all. You are not collecting data and nobody is a participant. That conversation can and should happen early.

The line is crossed when the conversation becomes the research. A hui held to gather people's experiences is data collection. A wānanga whose understandings will appear in your findings is data collection. Both require ethics approval before they happen.

This matters practically. A researcher who holds a wānanga during the mandate stage, with entirely good intentions, may have conducted unapproved research. The material may then be unusable, and the relationship carries the cost of that. How ethics approval relates to your research proposal and, where applicable, Confirmation of Candidature is set out in Phase 03.

- If you are unsure which side of the line a planned conversation sits on, ask whether anything said in it could end up in your findings. If it could, treat it as research and wait.
- Keep a record of mandate conversations from the beginning. Notes of who you met, when, and what was agreed are not research data and need no approval to make. They become part of your methodology later.

Individual and Collective Mandate

Individual mandate can legitimately support projects grounded in personal scholarship, professional practice or self-reflexive inquiry. But when research engages collective knowledge, tribal resources, community data, or cultural practice, individual authority is insufficient.

Collective mandate is required where collective consequence exists. It does not mean unanimity. It means that those with recognised authority have been engaged appropriately and have consented to the research proceeding under defined expectations.

Researchers must be able to state clearly: Under whose authority does this project proceed? Ambiguity is not neutral. It signals fragility.

Silence is not consent. A rōpū that does not answer your letter, a board that defers the item at three consecutive meetings, a kaumātua who says they will think about it and does not come back, none of these is a mandate.

Non-response is frequently a considered answer. The group may not want the research, may not want to say so directly, or may be signalling that the relationship is not yet strong enough to carry the request. Read it rather than overriding it.

Follow up once, in a way that makes a no easy to give. If there is still no response, do not proceed on the assumption of tacit approval, and do not approach individual members to get a different answer. Record the approach and record the silence. Then either change the design so that it does not require their mandate, or stop.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Before you design your research, ask yourself: does this research engage collective knowledge, community data, or tikanga-based practice? If yes, individual authority, including your own whakapapa connection, is not enough. You need a governance-level conversation.
- Identify the appropriate authority structure: is this an iwi-level decision? A hapū decision? An organisation's board decision? Engage at the right level from the start. A supportive conversation with an influential individual is not mandate.
- Document the mandate clearly: who authorised this research, in what forum, with what conditions, on what date. This documentation belongs in your AUTEC application, your Research Proposal/ Confirmation of Candidature, and your methodology chapter.
- If you are uncertain about who holds the appropriate authority for your research context, contact Te Ranga Tukutuku or Te Ara Poutama. This is exactly the kind of guidance they can provide.

Locating Authority Correctly

Māori authority is layered and structured. It is not interchangeable, and it is not always incorporated. Engaging an influential individual does not equate to engaging the governance structure. A supportive conversation does not constitute mandate. Iwi authority may sit with rūnanga, post-settlement governance entities or formally mandated boards. Hapū authority may sit with kaumātua collectives or designated representatives. Māori organisations may have trustees, directors, or executive leadership empowered to make decisions.

Approaching the wrong level of authority risks not only reputational damage but relational harm that can extend beyond the life of the project and affect future researchers working in the same space.

When There Is No Authority Structure

Not all Māori authority is incorporated, and not all research engages an entity that can pass a resolution. Some of the most significant Māori research is conducted with tohunga, rongoā practitioners, manukura, kairaranga, tā moko artists, and other experts who work across iwi and who hold authority in their own right.

That authority is not individual in the sense used above. It was conferred by teachers, by whānau, and by the communities the person serves. It is exercised under obligation, and it can be withdrawn. It is collective authority carried by a person rather than held by a board. Treating it as merely personal, and therefore insufficient, misreads it. So does the reflex of routing to a rūnanga a decision that no rūnanga was ever asked to make.

Where the research engages experts of this kind, the questions to answer are the same questions, asked of the right people:

- Who conferred this person's authority, and to whom are they accountable for its exercise? You do not need to audit this. You need to know it exists and to be able to say so.
- Is any of the knowledge you are engaging held collectively by a whānau, hapū, or iwi as well as by the practitioner? If it is, that collective still needs to be engaged. A tohunga's consent to share their own practice is not consent on behalf of a hapū whose mātauranga sits inside it.
- Have the experts been engaged as a rōpū, or only individually? Where several practitioners contribute, consider forming an advisory rōpū with a named role in the research: reviewing the design, interpreting findings and deciding what is published. This creates a durable, documentable structure without inventing a governance body that does not exist.
- Is the arrangement recorded? Write down who authorised what, on what terms, and when. Individually conferred mandate is as documentable as a board resolution.

AUTEC is not the fallback. Where no iwi or organisational structure applies, the temptation is to treat ethics approval as the authority for the research. It is not. AUTEC approves the ethics of a study; it cannot confer Māori mandate, and it has no standing to do so. Where the appropriate authority is a group of practitioners, that group is the authority. Where you genuinely cannot identify who holds authority for the knowledge you propose to engage, that is a signal about the design of the research, not a gap for the institution to fill.

If you are working out where authority sits in a distributed context, contact Te Ranga Tukutuku or Te Ara Poutama. This is precisely the kind of question they can help you think through.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Where the research engages an iwi, hapū, or organisation that has a formally constituted governance body, your first approach should be to that body rather than to an individual you happen to know who is affiliated with it. If you have a personal connection, use it to obtain an introduction to the right forum, not to substitute for it.
- Where the kaupapa arises from within a whānau, a rōpū, or a community of practice with no corporate structure, authority still exists; it simply is not incorporated. Identify who holds it in that context. It may be the whānau themselves, or the kaumātua or tohunga who carry the knowledge, or the collective who convened the rōpū. Seek their consent in the way that is tika for that group. Do not manufacture a governance process the community does not use, and do not read the absence of a legal entity as an absence of authority.
- When you contact the governance body, send a brief, clear letter or email that explains: who you are, what your research is about, what you are asking of the community, what you are committing to give back, and what the timeline looks like. Make it easy for them to say yes or no.
- If the governance body says no, or not yet, accept that. Record it. Do not approach individual members separately to try to obtain the same outcome through a different path.

When the Iwi Is the Client

A large share of Māori research is commissioned. An iwi, a post-settlement governance entity, a Māori provider or a trust engages a researcher to produce something they need, often to a deadline that belongs to a Tribunal hearing, a funding round or a negotiation.

This inverts the usual relationship. The community is not a participant to be approached, it is the client. Mandate is not sought, it is granted in a contract. And the questions change accordingly.

Who owns the output. In commissioned work the intellectual property normally sits with the commissioning entity, and that is appropriate. It also means you may not be free to publish from it, or to publish at all, and that needs settling in writing before the work begins rather than at the point you want a journal article.

Whose deadline governs. A Tribunal timetable does not move for a candidature milestone, and a candidature milestone does not move for a Tribunal timetable. Where commissioned work is also your thesis, both parties need to know that from the start.

What happens if the finding is unwelcome. A client can decline to release a report. A researcher who has also built a thesis on it is then exposed. Agree in advance what may be used academically, in what form, and with whose approval.

Where academic freedom sits. Commissioned research is not free of the obligation to report honestly. If the contract requires a conclusion, that is not research, and AUT's research integrity obligations still apply to you.

- Get a written agreement covering intellectual property, publication rights, timelines, and what happens if the parties disagree about a finding. AUT Ventures and your faculty research office handle contracts of this kind and should see it before you sign.

ENTERING TE AO MĀORI
KANOHI KI TE KANOHI AND RELATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Research in Māori contexts means working within a relational world with its own cultural and political order. Te ao Māori is not simply the setting in which research takes place. It shapes when it is appropriate to move and whose authority must be recognised along the way. Researchers must enter with humility, prepared to listen and be guided.

Kanohi ki te Kanohi

Kanohi ki te kanohi is not merely face-to-face interaction. It is relational presence. Physical presence signals that the researcher is serious. Where possible, initial engagement should occur in person, particularly where mandate is being sought, sensitive matters are discussed, or long-term partnership is intended (Paora & Steagall, 2023).

Presence signals commitment. Online engagement is valid and sometimes necessary, but relational foundations should not be built solely on convenience.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Check first whether the community or governance body publishes its own guidance on how it wants to be approached, and follow it. Where there is none, make contact by phone or by an email that sets out the project. What does not work is a bare survey link with no account of who you are or what you are asking.
- When travelling for research engagement, allow time before and after the formal engagement. Arrive early enough to share a meal. Stay long enough to have the conversations that happen after the meeting ends.
- If you cannot travel in person for initial contact, ask: who in my network has a relationship with this community who could make a warm introduction? A trusted intermediary can open a door that a cold email cannot.
- When you visit, come with koha. Not as payment. As acknowledgement that you are entering a relationship rather than extracting a resource.
- If you are reconnecting with an iwi you have limited prior connection to, name that when you make contact. Honesty about your positionality is more respected than an assumption of belonging.

Wānanga

Wānanga is not a workshop. It is a collective space for deliberation and knowledge exchange. It allows ideas to be tested, challenged and reshaped. Wānanga cannot be rushed into tight agendas designed purely for data capture (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020).

Outputs from wānanga are not simply transcripts. They are relational agreements and shared interpretations (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020).

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- When designing a wānanga, do not build an agenda that has 45 minutes for 'community input' and then moves to your predetermined conclusions. The agenda should be shaped by what the community needs to discuss, not by what you need to collect.
- Allow unstructured time. Some of the most important things that emerge in a wānanga happen in the breaks, over kai, in the conversations you were not directing.
- After the wānanga, write a summary and send it back to participants before you do anything with the material. Give them the opportunity to correct, add to, or withdraw parts of what was shared.
- Do not treat a wānanga recording as a transcript. Ask permission before recording. Consider whether recording is appropriate at all, some kōrero is not meant to be captured.
- Budget appropriately: venue, kai, travel for participants, time for preparation and follow-up. A wānanga on a shoestring is a wānanga that signals you have not respected the full value of what you are asking people to give.

Time Expectations

Institutional timelines are rarely aligned with Māori relational tempo. Tangihanga, seasonal commitments, community priorities and governance cycles shape availability. Delays are not automatically inefficiency. They may reflect legitimate competing obligations.

Meaningful engagement may take longer than institutional forms anticipate. Longer timelines can reflect proper involvement, not failure or delay.

Build generous timeframes. Avoid pressuring communities to meet funding deadlines. Mandate may take months, not weeks.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- When writing your research timeline, for your Research Proposal, your grant application, or your ethics application, add in a buffer of extra time.
- In your progress reports, document relational work explicitly: the hui you attended, the tangihanga that interrupted your schedule, the governance meeting that needed three rounds before a decision was made. This is not delay, it is method. Make it visible.
- If a funder gives you a deadline that is not compatible with genuine community consultation, say so. Propose a modified timeline. Submitting a grant application with fabricated consultation is worse, in every way, than renegotiating a deadline.
- When a community says, 'not yet', that is an answer. Work with it, not around it.
- Keep a simple log of every community contact: date, who you spoke with, what was discussed, what was agreed. This protects you if your timeline is ever questioned and demonstrates that delays were substantive, not negligent.

Cultural Humility in Practice

Cultural humility means recognising limits: we may not know local tikanga, we may not hold the highest authority in the room, and we may misstep and need correction. Correction is part of relational accountability, not personal attack. It is a gift; it keeps us on the right path.

Being challenged is not the same as being refused. When a researcher approaches a community for the first time, especially a researcher who is reconnecting, the questions can be direct and the reception can feel cool. This is frequently a test of whether the engagement is real: whether you will come back, whether you have the support to see it through, and whether you can hold a hard conversation without withdrawing. Communities have been approached before and have been left carrying the cost. Do not assume that directness means hostility. Where the response is unclear, ask respectfully whether further discussion would be welcome. Respect a refusal, and return only where you have been invited to do so.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Before engaging with any specific community or marae, do your research. Talk to people who know that community. Ask about protocols, leadership structures, sensitivities, and history. Do not arrive unprepared and rely on improvisation.
- In any first meeting, spend more time listening than speaking. Ask what the community needs. Ask what previous research relationships have felt like, the good and the bad.
- If you are corrected, about a cultural protocol, a use of language, an assumption you made, receive it without defensiveness. Thank the person. Write it down. Do not let the same misstep happen twice.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this continued

- Identify a cultural advisor early, someone who will tell you honestly when something is not right, not just when things are going well. This relationship is different from a supervisor relationship. It is a relationship of accountability.
- Acknowledge in your research what you do not know and how you navigated that. Intellectual honesty about the limits of your cultural knowledge is not a weakness in Māori research, it is evidence of integrity.

Research Participant Contexts | Locating Authority Carefully

Māori people participate in research from many positions, and not all of them involve collective tribal authority. The mandate and authority required depend on the nature of the research, the kind of knowledge being engaged, and who holds relevant authority in that specific context. Flattening all research contexts into a single 'iwi consultation' requirement misrepresents the diversity of Māori research and risks making researchers either over-bureaucratic in simple contexts or under-careful in collective ones.

Participant context	Who this includes	Authority considerations	Mandate approach
Iwi, hapū and Māori organisations	Tribal authorities, rūnanga, post-settlement governance entities, Māori health providers, education organisations, Māori-led NGOs	Collective authority held through formal governance. Research has collective consequence or engages tribal resources, mātauranga, or community data.	Governance-level consent and formal endorsement required. Iwi governance structures vary, so research the specific structure before first contact.
Māori-owned businesses and enterprise	Businesses across any industry: transport, construction, technology, retail, farming, trades, hospitality, creative industries, professional services	Authority may sit with owner, director, board, or whānau depending on structure. Business identity and commercial authority must be respected.	Do not assume the business operates as an iwi governance body. Engage the appropriate decision-maker: owner, board, or collective depending on the organisation. Both individual and organisational consent may be required.
Māori professionals in mainstream organisations	Health and legal practitioners, engineers, IT professionals, public servants, marketers, educators, executives working within non-Māori institutions	Both professional expertise and Māori identity must be honoured. Neither should be reduced to the other.	Individual informed consent is usually appropriate. Collective approval is not automatically required simply because a participant is Māori.
Individual Māori participants and whānau	Graduates, athletes, parents, elders, rangatahi, artists, entrepreneurs, whānau members participating through lived experience	Individual authority and the right to speak for themselves. Consider whether whānau context is relevant to the research.	Informed consent and dignity. Collective governance approval is not automatically required. Consider whether whānau members should be part of the consent process.

The mandate question for every context is the same: who holds authority here, what kind of consent or endorsement is required, what relationships need to be honoured, and what obligations continue after participation ends? These questions have different answers in different contexts. The researcher's responsibility is to ask them honestly at the design stage.

Participant Contexts the Design Must Account For

Locating authority carefully means recognising that some participant groups carry protocols and vulnerabilities the general design will not cover.

Tamariki and rangatahi. Research involving anyone under sixteen requires consent from a parent or guardian alongside the young person's own assent, and their assent is not a formality. Where the research runs through a kura or a school, the board is an additional gatekeeper. Where it runs through a whānau or hapū, the collective may hold a view about the participation of its young people that no individual parent can override. Where a researcher will have regular contact with children, safety checking may be required under the Children's Act 2014 and AUT policy and your supervisor and Faculty Postgraduate Coordinator need to know early.

ÅTakatāpui participants. Takatāpui may face risk from disclosure within their own communities as well as outside them, and confidentiality arrangements that work elsewhere can fail in a small hapū. Ask how a person wants to be identified, and do not assume that naming someone as Māori and naming them as takatāpui carry the same consent.

Wāhine and tāne specific tikanga. Some kōrero is held by wāhine and some by tāne, some spaces are restricted, and the restrictions differ by marae and by rohe. This is not something to work out on the day. Ask your cultural advisor before the design is fixed whether the kaupapa touches knowledge that is gendered in the communities you are approaching, and who should be in the room.

Whaikaha Māori. Disabled Māori participants are frequently designed out by venue, format and pace rather than by intention. Marae are not uniformly accessible. Consent processes assume reading, hearing and speaking. Budget for interpreters, accessible venues and longer sessions at design stage, not as an adjustment later.

- For each of these, the question is the same. Who holds authority for this group, is that the same authority you have already approached, and does your ethics application describe what you will actually do.

Maintaining Mandate Over Time

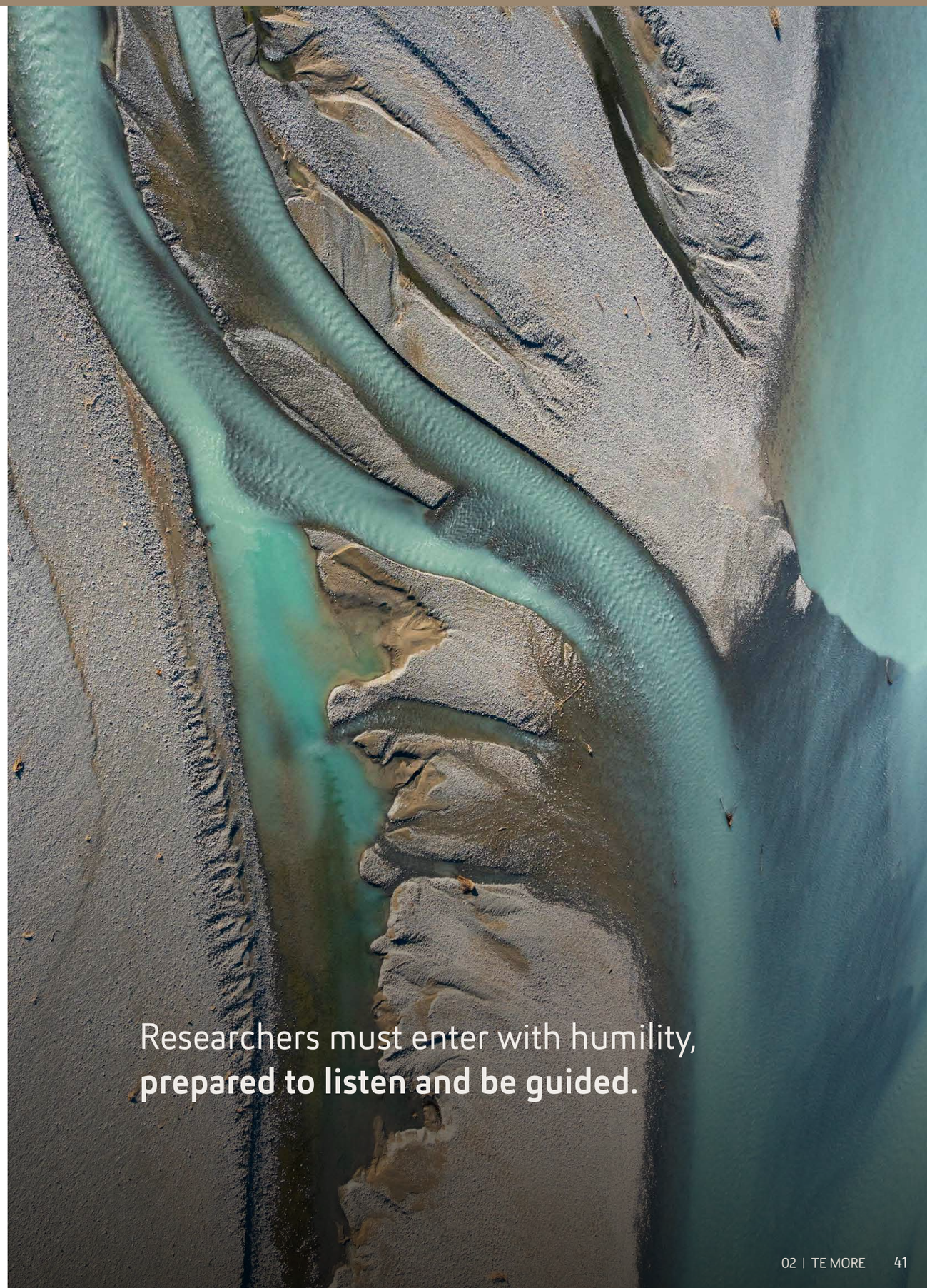
Mandate needs to be maintained as the research develops. Projects evolve, people change, and new questions or opportunities can alter the work in ways that were not anticipated at the beginning. Where that shift is material, the original mandate may no longer cover the project in full (Moko-Painting et al., 2023).

Maintaining mandate depends on keeping partners informed, returning when the scope changes, and being willing to pause when the authority to continue is uncertain. Silence and decisions made without the people who granted the mandate can gradually weaken the legitimacy of the work. Relational accountability continues throughout the project rather than being secured once at the beginning.

When scope changes, mandate may need to be revisited. Returning to iwi or community partners can protect the integrity of the kaupapa, even when it takes additional time.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Schedule a 'mandate check-in' at each major stage of your research, after ethics approval, at the start of data collection, at the analysis stage, before publication. Contact your governance partners and update them. Ask: has anything changed that we need to discuss?
- If your research changes direction, a new data set, a new research question, a scope expansion requested by a funder, treat this as a new mandate conversation, not a continuation of the old one.
- If your key contact in a community changes (leadership transition, staff departure, illness), re-establish the relationship with the new person. Do not assume mandate transfers automatically.
- If a community withdraws support partway through your research, pause. Speak with your supervisor and your Associate Dean (Postgraduate). In some cases, research cannot ethically continue. This is a difficult situation, but the right response is to honour the withdrawal.



{03}

TE WEU

DESIGNING THE RESEARCH WITH TIKANGA, ETHICS, AND SOVEREIGNTY

Build a design that is methodologically sound, culturally legitimate, ethically ready, and properly resourced.



Te Ara Tika Check | What this phase asks

Principle	Guiding question
Whakapapa	Does the design reflect the origins and relationships of the kaupapa?
Tika	Are the methods appropriate to the worldview and community context of the research?
Manaakitanga	Are participants and communities protected, supported, and able to give meaningful consent?
Mana	Who controls data, outputs, intellectual property, and future use? Is community sovereignty assured from the start?

MĀORI AUTHORITY, EXPERTISE, AND LEADERSHIP

Research engaging Māori people, communities, data, mātauranga, or priorities must identify the Māori authority, expertise, relationships, and governance appropriate to the nature and potential consequences of the work.

The relevant role may be held by Māori research leads, researchers, knowledge holders, iwi or hapū authorities, cultural advisors, community partners, or an appropriately constituted rōpū. These roles are not interchangeable, and academic qualification alone does not establish mandate or cultural authority.

Where the research is Kaupapa Māori or substantively engages mātauranga Māori, Māori leadership and epistemic authority must be clearly established. Māori expertise must be engaged early enough to shape the question, design, methodology, governance, analysis, and dissemination; given meaningful decision-making influence; and appropriately resourced. A named Māori person without authority, capacity, or influence does not satisfy this responsibility.

MĀORI RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
KNOWING, BEING, AND DOING

Methodology is not the same as method. A method is a tool: an interview, a survey, a wānanga. A methodology is the philosophical architecture that determines which tools are appropriate, how they are used, and what counts as knowledge when you are done. For Māori researchers, methodology begins with a prior question: from whose worldview is this research conducted, and what does that worldview ask of the research process (Henry & Pene, 2001)?

Within that wider foundation, this section focuses on Kaupapa Māori, the methodological tradition most commonly drawn on by Māori researchers. It also explains how Māori methods operate within it and what researchers need to consider when their work moves between Māori and Western knowledge systems (Wilson, Mikahere-Hall, & Sherwood, 2021).

The Philosophical Architecture | Epistemology, Ontology, Axiology

Research methodologies rest on positions about what is real, what can be known, and what matters. In Western research these are separated out and named as ontology, epistemology, and axiology, and are more often assumed than stated. In Kaupapa Māori research they are foundational and must be made explicit but they need not be separated. In te ao Māori, knowing, being, and valuing are held together, and many Māori researchers write from that integrated position rather than dividing it into three. The table below sets out the Western vocabulary because you will meet it, in reviewer comments, in research proposals, and in examination. Use it if it serves your thinking. If it does not, articulate the same ground in the philosophy of te ao Māori and say plainly in your methodology chapter that this is what you are doing and why. That is a methodological position, not an omission (Henry & Pene, 2001).

Dimension	The question it asks	A Māori approach
Epistemology (theory of knowledge)	What can be known, and how do we know it?	Knowledge is relational and collective. Mātauranga Māori, the total body of Māori knowledge, is a legitimate and complete knowledge system. Whakapapa is the organising framework through which all things are known and related (Moko-Painting et al., 2023).
Ontology (theory of being)	What is real? What exists?	The world is relational, not atomised. People, land, ancestors, spiritual dimensions, and living systems are in relationship. Wairua, the spiritual dimension, is real and must be respected in research. What affects a person affects their whānau and their whakapapa (Marsden, 2003).
Axiology (theory of value)	What counts as worthwhile research?	Research has value when it benefits Māori communities, honours tikanga, and produces knowledge that is accountable to those it concerns. Academic recognition is not sufficient justification. The ultimate measure is: does this research serve the people it was done with?
Positionality (researcher location)	Where does the researcher stand in relation to the research?	Researchers are never neutral. In Kaupapa Māori research, the researcher's whakapapa and relational obligations are part of the research, not external to it. Positionality must be named and reflected on throughout (Mikahere-Hall, 2017).

Kaupapa Māori Methodology

Kaupapa Māori research is research by Māori, for Māori, with Māori. It is grounded in Māori worldviews, governed by Māori authority, and accountable to Māori communities. It is not a method. It is a complete methodological framework that encompasses epistemology, ontology, axiology, and ethical obligation (Henry & Pene, 2001).

Kaupapa Māori academic scholarship emerged from the work of Māori scholars, including Graham Hingangaroa Smith and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, as a political and intellectual response to research practices that had historically extracted from, misrepresented, and harmed Māori communities. It carries both a methodological function, in showing how to do research from a Māori worldview, and a political function, in challenging colonial knowledge systems from within the academy (G. H. Smith, 2003).

Kaupapa Māori methodology does not reject Western knowledge systems. It centres Māori worldviews and concerns first, then draws on Western theory and method where they are useful and appropriate. The distinction matters: Kaupapa Māori researchers are not required to validate their work through Western epistemological frameworks. The framework provides its own internal logic of rigour (Hiha, 2015).

Choosing Kaupapa Māori carries more than a methodological preference. It is a political and intellectual commitment to work through the values, tikanga, whakapapa, relational accountability and tino rangatiratanga that govern Māori life. The same label will not fit every Māori project, but whichever methodology is chosen must make cultural sense for the kaupapa and remain accountable to Māori (Moko-Painting et al., 2023).

Kaupapa Māori research has several core principles that operate as guides to practice. They are not a checklist but a set of relational orientations: tino rangatiratanga, the right of Māori to determine their own research agenda; taonga tuku iho, the privileging of inherited knowledge; ako Māori, culturally preferred pedagogy and learning; kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kāinga, addressing structural inequities; whānau, collective solidarity as both method and outcome; and kaupapa, collective vision grounded in Māori cultural values (L. T. Smith, 2012).

Māori-informed and Interface Research

Kaupapa Māori is not the only legitimate way Māori academics undertake Māori research. Some Māori scholars work through Indigenous methodologies, Māori-centred research, interface methodologies, discipline-specific frameworks, creative practice, community-led approaches, or mixed methodological designs. Others may be cautious about claiming Kaupapa Māori methodology where the mandate, governance structure, whakapapa connection, or research conditions do not fully support that positioning (Wilson, Mikahere-Hall, & Sherwood, 2021).

This does not make the work less Māori. It means the researcher must be precise and honest about the methodological tradition they are working within, the authority that supports it, and the obligations it carries.

Not all research that engages Māori contexts is, or needs to be, Kaupapa Māori research. Māori-informed research may draw on Māori frameworks, tikanga, values, language, participants, or priorities while still operating within broader disciplinary paradigms. Interface research explicitly engages Māori and Western knowledge systems and makes the relationship between them part of the research design and interpretation (Pene, Gott, & Clark, 2024).

The responsibility across all of these positions is to be honest about where the research actually sits and what that positioning requires. Calling research Kaupapa Māori when it is more accurately Māori-informed can misrepresent the methodological stance. Calling research merely 'involving Māori' when it engages collective knowledge without collective authority can become extractive. Positioning is therefore an act of scholarly integrity, not marketing.

Māori Research Beyond Qualitative Methods

Kaupapa Māori and Māori-centred research are not tied to a particular method. They can be quantitative, experimental, computational, clinical or mixed-method, just as they can be carried through wānanga, pūrākau, kanohi ki te kanohi or creative practice. Kaupapa Māori has been applied across multiple disciplines, with Māori principles shaping research questions, design, ethics, methods, analysis and interpretation rather than sitting alongside them as a cultural addition (Pīhama et al., 2026).

The question is therefore not whether a method is Māori or Western, but what governs its use. Māori-centred research asks who defined the problem, whose priorities shaped the question, who holds authority over the data or taonga involved, what assumptions sit inside the measures or categories being used, who interprets the results, and what consequences follow from them.

Māori researchers are already doing this across quantitative, mixed-method and community-led designs. The point is not that a method becomes 'Māori' through labelling, but that Māori priorities, authority, interpretation and accountability shape how the method is chosen and used. Kaupapa Māori scholarship accommodates discipline-based conventions while requiring the research questions, design, ethics and interpretation to remain grounded in Māori principles and relationships (Pīhama et al., 2026).

The same principles carry into science and technology. Pūtaiao has been described as an expression of Māori research sovereignty within science (Moko-Painting et al., 2023), while Kaupapa Māori has been woven into computer science and software engineering through Māori leadership, community engagement and Māori interpretation of findings (Rolleston et al., 2021). Genomic and laboratory research similarly raises questions of rangatiratanga, whakapapa, taonga and authority over the use of biological material and genomic data, with Māori-led research showing how tikanga, community collaboration and Indigenous data sovereignty can be built into study design and practice (Abolins-Thompson et al., 2024).

Technical choices matter because they shape what research can see. Decisions about ethnicity classification, aggregation, comparison groups, variables and statistical models can materially alter how Māori are represented and what conclusions are drawn. Yao and colleagues (2025), for example, show that different methods of classifying ethnicity can substantially change the population reported as Māori. A statistical difference is also not an explanation in itself. Where Māori outcomes differ from those of another population, researchers need to consider the historical, institutional and structural conditions through which those outcomes were produced rather than allowing Māori identity to become the explanation.

The same care is required when working with administrative, computational or linked data. Māori rights and interests do not disappear because data have been de-identified or moved into a large institutional system (Greaves et al., 2023). Māori scholarship on the Integrated Data Infrastructure and Māori Data Sovereignty continues to place governance, benefit, authority and Māori aspirations at the centre of how data are collected, linked, analysed and reused (King et al., 2026).

Research decision	Ask
Problem	Who decided this was the problem worth studying?
Measure	Does what is being measured make sense in the Māori context of the research?
Categories	How are Māori being classified or aggregated, and what disappears through that choice?
Comparison	Who is being treated as the norm?
Data or taonga	Who holds authority over its collection, use, linkage, storage and reuse?
Analysis	What assumptions are built into the method or model?
Interpretation	Who should be involved in deciding what the result means?
Consequence	What might follow from the finding, and who will carry those effects?

Māori Research Methods

Methods are the specific practices used to generate and analyse knowledge. The following methods have a well-established presence in Māori research literature. This is not an exhaustive list, and Māori methodological innovation is ongoing, but these are the methods most likely to be relevant to AUT researchers across disciplines.

Wānanga | Collective Knowledge Exchange

Wānanga creates space for people to speak and make sense of a kaupapa together. Although it may sometimes serve a similar research purpose to a focus group or workshop, it is governed by a different relational logic. The kōrero is allowed to move where it needs to, and the understanding that emerges belongs to the collective rather than being treated as material extracted by the researcher (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020).

This makes wānanga especially valuable when a community needs to shape the research itself, test an emerging framework, or consider findings before they are made public. It can also offer a more appropriate alternative to participant observation because the researcher is present within a tikanga-governed process rather than standing outside it. Knowledge develops through participation and shared reflection, with the relationships and obligations surrounding the kōrero kept visible (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020).

A wānanga must be resourced as a genuine part of the research. The budget and timeline need to provide for preparation, facilitation, kai, venue, koha and follow-up. The methodology should then explain how the wānanga was held, how tikanga and relationships shaped the kōrero, what understanding emerged collectively, and how participants were able to review or refine it.

Kanohi ki te Kanohi | Relational Presence

Kanohi ki te kanohi interviewing is face-to-face engagement that prioritises relational presence over data efficiency. The researcher comes to the participant, to their marae or their home, rather than requiring participants to travel to institutional settings. Presence signals commitment and respect (Paora & Steagall, 2023).

The kanohi ki te kanohi encounter begins before the formal interview, in the sharing of a meal, in the karakia that opens the session, in the conversation that happens in the margins. Researchers must allow time for these relational moments. They are not inefficiency. They are method (Paora & Steagall, 2023).

Pūrākau | Story as Method

Pūrākau is a narrative methodology grounded in Māori oral traditions. It uses story, personal and ancestral, as both the vehicle for data collection and the medium through which knowledge is generated and transmitted. Pūrākau was developed as a research methodology by Māori scholars including Lee (2009) and Pouwhare (2019), drawing on the deep epistemological function of storytelling in te ao Māori.

Pūrākau is particularly suited to: oral history research, identity and experience research, creative practice-led doctoral inquiry, and any research that privileges ancestral knowledge transmission. It operates through the logic of whakapapa: stories are connected to each other through genealogical relationship, not merely sequential arrangement (Pouwhare & Steagall, 2023).

Noho Puku | Researcher Reflection

Noho puku is a method of deep internal reflection, sitting with and dwelling within the material, used as part of analysis and sense-making in Kaupapa Māori research (Hiha, 2015). It acknowledges that the researcher is not a neutral instrument. Their embodied response to the research material is itself knowledge. Noho puku disciplines that response, giving it methodological rigour rather than treating it as bias to be eliminated.

This method addresses something Western research traditions have long treated as a problem: the researcher's presence in the data. In Kaupapa Māori research, that presence is acknowledged and structured through tikanga, including noho puku, rather than denied (Hiha, 2015).

Creative and Arts-Based Methods

Creative and arts-based methods can enable researchers to explore and express Māori knowledge, identity and experience through practice, as illustrated by Paora and Steagall's (2023) research integrating photography, poetic inquiry and performance within a Kaupapa Māori framework. AUT also has a history of Māori creative practice being examined through Format 3; see 'Practice-Led and Arts-Based Research' in Phase 03

Wairua | Wairua as Methodological Consideration

Wairua, the spiritual dimension of Māori existence, is not peripheral to research involving mātauranga Māori. It is constitutive. Knowledge in te ao Māori does not separate the spiritual from the material or the seen from the unseen. Research that engages oral history, mātauranga, taonga or community knowledge must account for wairua as a real dimension of the knowledge being engaged, not as a mystical extra (Marsden, 2003).

Accounting for wairua begins in the way research engagements are held. Karakia may open the space, and knowledge that is tapu may carry clear limits around who can hold it and how it can be shared. Researchers must also recognise spiritual wellbeing as part of participant safety and approach ancestral knowledge with the reverence it carries, rather than the analytical distance Western research traditions often expect (Wilson et al., 2022).

Researchers in disciplines where wairua feels unfamiliar should sit with it and seek guidance rather than dismiss it. Researchers who engage with Māori communities will encounter wairua as a living reality in those communities, whether or not their disciplinary training has prepared them for it. Preparation is better than surprise (Marsden, 2003).

Methodological Rigour | Kaupapa Māori Standards

A persistent challenge for Māori researchers is the expectation that their methodology must justify itself against Western standards of rigour such as validity, reliability and generalisability. Kaupapa Māori methodology has its own standards of rigour, grounded in different but equally defensible epistemological principles. The table below is a translation device for a reviewer who holds the conventional categories, and it is not the standard itself. Its right-hand column is not a Māori version of validity. Note that the qualitative tradition has already moved past those categories: Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria of credibility, dependability and transferability are widely accepted, so a reviewer demanding validity and generalisability of a qualitative Kaupapa Māori study is behind their own field as well as yours (Hiha, 2015).

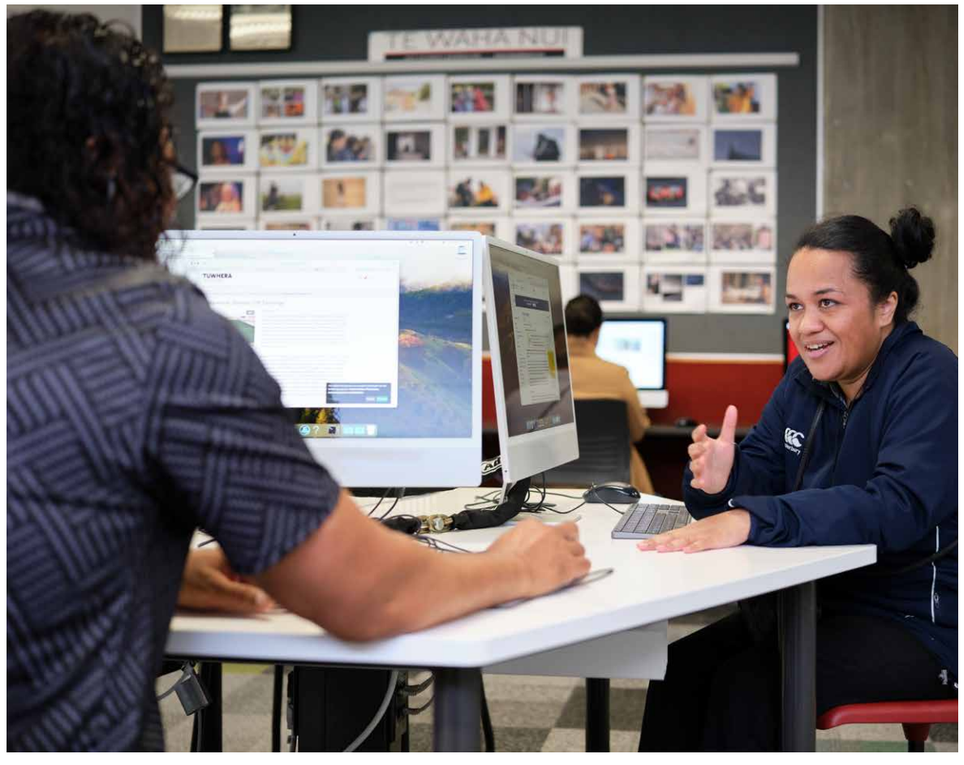
Western standard	Kaupapa Māori equivalent	How to articulate this
Validity: does the research measure what it claims to measure?	Cultural validity: does the research engage with Māori knowledge and experience in ways that the community recognises as truthful and appropriate?	Demonstrate that community members recognise themselves in the findings. Show that findings were returned to and validated with participants. Document the cultural authority that endorsed the research design.
Reliability: would the same methods produce the same results in a different context?	Relational consistency: is the research conducted with consistent relational accountability across its full lifecycle?	Document that tikanga was applied consistently and that mandate was maintained throughout.
Generalisability: do the findings apply beyond the study sample?	Transferability within relational context: do the findings have meaning for related communities, and is that meaning defined by those communities?	Acknowledge the specific relational and cultural context of your research. Discuss where findings may transfer and where they are context-specific. Let the community determine the reach of the research.

When reviewers ask you to justify Kaupapa Māori methodology against Western standards, the response is not to apologise or to translate your methodology into Western terms. It is to explain the epistemological logic that makes your approach rigorous on its own terms, and to do so with the same scholarly confidence that any methodologist brings to defending their framework. This is a learnable skill. Practise it in your research seminars and supervisory meetings before you need it in a reviewer's rebuttal.

Articulating Your Methodology

Your research proposal, your methodology chapter, and any journal articles you publish will require you to articulate your methodological position clearly to audiences that may be unfamiliar with Kaupapa Māori research. This is a translation task, not a defence. You are explaining your framework to a reader who does not yet have the vocabulary, not justifying yourself to a reviewer who doubts your legitimacy.

A strong methodology chapter should allow a reader to understand the worldview grounding the research, the Māori methodological tradition it draws on, and how that grounding shapes the design, analysis and relationships surrounding the work. It should also make clear where cultural authority sits and how relational accountability is being maintained. Researchers may use the academic language of epistemology, ontology and axiology to explain this foundation, or write directly from a te ao Māori philosophy in which knowing, being and valuing are held together. Either approach can be rigorous when the grounding is explicit and carried through the research. Together, this is the substance of the methodology chapter rather than an addition to it (Wilson, Mikahere-Hall, & Sherwood, 2021).



TE PŪTEA RANGAHAU
FUNDING

Funding success in Māori research is rarely transactional. It is relational and cumulative. A sustained research career rests on the relationships you build while preparing a grant application and the mandate you secure before you begin. It also rests on your reputation for returning findings with integrity.

Strong applications are not only well written; they are relationally grounded. Community trust can matter as much as technical polish.

What Māori Funding Typically Requires

- Co-development letters signed by partner organisations
- Evidence of collective mandate
- Governance structures or advisory groups
- Alignment with Vision Mātauranga themes where relevant
- Explicit benefit to Māori communities
- Detailed plans for knowledge return

For non-Māori researchers seeking Māori input or Vision Mātauranga support for an external research proposal or project, contact the Vision Mātauranga advisers in Te Kāhui Poipoi Rangahau, the AUT Research Office, early. Where the project also requires connection to Māori researchers, wider strategic Māori research consideration, or potential collaboration, Te Ranga Tukutuku may be an appropriate additional pathway.

Timeline Realities

Mandate must precede submission, not follow it. If endorsement cannot be secured in time, the application timeline must adjust. Funding success in Māori research is relational and cumulative.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- When you first identify a funding opportunity, work backwards from the submission deadline. If genuine community consultation requires 3–6 months, and the deadline is in 2 months, that deadline is not right for this application. Either find a different round or begin building the mandate now for the next one.
- Contact your community partners as early as possible when you are planning a grant application. 'I'm thinking about applying for X, would you be open to exploring this?' is a very different conversation from 'I need a letter of support by Friday.'
- Unsuccessful applications are not wasted. The relationships you built, the mandate conversations you had, and the feedback you receive all strengthen the next application. Not all funding rounds provide feedback, particularly if an application is declined early. Where feedback is available, request it and use it to strengthen future applications.
- Connect with Te Kāhui Poipoi Rangahau, the AUT Research Office, well before a deadline. They have seen what works and what does not.

KOHA, RECIPROCITY, AND CULTURAL HOSPITALITY

Reciprocity is not an optional courtesy in Māori research. It is an ethical expectation grounded in relational accountability.

Where Māori people contribute time, knowledge, governance, cultural authority or lived experience, that contribution must be acknowledged in ways that are tangible and proportionate. Engagement without reciprocity is extraction, even when unintentional.

If you are unsure what is appropriate, ask before you decide rather than after. Koha is one of the areas where a well-meaning researcher can cause the most quiet offence, and one of the areas a non-Māori supervisor is least likely to be able to advise on. Before it goes into your budget or your ethics application, take your koha plan to your cultural advisor, and where relevant to the community itself. That means the amounts, the form, the timing, who receives it, and who presents it.

Koha

Koha recognises the value of what has been shared and the relationship within which that contribution was made. It is distinct from a fee, remuneration or a subcontract, but neither is it merely symbolic. In research, koha gives practical expression to what whanaungatanga asks of us.

Because koha acknowledges contribution rather than purchasing participation, it must never be structured as an inducement (Hudson et al., 2010).

The dignity of the exchange matters, including the way the koha is offered and received.

Its value should reflect the time and expertise involved, the responsibility a person has carried, and the sensitivity of what they were asked to share.

Reciprocity is visible. Communities notice whether researchers arrive to extract, or arrive understanding what the relationship asks of them.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Faculty finance will ask for a figure, and the figures below are for that purpose rather than for the kōrero with your community. For individual participants in interviews or focus groups: $30–$50 per hour is a reasonable starting point. If the topic is sensitive, or the participant holds specialist knowledge, it should be higher. Check current amounts and payment mechanisms with your faculty research office, as Te Whakaruruhau is reviewing koha practice across AUT.
- For governance or advisory roles: an honorarium of $100–$200 per meeting is appropriate as a starting point. Senior governance roles with ongoing commitment warrant more. Document this in your ethics application.
- Koha can also be non-monetary: a contribution to the marae fund, a donation toward a community event, or a catered hui. The form matters less than the proportion and the spirit. If unsure, seek cultural advice and support when selecting koha.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this continued

- Never offer koha as a condition of participation; that is inducement, not acknowledgement. The koha recognises what was given; it does not purchase what you want.
- Before your research begins, check the AUT policy on gifts, koha and donations (available on TUIA) and talk to your faculty administrator about payment processes. Koha payments have specific approval and recording requirements, and practice currently varies between faculties. If the process you are given does not allow you to koha appropriately, say so. That might mean being told koha can only be paid by reimbursement after the hui, or that a recipient must supply an invoice. Raise it with your Associate Dean and let Te Ranga Tukutuku know. Processing after the fact is significantly more difficult than planning ahead.

Budgeting for Tikanga

Tikanga needs to be resourced from the beginning of the research. When these costs are left out of the budget, researchers often end up carrying them personally, which is neither fair nor sustainable.

Research budgets need to reflect the actual way the work will be carried out. This may include koha and honoraria, kai, marae or venue contributions, travel for kanohi ki te kanohi engagement, cultural advice, and the secure tools needed to store, transcribe and analyse the data. Time must also be allowed for communities to review what the research produces. These are ordinary costs of working responsibly in te ao Māori, and researchers should not be expected to absorb them personally. Funding applications need to show that reality from the outset.

Build your koha budget at the same time as your research proposal, in consultation with your faculty administrator. Retro-fitting koha into an approved budget is difficult, and in some faculties it is not possible at all.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- When writing your research budget, whether for a grant application, your Research proposal, or your faculty research support application, create a dedicated 'tikanga and relational engagement' line. Do not bury these costs inside generic 'fieldwork' or 'travel' categories. Naming them signals to reviewers that you understand what Māori research actually requires.
- Identify which funding source is most appropriate for your tikanga costs. Faculty research support funds may cover koha, kai, and travel for doctoral students, but you must apply before you incur costs. Staff researchers have different routes and should ask their faculty research office about seed or contestable faculty funding, and about whether a small tikanga budget can be attached to an existing project. Where a project is genuinely unfunded, say so to your faculty research office early rather than absorbing the cost personally. Carrying koha out of your own pocket is not a private choice, it is an unrecorded subsidy of the University by a Māori researcher.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this continued

- If a grant reviewer queries your tikanga budget, hold the line. Explain that these are not optional courtesies; they are core research costs. Removing them would make the research culturally non-viable. Draw on support from supervisors and mentors.
- Build your tikanga budget before you build the rest of your budget. Then build the academic costs around it.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DIGITAL TOOLS
SOVEREIGNTY IN A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

The 2026 Handbook sets out mandatory requirements for postgraduate students who use artificial intelligence tools, and all AUT researchers are expected to follow AUT's Guidelines for the Ethical Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Research. The Handbook names cultural appropriation as a misuse of AI, but it does not address Māori data sovereignty, which carries specific implications for Māori research.

What Is Now Mandatory

If you use any artificial intelligence (AI) tools in your research, you must:

- Complete and submit an Artificial Intelligence Declaration Template with your initial research proposal, your Confirmation of Candidature, and your final submission for examination
- Discuss AI tool use with your supervisor and demonstrate you understand the tool's functionality and potential risks including biases
- Clearly identify and reference any text, images, data, or analysis created or amended by AI tools
- Ensure any AI use involving participant data is within the scope of your AUTEC approval and that participants have given informed consent for their data to be analysed this way
- Include an Artificial Intelligence declaration statement in the front pages of your thesis.

Using artificial intelligence to generate content that you present as your own constitutes plagiarism and may result in disciplinary action.

What This Means for Māori Research Specifically

The institutional artificial intelligence policy addresses academic integrity. It does not address data sovereignty. For Māori research, the risks go further (West, Wilson, Thompson, & Hudson, 2020).

Risk Area	Māori Research Implication
AI transcription tools	If you use AI to transcribe kōrero from Māori research participants, that audio and text may be processed and stored on servers governed by foreign law, potentially used to train AI models, and inaccessible for deletion. This is a data sovereignty concern your AUTEC application must address explicitly.
AI analysis of Māori data	AI systems trained predominantly on Western data carry colonial biases that may misrepresent Māori knowledge or produce analysis that pathologises rather than affirms. This is a methodological risk, not just a technical one (Brown et al., 2024).
AI generation of Māori content	Using AI to generate text, imagery, or analysis involving mātauranga Māori risks decontextualisation and the laundering of extracted Indigenous knowledge through an opaque system. Even where the output appears culturally appropriate, it lacks the whakapapa that makes knowledge legitimate.
The Declaration	If you are uncertain whether a tool constitutes artificial intelligence use for these purposes, discuss it with your supervisor before you use it, and record the decision.

The Principle

If a tool takes data in and you cannot guarantee where it goes, who accesses it, and whether it can be deleted, do not use it for Māori research data without explicit community consent and institutional backing.

MĀORI DATA SOVEREIGNTY
PROTECTING WHAT IS ENTRUSTED

Māori data is not neutral information. It carries whakapapa and collective consequence (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016).

Where research involves Māori individuals, whānau, hapū, iwi, organisations, or mātauranga Māori, the data generated becomes part of a broader sovereignty conversation. Data sovereignty concerns who controls data, where it is stored, who can access it, how it is used, whether it can be reused, and who benefits from it.

Data Storage | Jurisdictional Considerations

Data storage is not a technical afterthought. It is a jurisdictional decision (Oliver, Lilley, & Cranefield, 2022). When Māori data is stored outside Aotearoa, it becomes subject to foreign government access laws, commercial data mining policies, and cross-border surveillance regimes (Sharma, Martin, & Swanlund, 2024).

Personal Dropbox, Google Drive or privately managed cloud storage should not be used for primary storage of sensitive Māori data unless explicitly approved and fully understood.

Core Principle: Where possible, Māori data should be stored within Aotearoa-based infrastructure under institutional control, typically the AUT R: Drive or approved institutional storage systems.

Tool	Questions to Answer Before Use
Zoom (recordings)	Where is data stored? Is it retained by the platform? Is it stored on overseas servers?
AI transcription tools	Is audio used to train AI systems? Can data be deleted permanently?
Survey platforms (Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey)	Is data stored on overseas servers? Who owns the data?
Cloud analytics platforms	Can access be restricted? Can data be deleted on request?

Uploading sensitive kōrero to unknown AI platforms without clarity is a sovereignty breach. Data storage is not administrative detail. It is the first act of protection (Rana, 2024).

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Before your research begins, contact the AUT IT Service Desk or your faculty IT support to request access to the AUT R: Drive for your research data. This is your primary storage option for Māori research data.
  - Talk to the AUT Library early about long-term deposit and access. Tuwhera, AUT's open research repository, can host research data as well as theses, and the library can advise on metadata, embargo periods, licensing, and access controls. Deposit is not automatically the right answer for Māori data: open access and Māori data sovereignty can pull in opposite directions, and the decision belongs to the communities the data came from, not to the researcher, the journal, or the funder. Where deposit is appropriate, ask about restricted or mediated access, tikanga-based licensing, and Traditional Knowledge Labels.
  - Budget for the paid tier. Free and consumer versions of transcription, survey, storage, and analysis tools routinely reserve the right to use uploaded content to train their models. Institutional and enterprise tiers frequently do not, and often add encryption, jurisdiction choice, retention controls, and a contract you can cite in your ethics application. Read the terms for the tier you will actually use, not the marketing page. Put the subscription in your budget at design stage; this is a data sovereignty cost, not a software convenience.
- For every digital tool you plan to use, survey platforms, transcription software, video calling, cloud storage, complete a simple audit: Where is the data stored? Which country's laws govern it? Can I delete it? Has the community consented to data being processed this way? If you cannot answer these questions, do not use the tool until you can.
- Before you set up your transcription workflow, check the AUT list of approved transcription tools, and consider whether a human transcriber under a confidentiality agreement is more appropriate than any AI tool for sensitive kōrero. For kōrero touching tangihanga, rongoā, whakapapa, trauma, or knowledge held under tapu, a named human transcriber bound by a confidentiality agreement should be your default. Where you use one, budget for it. Transcription of this kind is skilled work.
- Include your data storage decisions in your Ethics application, specifically naming the storage system and jurisdiction. Vague statements like 'data will be stored securely' are insufficient.
- Create a data management plan at the start of your research, following the AUT research data management guidelines. It should cover where data is stored, who has access, how long it will be retained, what happens when you leave AUT, and how it will be disposed of, returned, or archived. For Māori research, it should additionally record who holds authority over the data, what secondary use has been consented to, what may not be deposited or shared, and what the community expects to happen to the material at the end of the project. Your supervisor should sign it.

Deductive Disclosure | When Anonymity Is Not Enough

Removing a participant's name does not necessarily make them anonymous. Within small or highly connected Māori communities, a combination of iwi, hapū, rohe, occupation, age, role or a distinctive experience may make someone recognisable to people who know the context. Quantitative research can create the same risk through very small cells or unusual combinations of variables.

This needs to be considered when the research is designed, not only when it is written up. Researchers may need to generalise contextual details, combine categories, suppress small cells or change how quotations are presented. At the same time, removing every marker of identity can strip kōrero of the whakapapa and context that gives it meaning, and some knowledge holders may actively want to be named.

The task is therefore not anonymity at all costs, but protection that reflects what the person agreed to, what their community will be able to infer, and the cultural context in which the knowledge sits.

Kōiwi, Tissue, and Genomic Data

For Māori, biological material is not simply a sample. It can carry whakapapa, identity and collective interest, and those relationships do not disappear when material enters a laboratory, biobank or dataset (Beaton et al., 2017). Māori scholarship on biological and genomic research has emphasised whakapapa, tikanga, kaitiakitanga and Māori authority over how tissue, DNA and associated data are collected, accessed, used, shared and governed (Apaapa-Timu et al., 2026).

Consent should be understood in relation to what was actually agreed. A sample provided for one purpose should not be assumed to authorise indefinite storage, secondary use, export, sequencing or the creation of further research material (Beaton et al., 2017). Māori research on biobanking and genomic research identifies transparency around future use, access, sharing, return or disposal of taonga, collective interests and Māori governance as central considerations (Apaapa-Timu et al., 2026). Māori Data Sovereignty carries the same principle across the life of research material and the data derived from it: authority does not end at collection (King et al., 2026).

Genomic research makes this particularly visible because genomic information is relational. What is learned from one person may also carry implications for whānau, hapū and iwi (Beaton et al., 2017). Māori genomic research frameworks, such as Te Mata Ira (Hudson et al., 2016), emphasise consent, Māori governance, reciprocity and the capacity for Māori to shape how genomic data and taonga are accessed, used and interpreted, rather than being consulted after decisions are made (Rye et al., 2025)..

Where biological or genomic material is involved, the design should therefore establish from the beginning who holds authority over its collection, storage, access, secondary use, transfer or export, and what happens when the project ends. These decisions should be explicit rather than left to the default practices of a laboratory or repository (Beaton et al., 2017). This includes how taonga are stored and displayed. Tissue and kōiwi should never be kept as objects on view in a laboratory, and whānau may hold expectations about privacy and respect that go beyond how the material is handled in the study itself. When a project ends, there are three legitimate outcomes for biological material: continued storage, with approvals in place to revisit consent before any further use; return to a person or rōpū identified at the outset; or destruction in a manner agreed with them. Keeping tissue beyond what was consented to, or without the knowledge of the person it came from, is not acceptable.

Kōiwi tangata carry an even more direct whakapapa relationship. Where ancestral remains are held by an institution, custody should not be treated as settling cultural authority. The whakapapa, provenance and authority of the descendant community remain central to decisions about access, study, sampling, movement and return. Where kōiwi are held in a collection, the provenance questions in Phase 04 apply with more force, not less (Meihana & Bradley, 2018).

- For any biological or genomic material, ask: Where will it be held? For how long? Who can authorise another use? When the study ends, will it be stored, returned or destroyed, and who decides? If you cannot clearly identify who holds authority over those decisions, the design is not finished.

Urupā, Wāhi Tapu, and Research After a Death

Some places carry restrictions not only on access, but on what may be seen, recorded, reproduced or shared. Permission to enter an urupā or wāhi tapu does not automatically create permission to photograph it, map it, record coordinates or publish its location. Ask separately about access, recording and publication. They are not the same permission.

Research concerning people who have died also remains relational. A person's death does not remove their whakapapa or the interests of the whānau connected to them. Where research touches a recent death, tikanga associated with tangihanga, mourning and the period that follows may affect when or whether the work should proceed. Where the research concerns a historical figure, descendants may still hold legitimate interests in how that person, their kōrero or their taonga are represented.

The appropriate response is not to assume that historical distance has removed those obligations. Find the people connected to the person or place, establish what authority sits with them, and ask what can be recorded, interpreted and made public before the material enters the research.

The same care applies to research material in which a participant is identifiable, such as photovoice, video recordings, or pūrākau they have named and claimed as their own. Where a participant dies during or soon after the research, return to their whānau at an appropriate time to ask whether the material may still be published, promoted or discussed. Whānau have been deeply hurt by coming across a loved one's story without warning.

- Where a project involves an urupā, wāhi tapu, kōiwi tangata or a person who has died, establish separately what you may access, what you may record, and what you may publish, and revisit that with whānau if a participant dies .

Consent Frameworks

Consent in Māori research must be meaningful, not procedural. Institutional consent forms are the floor, not the ceiling. Tikanga obligations may require additional processes not captured by applications for ethical approval (Hudson et al., 2010).

- Consider whether collective consent is needed alongside individual consent.
- Consider whether whānau members should be part of the consent process.
- Ensure consent covers secondary use, publication and commercialisation.
- Consider whether process consent, consent sought afresh at each stage rather than once at the start, is more appropriate than a single consent at the outset.
- Make clear how withdrawal works, including what happens to data already collected.

Process consent recognises that a participant may not be able to anticipate every use of their contribution at the beginning of a project that lasts three or four years. Consent is revisited when the transcript is returned, when emerging findings are discussed, and before particular kōrero is used in the thesis or a publication. A participant can continue through some stages and stop before others without having to withdraw everything they have already shared.

This staged approach is often more tika for whānau, kaumātua and sensitive kaupapa because it reflects how relationships and understanding develop over time. Describe it clearly in your AUTEC application, including what will happen to material already gathered if a participant decides not to continue.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Draft your consent forms in plain language, not legal language. Have someone outside academia read them and tell you whether they understand what they are signing.
- Consider whether a reo Māori version of your Participant Information Sheet is needed or appropriate for your community. If so, engage a translator early, this takes time.
- For research with whānau or community groups, consider hosting a hui to explain the research and answer questions before anyone signs anything. Consent given after genuine dialogue is more meaningful than a form returned by email.
- If your research involves mātauranga that belongs collectively, oral histories, traditional knowledge, community data, discuss with your supervisor and community partners whether individual consent is sufficient or whether governance-level consent is also required.
- Build in a 'cooling off' period between the information session and when you ask for signatures. People should be able to sleep on it.

Intellectual Property | Mātauranga Māori

Where research involves mātauranga Māori, intellectual property questions arise from the outset. Before data collection begins, clarify who owns knowledge co-created during the research, whether commercialisation is possible and on what terms, whether AUT Ventures obligations are triggered, and how attribution will be managed.

These conversations are far easier at the beginning than at the end. Unresolved intellectual property questions can damage relationships that took years to build.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- In your first supervisory meeting, raise the intellectual property question directly: does this research have commercialisation potential? If yes, contact AUT Ventures before you begin data collection, not after.
- In your supervision agreement, document explicitly who owns what. If community partners are co-creating knowledge, their intellectual property rights should be named.
- If your research involves mātauranga Māori contributed by an iwi or hapū, consider a simple data sharing or intellectual property agreement with that governance body, even if AUT does not require one. It signals respect and creates clarity.
- Attribution in publications is an intellectual property decision, not just a courtesy. Discuss co-authorship expectations with community partners before you begin. If their knowledge is central to your findings, they have a claim to be named.

OVERSEAS DATA COLLECTION RESEARCH TRAVEL

Two distinct provisions in the Handbook apply to research conducted outside AUT campuses or outside Aotearoa. Both are commonly overlooked.

Research-Related Travel

The Handbook requires you to notify the university of research-related travel and to ensure appropriate insurance arrangements are in place. This applies to field research at marae, in remote communities, or overseas.

- Complete the Notification of Research Related Travel form, approved by your supervisor and faculty postgraduate office, before you travel, and read the Postgraduate Research Student Travel Policy
- Confirm AUT travel insurance covers the research activity

Where travel involves community engagement, travel plans should reflect cultural obligations, including the possibility that visits may extend beyond planned timelines

Overseas Data Collection

If your research involves collecting data outside New Zealand, the Handbook requires you to investigate any local ethical requirements, report back to your supervisor, and obtain a local ethics approval letter. Failure to obtain or comply with local ethical requirements can lead to disciplinary action for both student and supervisor.

For Māori researchers working with iwi or hapū communities with connections outside Aotearoa, or with Māori diaspora communities internationally, this is directly relevant. Plan for additional ethics processing time.

PRACTICE-LED AND ARTS-BASED RESEARCH

AUT recognises three postgraduate thesis formats. Format 1 is the conventional thesis. Format 2 is a thesis that incorporates publications. Format 3 is a practice-led thesis in which a creative work is examined alongside an exegesis. Most Māori researchers are aware of the first two. Fewer know that Format 3 exists and is particularly suited to creative practice, performance, and toi-based research. For tauira moving from undergraduate creative practice into postgraduate research, Format 3 may offer a way to carry that practice forward, subject to the requirements of their programme.

In a Format 3 thesis, practice is not used to illustrate theory; it is the site of research. The research component includes an artefact, performance, or other creative output alongside an exegesis that elucidates the relationship between the work and its theoretical and methodological context.

Examples of creative outputs include spatial, industrial, graphic, fashion, animation, visual effects, game design, and visual arts, or any other creative means of showcasing practice-oriented research.

For Māori researchers working in raranga, whakairo, toi, kapa haka, waiata, film, creative writing, or any other creative practice that embodies mātauranga Māori, this format exists for you. The exegesis does not reduce the practice to theory. It holds the practice in its critical and cultural context. AUT has an important history in this space. One groundbreaking example involved three kairaranga undertaking collaborative doctoral work under Format 3. Each researcher produced a separate exegesis on a related kaupapa, while also contributing to a shared exhibition. This model demonstrated how Māori creative practice, collective knowledge, and doctoral scholarship could be held together without forcing the research into a conventional thesis-only structure. Further detail on this example can be sought through Te Ipukarea Research Institute.

If you are considering a practice-oriented postgraduate project, discuss Format 3 with your supervisor and Associate Dean (Postgraduate) early. The word length requirements and examination process differ from Format 1 and 2.

CONFIRMATION OF CANDIDATURE

Confirmation of Candidature, submitted on the PGR9 form, is the most critical milestone in a doctoral journey. The AUT Postgraduate Handbook (referred to throughout as the Handbook) specifies exact timeframes, and the consequences of missing them are serious.

Situation	What Happens
Full-time doctoral candidates	Confirmation of Candidature review process should begin at 9 months. The completed Confirmation of Candidature form must be submitted to the University Postgraduate Research Board (UPRB) within 12 months of provisional admission.
Part-time doctoral candidates	Confirmation of Candidature review process should begin at 18 months. The completed Confirmation of Candidature form must be submitted to UPRB within 24 months of provisional admission.
If not submitted on time	The faculty will send a letter requiring submission within 6 months. A progress report must be submitted in lieu.
If still not submitted	The unsatisfactory progress process begins, giving a further 6 months. After that, you will be withdrawn from the programme.

Doctoral timelines can be rigid, while Kaupapa Māori research may require early relationship-building before the question is fully formed. Candidates need to know how institutional clocks operate from the beginning.

For Māori researchers engaged in community consultation and relationship building, these timeframes are genuinely at risk. This is not a reason to rush the relational work; it is a reason to document it thoroughly, communicate with your supervisors from the start, and understand what protections are available to you.

What to do

Document all community engagement work in your progress reports. Communicate early with your supervisor and Associate Dean (Postgraduate) if your research timeline requires extended consultation. Relational work is method, but it must be visible in your institutional record to protect you.

What Your Confirmation of Candidature Must Include, Māori Research Additions

The standard Confirmation of Candidature requirements include research question, rationale, literature review, methodology, ethics approval, budget, and timetable.

For Māori research, your Confirmation of Candidature should additionally address:

- Mandate and authority, who has authorised this research to proceed
- Governance structures, advisory rōpū or oversight mechanisms
- Community engagement strategy, timeline and relational design
- Data sovereignty protections, storage, access, secondary use
- Reciprocity design, how findings will be returned to communities

For Māori research, the Confirmation of Candidature should also make the Māori research logic visible to the reader. Do not assume that every reviewer will already understand Kaupapa Māori, tikanga-based methods, iwi or community accountability, or Māori data sovereignty. These elements need to be explained with enough clarity that the panel can see how they shape the research design, not as cultural additions sitting beside it, but as part of the project's methodological structure. The aim is not to make the research less Māori. It is to make its foundations legible inside a university approval process.

A note on length. Kaupapa Māori research carries an additional writing burden that word limits do not recognise. A Māori thesis must do everything a conventional thesis does and also account for mandate, engagement process, relational accountability, data sovereignty, and a methodology many readers will not know, within the same word count. If your writing feels compressed, that is a structural condition, not a failure of economy on your part.

Some levers exist. Mandate documentation, engagement timelines, governance correspondence, and cultural advisor records can usually sit in appendices, which are generally not counted in the word limit. Format 3 has different word length requirements. A variation to word length can be sought through your faculty and the Graduate Research School with a clear rationale. Raise this with your supervisor and Associate Dean (Postgraduate) at Confirmation of Candidature, not in the final months when your options have narrowed.

Te Ranga Tukutuku regards this as an institutional issue and is raising it through Te Whakaruruhau.

If completing your Confirmation of Candidature in te reo Māori, the Handbook requires you to also supply an English summary of 250–500 words. This is a formal requirement; ensure your supervisor knows this.

ETHICS PATHWAYS
AUTEC AND MĀORI RESEARCH

Ethics approval is a formal requirement for research involving human participants. At AUT, this is governed by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). It is not optional. It is also not sufficient on its own.

Process	Scope
AUTEC will assess	Participant safety, informed consent, data handling, risk mitigation, confidentiality.
AUTEC will NOT automatically assess	Tribal authority, mandate legitimacy, cultural appropriateness beyond general principles, data sovereignty beyond stated storage.

Ethics approval protects participants legally. It does not replace relational accountability. Both pathways must be satisfied independently (Johnson, Brewer, & Nelson, 2023).

AUTEC applications involving Māori research should clearly articulate: engagement processes including kanohi ki te kanohi and wānanga; koha plans and payment mechanisms; data storage location; governance arrangements; and cultural risk considerations.

Vague statements about 'cultural sensitivity', 'I will seek endorsement' or 'I will engage with an advisory rōpū or kaumātua' are insufficient. Specificity demonstrates seriousness, and protects you when questions arise later.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Contact the AUTEC Secretariat early, before you draft your application, if you are uncertain whether your research requires ethics approval or which type. Email **ethics@aut.ac.nz**. A 15-minute conversation can save weeks of revision.
- In your AUTEC application, do not use generic language about 'respecting Māori culture'. Name the specific engagement processes you will use: how many hui, at what stage, with whom, in what format. Name your koha arrangement with the specific amount and payment method. Name your data storage system.
- If your research involves iwi, hapū, or Māori organisations, attach any letters of support or governance agreements to your AUTEC application. This demonstrates that cultural authority is in place, not just assumed.
- Submit your ethics application at least 8 weeks before you need approval. AUTEC meets monthly and has agenda closure dates. Missing the closure date means waiting another month.
- Remember: AUTEC approval and Māori mandate are separate processes that must both be satisfied. Completing one does not complete the other.

Ethics Approval and Peer Review | What Comes First

Ethics approval and Confirmation of Candidature are usually spoken about as though one simply follows the other. The actual relationship is more specific, and knowing it saves months.

AUTEC requires that research has been peer reviewed before it grants approval. For a doctoral candidate the Confirmation of Candidature is that peer review, which is why ethics approval normally follows confirmation. The EA1 form asks you to say which review applies, and Confirmation of Candidature and Admission to the Doctoral Programme are both listed options.

You can apply earlier. The form provides for it, and asks that where a study will take place before the Confirmation is complete you supply peer review to support that stage. A pilot or preliminary phase is the usual reason.

For Māori staff researchers and early career researchers there is no Confirmation of Candidature at all, and this is where people get stuck. The same question on the form lists the alternatives: an AUT competitive grant, an external competitive research grant, a postgraduate research proposal, or an independent peer review. A funded project usually already satisfies this. An unfunded one usually needs an independent review arranged deliberately.

- If you are a staff researcher without a funded project, arrange your peer review before you start the ethics application rather than discovering the requirement at question A.7.

Working the AUTEC Form as a Māori Researcher

The EA1 form is not designed around Māori research, and several of its questions are more useful than they look.

The form asks early on for the context behind the research, and explicitly invites your worldview, lived experience and relevant affiliations. This is where positionality belongs. It is a rare place in an institutional form that asks who you are rather than only what you will do, and a considered answer here frames everything the committee reads afterwards.

The list of research tools does not include wānanga. It offers interviews, focus groups, observation, participant observation and questionnaires. Do not simply tick focus groups and move on, because a wānanga is not a focus group and the form is a declaration. Tick what genuinely applies, write wānanga into the free text, and describe it fully in the methodology question where frameworks and approaches are asked for. Expect a query, and treat it as a chance to educate the committee rather than a problem.

The form accommodates staged research. Where a project proceeds in phases, as most co-design and Kaupapa Māori work does, you can describe the phases and seek approval across them rather than applying repeatedly. Where a later phase will change materially, an amendment is usually simpler than a new application.

Transcription and recording are asked about directly. Where an AI tool will be used to transcribe, it must be disclosed and it must be an approved tool. Māori data should not pass through a service that processes it offshore or retains it for training.

- Where karakia opens and closes a session, say so in the form and say that it sits outside the recording. It makes clear that tikanga governs the engagement and that only the substantive kōrero forms part of the research record. Karakia is not a procedural courtesy and it is not for everyone to lead. It carries authority and it carries risk. If you are reconnecting, or not Māori, arrange for someone with the standing to do it rather than improvising, and say in the form who that will be.
- Name your cultural advisor and any governance rōpū in the application, with their permission. A committee reading an application with named Māori oversight assesses it differently from one without.

Conflict of Interest

Māori research frequently operates in close relational networks. Researchers may have whakapapa connections to participants, hold governance roles in organisations involved, or be both researcher and community member.

Conflict of interest does not automatically disqualify research. However, it must be disclosed transparently. Undeclared conflicts erode trust quickly and can unravel work that took years to build (Mikahere-Hall, 2017).

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- In your AUTEC application and your supervision agreement, declare any personal, whakapapa, or financial connections to your research community explicitly. Do not assume these are obvious or that disclosure is unnecessary.
- If you are researching a community you belong to, address this directly in your methodology section: explain your positionality, how it shapes your approach, and what steps you are taking to maintain research integrity.
- If you hold a governance role in an organisation you are also researching, discuss this with your supervisor and Associate Dean (Postgraduate). A formal conflict of interest declaration may be required.
- The test is not whether a conflict exists, it is whether a reasonable observer would have concerns. If in doubt, disclose.

Supervision | Choosing With Care

For Māori candidates, supervision must be evaluated on more than disciplinary alignment. The right supervisor is not just someone who knows your field. They are someone who will advocate for your kaupapa and help you hold both worlds without being made to choose between them.

- Does this supervisor understand Māori methodologies?
- Are they comfortable with relational tempo?
- Will they support tikanga-based design decisions?
- Are they willing to advocate institutionally when needed?

The wrong supervisor can constrain a kaupapa before it begins. Take the time to choose well.

For Māori staff researchers and early career researchers, the equivalent question is not supervision but collegial accountability. Who in your professional network understands Kaupapa Māori methodology well enough to read your work critically? Do you have a peer reviewer, a critical friend, or a co-investigator who can hold that function? If not, Te Ranga Tukutuku can help connect researchers across career stages. The absence of formal supervision does not remove the need for methodological accountability; it makes the relational architecture of that accountability even more important to build deliberately.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Before committing to a supervisor, have an explicit conversation about Kaupapa Māori or Māori-informed methodology. Ask directly: have you supervised Māori research before? What does that look like? How do you approach tikanga obligations in a research timeline?
- Ask to speak with one or two of their previous Māori doctoral students. Their experience will tell you more than any formal meeting.
- If your preferred supervisor does not have Kaupapa Māori experience but is strong in your disciplinary area, discuss co-supervision with someone from Te Ipukarea or Te Ara Poutama. A co-supervisor who holds the methodological knowledge is better than a solo supervisor who does not.
- If supervisory problems emerge once you are enrolled, you are not locked in. Speak to your Associate Dean (Postgraduate). Supervisory team changes are possible and sometimes necessary. If you are concerned, act early.

Progress Reports as Relational Work

For Māori candidates, progress reports should document engagement undertaken, hui or wānanga held, governance discussions, mandate confirmation, and deliberate relational pacing.

Relational work is not delay. It is method. Document it clearly so that faculty understand that time invested in mandate and engagement is scholarly, not peripheral (Wilson, Mikahere-Hall, & Sherwood, 2021).

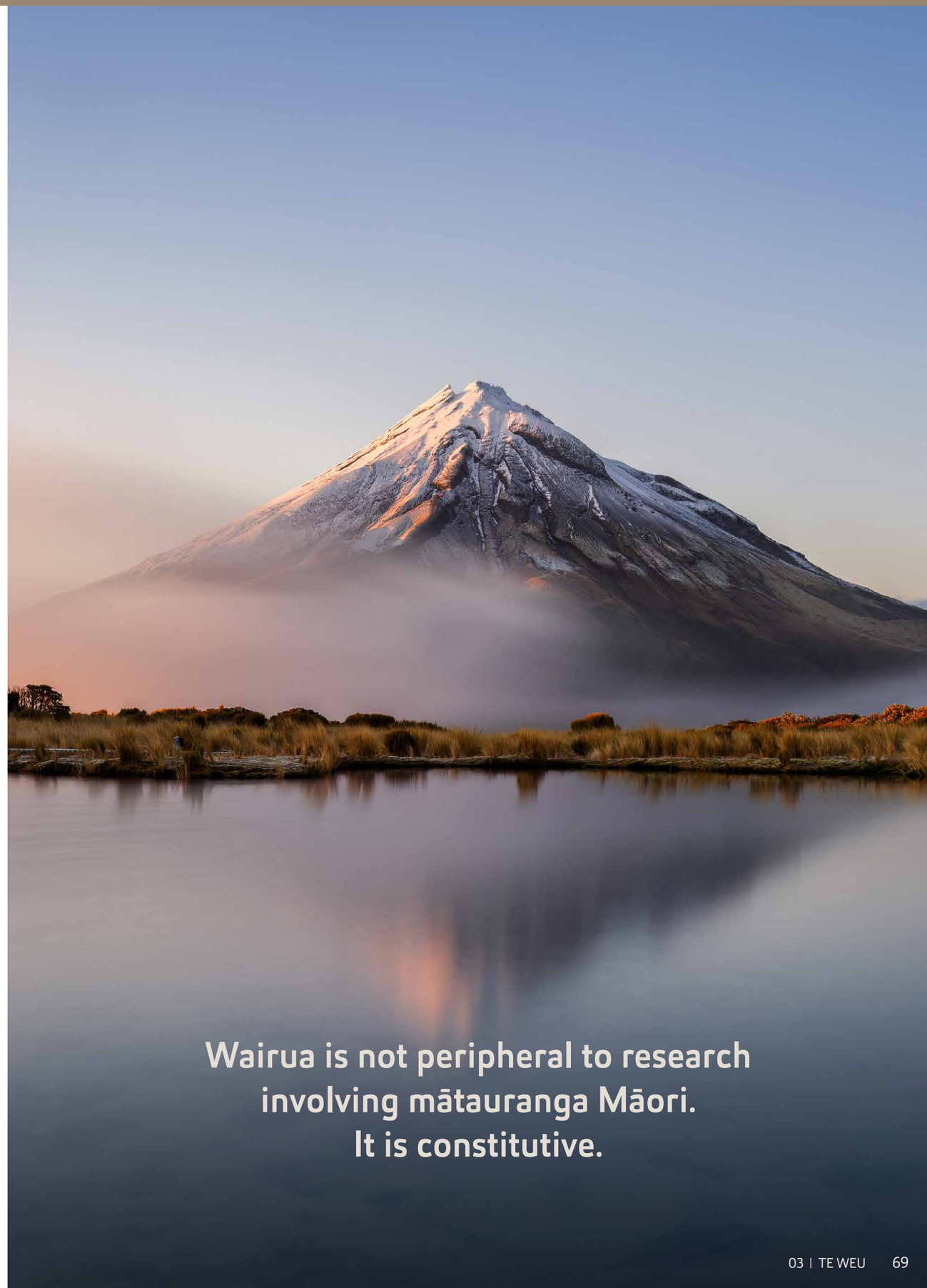
Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Every six months when you complete your progress reports, include a 'relational engagement' section. List: hui attended, community contacts made, governance meetings participated in, koha paid, mandate conversations held. This creates an auditable record of your research process.
- If your progress report shows slower-than-expected academic progress because of community engagement, frame it explicitly: 'Progress has been deliberately paced to honour the governance requirements of [community]. This is methodological, not a delay.' Your supervisor needs to sign this, use it as a conversation.
- Keep a simple research journal or log. Date, who you met with, what was discussed, what was agreed, what comes next. This takes five minutes after each interaction and becomes invaluable when you are writing your methodology chapter.

Building Toward Research Approval

Everything settled during design informs your research proposal and relevant approval processes: the mandate secured, the governance structures agreed, the data sovereignty protections in place, and the reciprocity designed into the work. Keep that record as you go. The sequence of proposal approval and ethics review depends on your programme or research context, so confirm the requirements early. Obtain any required ethics approval before recruiting participants or collecting data. Early relationship building and discussions about mandate should remain distinct from gathering material for your findings.

Your reviewers may not include a Māori researcher. Explain the Māori methodological logic clearly so they can understand how it shapes the research. This requires translation across epistemologies, while retaining the Māori grounding and authority of the work.



{04}

TE AKA

CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH WITH CARE

Carry out the research with care, institutional literacy, tikanga, supervision, and clear documentation. This phase begins once the design is confirmed and ethics approval is in place.



Te Ara Tika Check | What this phase asks

Principle	Guiding question
Whakapapa	Are relationships being actively maintained throughout engagement and data collection?
Tika	Is the process still appropriate as circumstances, relationships, or community needs change?
Manaakitanga	Are people being cared for during engagement, their time and their wellbeing?
Mana	Is community authority still intact? Has any shift in scope been re-mandated?

TE RANGAHAU
DOING THE RESEARCH

This phase begins once the design is approved and ethics approval is in place. Phase 03 set out what wānanga, kanohi ki te kanohi, pūrākau and noho puku are and when each is appropriate. This section is about what happens once the research is actually underway.

Most research draws on more than one kind of material. Interviews, hui and wānanga may sit alongside scholarship, archives and existing datasets. Both primary and secondary research carry obligations, although the obligations attached to knowledge gathered by others are often less visible.

Before the first engagement

Before fieldwork begins, confirm that the approved ethics application covers what is about to happen, that the mandate under which the research is proceeding still stands, and that the practical arrangements have been made with enough knowledge of the people and place involved.

Mandate should not be assumed to remain unchanged simply because it was secured at the beginning. Leadership changes, relationships develop, circumstances shift and research questions sometimes move. Māori research ethics place continuing accountability to Māori within the research relationship rather than treating ethical responsibility as something settled at the beginning of a project (Wilson et al., 2021). Where the circumstances or scope have materially changed, check that the mandate still stands.

A short message before an engagement confirming who will attend, what the researchers hope to cover, approximately how long the session will take and what will happen with what is shared can prevent misunderstandings later. It should also be clear who will open and close the engagement and whose tikanga will guide the process.

Consent is a relationship, not a signature

A signed consent form records consent at a particular point in the research. It does not remove the need to pay attention to consent as the research unfolds. Te Ara Tika locates Māori research ethics within whakapapa, tika, manaakitanga and mana, creating what has been described as a relational ethic of reciprocity and ongoing accountability to Māori (Wilson et al., 2021).

Where a hui runs longer than agreed, the kōrero moves into unexpected territory, or a participant appears uncomfortable with where the discussion is going, the researcher should recognise that something has changed and give the person a genuine opportunity to decide whether they want to continue (Hudson et al., 2010).

Researchers also need to be precise about what participants can ask for later. AUTEC requires participants to be told the point up to which withdrawal is possible, and this depends on the approved project. The same applies to reviewing transcripts, correcting interpretation or requesting removal of material. Promise only what the approved protocol allows, and make those options practically accessible where they have been offered.

When someone gives you more than they agreed to give

Trust sometimes produces material that was not part of what the researcher expected to receive or what the participant originally agreed to share. When that happens, do not quietly decide afterwards that the material is too useful to leave out.

Recognise the change and return the decision to the person who shared it. Where the material concerns personal experience, that may be enough. Where it involves knowledge held through whānau, hapū, iwi or another collective, individual consent may not by itself settle whether the knowledge can be used.

Kaupapa Māori research places rangatiratanga with tangata whenua, including authority over how knowledge and other taonga are shared and researched (Collier-Robinson et al., 2019).

Where there is genuine uncertainty about whether material can be used, do not use it until the appropriate authority has been established.

When something goes wrong in the room

Research engagements do not always proceed as planned. Someone may become distressed, disclose harm, ask for the research to stop, or become involved in a disagreement that changes what is possible in the room.

A request to stop means the research activity stops.

Distress does not always mean that a person wants an engagement to end, but it should always trigger a check-in and the response set out in the approved ethics protocol. The researcher should offer the options available and follow the participant's decision.

Some disclosures may also carry safety, legal or professional obligations beyond the research itself. These possibilities should be considered during the design stage so that the researcher knows what applies and what escalation or referral process has been approved before entering the field.

Conflict between people in the room does not give the researcher authority to settle relationships or questions of tikanga that belong to others. Where conflict affects the research, pause the research activity where appropriate and return to the person or collective from whom the mandate was received.

Significant incidents should be recorded while the details are still clear, including what occurred, what response was made and who was informed.

Documenting as you go

Alongside the research material itself, keep a record of how the research was conducted: hui held, guidance received, decisions made, questions returned to advisors or community leadership, and changes that materially affected the project.

This is particularly important in Māori research because much of the work that gives the research its integrity can otherwise disappear from the formal account. A contemporaneous record makes it possible to show how tikanga, relationships and cultural guidance actually shaped the research rather than simply asserting at the end that they did.

This does not mean everything should be written down. Phase 05 sets out the limits around what should enter the research record at all.

When the research changes shape

Research projects evolve. A community may ask for something the original design did not anticipate, a finding may raise a new question, or growing trust may create possibilities that were not apparent when the project was first agreed.

Treat a material change in scope as a mandate question before treating it as a methods question. The people who authorised the original research authorised that research, not every later version of it. Māori research approaches place particular importance on protecting both individual and collective rights and maintaining Māori authority throughout the research process (Paine et al., 2022). Where the approved project itself changes, AUTEC also requires the amendment to be approved before the altered research is put into effect.

Institutional approval does not replace Māori authority, and Māori authority does not remove the institutional obligations attached to an approved research project.

A useful test is whether the people who gave the research its mandate would recognise what is now being done as the kaupapa they agreed to. If the answer is uncertain, go back.

Interruption

Tangihanga, illness, whānau obligations and community events will sometimes interrupt fieldwork. These are not necessarily failures of planning. They are part of research conducted within relationships and within lives that continue around the project.

Where interruptions materially affect the research, supervisors should know while they are occurring rather than only afterwards, and the effect on the fieldwork should be recorded. If the interruption changes who was available, what could be asked, when an engagement could occur or how the kaupapa came to be understood, that effect belongs in the methodological account.

Phase 07 sets out the formal protections available where an interruption becomes substantial.

Ending an engagement without ending the relationship

The final interview or hui may mark the end of data collection, but it does not mark the end of the relationship through which the research became possible. People should know what happens next, when they are likely to hear from the project again and what will be returned to them.

If an update has been promised, send it. If the work is taking longer than expected, say so. Silence after data collection can undermine the trust on which the research was built.

Reciprocity in Māori research includes responsibility for returning benefit and communicating findings to Māori participants and communities in ways that are timely and meaningful (Paine et al., 2022). What happens after fieldwork is therefore part of the research relationship, not an optional courtesy added at the end.

Working With Knowledge Others Have Gathered | Secondary Research

Not all Māori research involves new interviews, hui or wānanga. Literature reviews, archival research, analysis of existing datasets and work built through the scholarship of other Māori and Indigenous researchers are all legitimate forms of research.

The absence of a new participant does not mean the absence of obligation. Knowledge still has a source, a history and, in many cases, relationships and authority attached to it.

Citation as whakapapa

A reference list reveals the intellectual lineage through which a researcher has chosen to understand a subject. It says something about whose scholarship and authority have been treated as foundational.

That matters particularly in research about Māori. A thesis concerned with Māori lives, knowledge or communities but grounded almost entirely in non-Māori scholarship is not making a neutral choice about sources. Nicholson (2020), writing from within a Māori research paradigm, locates knowledge within whakapapa and deliberately places oral Māori knowledge holders alongside written academic sources rather than treating one as inherently more authoritative than the other.

Thinking about citation as whakapapa means Māori and Indigenous scholarship is not added afterwards to demonstrate diversity. Where that scholarship is authoritative on the question being asked, it should shape how the question itself is understood.

Citation also has material consequences. Wehi and colleagues (2019), examining recognition of Māori within the New Zealand scientific community, note that publications, citations, grants and awards are among the measures through which scientists are judged and careers progress. Who is cited therefore matters intellectually and institutionally.

Before finalising a reference list, read it as a whole and ask what it says about where you believe authority on the subject sits. Foundational Reading (page 132) is a starting point, not a limit.

Archives and collections

Institutional access to archival material can create a false sense of permission. Mātauranga is connected to place, whakapapa and the authority of the people through whom it is held, and the fact that material has entered an institutional collection does not remove those relationships. Wilkinson, Hikuroa and Macfarlane (2020) make the position particularly clear: there is no expectation that iwi and hapū give mātauranga away simply because researchers wish to work with it.

Provenance therefore matters. Ask how the material came to be there, who provided it, whether that person had authority to do so, what conditions were attached to it, and who holds authority over its use now.

Custody and cultural authority are not the same thing. An institution may legally hold a document, recording or object without being the body best placed to determine how the knowledge within it should be interpreted or circulated.

Where the people connected to the material can be identified, contact may also reveal context the archival record does not contain and change the researcher's understanding of what the material means.

Published does not mean noa

Publication does not necessarily make mātauranga free of the relationships and authority through which it was held. Clapcott and colleagues (2018) describe mātauranga as specific to place and local context, emphasising that the whakapapa of knowledge matters, that appropriate permissions should be sought, and that sharing does not create an ongoing right of use.

Some published mātauranga entered the written record under circumstances that would not meet contemporary expectations of authority, consent or reciprocity. Later publication does not retrospectively resolve those questions, and reuse can reproduce the original problem rather than repair it.

Where a contested source is necessary, the methodology should explain what is known about how the material was gathered, why the source is problematic, and why the researcher has nevertheless chosen to use it.

Reading colonial sources against the grain

Colonial records can contain useful historical material, but they also carry the assumptions and limits of the people who produced them. Read them not only for what was recorded, but for how the recorder came to know it, what they understood, what they expected to find, whose explanations were available to them and what may have remained outside the record.

A flawed source can still be useful without being treated as authoritative on everything it claims to describe.

Secondary use of Māori data

Māori data sovereignty does not disappear because another researcher collected the data first or because the information is now held by a university, government agency or repository. Research on the Integrated Data Infrastructure has shown the importance of Māori governance, values and aspirations even within large institutional data systems (Greaves et al., 2023), while West and Renfrew (2026) identify continuing gaps between commitments to Māori Data Sovereignty and its practical implementation within New Zealand universities.

Do not assume that consent for the original collection authorises a new use. Check what participants were originally told, what secondary uses were contemplated, whether Māori governance formed part of the original project and what authority is required for the proposed use now.

Where a dataset contains Māori information but no identifiable governance arrangements or clear account of secondary use, that absence should be acknowledged in the methodology rather than treated as an administrative gap.

Phase 03 sets out the wider Māori data sovereignty principles that apply.

Citing kōrero and oral sources

Confidentiality and anonymisation remain important protections, but they should not be applied so automatically that protection becomes erasure. In some Māori research, a knowledge holder may want their name attached to what they have shared because attribution recognises where the knowledge came from and helps prevent it being separated from the person and whakapapa through which it was carried.

Nicholson (2020), for example, deliberately cites Māori knowledge holders by their full names and places their kōrero alongside written academic literature, both to honour Māori voice and to recognise oral knowledge within the scholarly record.

The decision should sit with the person concerned within the boundaries of the approved ethics process rather than being assumed in advance. Where someone is named as a knowledge holder or source, showing them the relevant passage in context before publication also gives them the opportunity to see how their contribution is being used, not only whether their words have been quoted accurately.

Interdisciplinary and Interface Research | Standing in Both Worlds

Māori research does not sit neatly within disciplinary boundaries. Many of the most urgent questions facing Māori communities lie at the intersection of domains: technology and tikanga, economics and whenua, health systems and whakapapa, law and mana motuhake, climate science and kaitiakitanga.

Working across domains is not deviation. It is often necessity. And it is where some of the most transformative Māori research is being done.

Interface research often sits across multiple fields, each with its own standards. Standing confidently across those spaces takes time, but can strengthen the work.

Operating Across Māori and Western Knowledge Systems

Interface research does not mean blending epistemologies into a single indistinct framework. Mātauranga Māori and Western disciplinary systems are not interchangeable. They arise from different ontologies and different authority structures, and interface scholarship treats them as systems to be worked with alongside one another rather than merged (Pene, Gott, & Clark, 2024).

- Be explicit about which epistemology grounds the research.
- Clarify where Western frameworks are being used.
- Avoid appropriating mātauranga as metaphor or ornament.
- Avoid subordinating Māori knowledge to external validation.

Warbrick and colleagues (2023) state the position without hedging: Indigenous knowledge needs no validation, least of all against a standard that has caused Indigenous people significant harm.

Navigating Scrutiny | Methodological Challenge and Review

Interface research is likely to be read by people working from very different expectations. Academic reviewers will test its rigour, Māori communities will look to its legitimacy and benefit, and institutions will want to know that it is feasible. Those questions are part of working across boundaries and can help sharpen the research when each is asked from the right position.

That scrutiny can be difficult, particularly when criticism of the methodology begins to feel like criticism of the researcher or their identity. The task is to use critique that strengthens the work without allowing unfamiliarity with Māori scholarship to destabilise its foundations. Much of the innovation in Māori research emerges from precisely these interdisciplinary and interface spaces.

It is not necessary to reconcile all differences. It is necessary to be honest about them.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Anticipate the scrutiny questions before they arrive. For academic reviewers: prepare a clear, confident articulation of your methodological logic that does not apologise for its Māori grounding. For Māori communities: be ready to demonstrate mandate, benefit, and relational accountability. For the institution: be ready to show feasibility and budget.
- In your Confirmation of Candidature, include a section that explicitly addresses how you will navigate the different epistemological expectations of your examiner panel. Not defensively, confidently. You know this terrain.
- Find a peer who has completed interface Māori research and talk to them. Not about methods, about what it felt like when the scrutiny came, and what helped them hold the line.
- If a supervisor or reviewer asks you to explain the Māori methodological grounding of your research more clearly, treat that as an opportunity, not an attack. Build the clearest possible articulation of why this approach is right for this research. If you believe the feedback crosses into undermining your methodology rather than strengthening it, speak with your Associate Dean.

WORKING WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL NAVIGATION

Universities are not neutral ground. New Zealand universities were established as colonial institutions, and their structures still carry that inheritance: what counts as knowledge, what counts as rigour, who is presumed to be an expert, which outputs are counted and rewarded, how quickly a project is expected to move, and whose time is assumed to be free. Very little of this is ever stated. It is built into forms, timelines, workload models, promotion criteria, and review processes, which is what makes it difficult to name and easy to mistake for the natural order of things.

This matters practically, not just politically. When a Kaupapa Māori proposal is asked to justify its methodology in terms no Western methodology is asked to justify, that is not a comment on the researcher. When the time required for genuine relational engagement will not fit inside the timeframe a policy allows, the mismatch is in the policy. When cultural guidance, mentoring, karakia, translation, and committee representation are expected but appear in no workload model, that is a structural allocation of unpaid labour, not a personal failure to set limits.

Naming this is not an argument for cynicism, and it is not a reason to disengage. AUT has made real commitments through Te Aronui, and there are people throughout the institution working to honour them. But a Māori researcher who does not know that the friction is structural will tend to read it as personal inadequacy, and that reading is what pushes people out. Knowing where the friction comes from is what makes it possible to navigate without absorbing it, and to tell the difference between a problem you should solve and a problem you should escalate.

So Māori researchers navigate two systems at once: te ao Māori relational expectations and institutional regulatory requirements. Neither can be ignored, and neither should be allowed to diminish the other. Where the two genuinely cannot be reconciled, that is information the institution needs. Take it to your Associate Dean and to Te Ranga Tukutuku. Part of the work of Te Ranga Tukutuku and Te Whakaruruhau is to gather these instances and press for the systems to change, so that the next researcher does not pay the same cost.

Māori researchers often have to navigate institutional and community processes at the same time. The skill is learning to hold both without letting one erase the other.

{05}

TE REA

BRINGING THE RESEARCH TOGETHER

Bring the research into coherent scholarly form through analysis, writing, examination and reo Māori provisions, while keeping the kaupapa and its relational obligations intact. These processes sit within the research pathway because Māori researchers must navigate academic requirements and tikanga obligations together.



Te Ara Tika Check | What this phase asks

Principle	Guiding question
Whakapapa	Does the research remain connected to the people and purpose that gave rise to it?
Tika	Are writing, examination and institutional requirements being handled in a way that keeps the kaupapa intact?
Manaakitanga	Is the researcher supported to meet institutional expectations without compromising wellbeing or tikanga?
Mana	Does the way the research is written, presented, assessed, and stored uphold the mana of all involved?

ANALYSING AND WRITING MĀORI RESEARCH

Writing Māori research is one of the places where the kaupapa is most deeply carried. By this stage, people may have given their time, their knowledge, and parts of themselves that were not easy to share. That gift asks the researcher to write with care, and to remember that words on the page travel far beyond the relationship in which they first emerged (L. T. Smith, 2012).

Analysis is not separate from tikanga. Kōrero carries the person who shared it. It may also carry whakapapa, humour and grief, all held within a particular relationship and moment. Researchers need to sit with that richness before moving too quickly to themes or codes, listening for the meaning that matters to the kaupapa and to the people connected to it (Nicholson, 2020).

Writing responsibility	What this means in practice
Write with care	Treat participant kōrero as taonga, not raw material. Use quotes only where they are necessary and mana-enhancing.
Interpret with humility	Sit with the kōrero before imposing themes. Notice what repeats and what is silent. Note what needs further checking.
Protect what should not travel	Not every insight belongs in a thesis, article, or public repository. Some knowledge should remain with the people who hold it.
Return before finalising	Give participants or communities the opportunity to challenge an interpretation before it is fixed.
Write against deficit	Name harm where needed, but do not reduce Māori people or communities to damage. Make room for agency, humour and mana.
Stand in more than one world	Academic language may be required, but Māori knowledge should not be made smaller for institutional comfort.
Write for those coming after	The writing becomes part of the record others inherit. It may help the next researcher, supervisor, community, or institution.

The writing should bring the research together without losing the people and relationships at its centre. Academic quality matters, but so does whether the work remains culturally grounded and recognisable to those it is intended to serve.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Before analysing, return to the kaupapa. Read your original research question, your positionality statement, and your engagement notes. Ask whether the writing still reflects the relationships and responsibilities that gave rise to the work.
- Keep an analysis journal. Record not only themes and codes, but moments of uncertainty and correction. These reflections often become important parts of the methodology chapter.
- Treat participant kōrero as taonga, not raw material. Before using a quote, ask whether it is necessary, whether it is held in context, and whether it protects the mana of the person or community connected to it.
- Return emerging findings before they harden. Build at least one interim return point into the research timeline, and treat it as a milestone, not a courtesy. Take the draft analysis back to participants, community partners, or governance groups so they can confirm accuracy, question the interpretation, and see what is about to be said about them in a public document. Record what changed as a result; that record belongs in your methodology chapter. Interim return is the last point at which disagreement can still change the work.
- Write against deficit. Name harm where it exists, but do not let harm become the only story. Make room for strength and humour.
- Be clear about what grounds your analysis. Explain how tikanga, kaupapa Māori methodology, Māori-informed methods, or interface positioning shaped the way you interpreted the material.
- Protect what should not travel. If a piece of knowledge was shared in trust, in grief, or within a specific relational context, the decision about whether it belongs in the written record is not yours alone. See What Should Not Be Written Down, below.
- Write early and often. Positionality, methodology, engagement reflections, and analytical decisions can be written as the project unfolds. The thesis is not built only at the end. It is gathered and strengthened the whole way through.

What Should Not Be Written Down

Not everything shared with a researcher is meant to travel. Some mātauranga is held by a whānau, a hapū, or a tohunga and is passed only to those chosen to carry it. Some kōrero is given because of who you are and where you were standing, not because it is for the record. Some knowledge about dying, rongoā, karakia or wāhi tapu carries obligations that publication cannot honour (Clapcott et al., 2018).

Becoming privy to knowledge does not make it tika to publish it. Ethical approval does not settle this question, and neither does consent to be interviewed. Someone who agreed to talk with you has not thereby agreed that every element of what they said should sit permanently in an open repository (Clapcott et al., 2018).

This decision is not yours alone to make. It belongs with the people who hold the knowledge. Ask directly, and ask specifically: is this for the thesis, for the community, or for neither? Ask again at the interim findings stage, when people can see the material in context and judge how it reads to an outsider.

Where the answer is that something should be withheld, you can record that a decision was made, and by whom, without recording what sits behind it. Naming the existence of a boundary is itself a methodological statement (Clapcott et al., 2018).

There are options between publishing and not publishing. Describe the significance of knowledge without recording its content. Hold material in an appendix available to examiners and removed from the deposited version. Embargo part of the thesis. Return recordings and transcripts to the whānau at the conclusion of the project. Agree that some material exists only as kōrero and is never transcribed at all. Agree the approach before data collection rather than after, and write it into your ethics application and your data management plan.

The test is not whether you have permission to publish. It is whether publication is tika.

ASSEMBLING THE THESIS

A thesis is not a set of chapters written in order. It is an argument that has to hold together, and in Māori research it has to hold together for two readers who want different things from it.

The methodology chapter carries the weight

In most theses the methodology chapter is procedural. In Māori research it is the chapter that establishes legitimacy, and reviewers will read everything after it in the light of it.

It has to carry where the kaupapa came from, who authorised the research, what tikanga governed how it was conducted, why the methods chosen were appropriate to that kaupapa, and how rigour was established on the methodology's own terms rather than by reference to somebody else's.

If that chapter is thin, relational accountability reads as bias and whakapapa reads as anecdote. If it is strong, the rest of the thesis is protected.

Where the mandate story belongs

In the methodology chapter, as method. Not in an appendix as evidence that something happened.

The correspondence, the governance records and the engagement timeline go in appendices. The account of what they mean, and what they required of the research, goes in the chapter. Appendices are generally not counted in the word limit, which matters when Māori research carries documentation that other projects do not.

Te reo Māori in the thesis

Four decisions are worth making deliberately and early rather than discovering at submission.

1) **How much of the thesis is in te reo.** This can range from terminology through to the whole work. The provisions that protect a thesis written in te reo Māori are set out later in this phase.
2) **Whether to translate.** Translation is interpretation, and a translated whakataukī is a reading of it rather than a copy. Where a passage carries meaning that English flattens, you may choose to leave it and explain its significance instead of rendering it.
3) **Whether to gloss on first use or to carry a glossary.** A glossary keeps the prose clean and asks more of the reader. Glossing interrupts but assumes less.
4) **Whether to italicise.** This document does not, on the basis that te reo Māori is not a foreign language in Aotearoa. Some journals and some supervisors will expect italics. It is a defensible position either way, and it is worth stating your choice in the thesis rather than leaving it to a copy editor.

An English-language thesis that includes te reo Māori

For an English-language thesis that includes te reo Māori, if you are not confident in the reo and your supervisors are not able to review it, budget for a translator to review or edit Māori titles, captions, concepts, and other reo passages.

A thesis written in te reo Māori

If you are writing your thesis in te reo Māori, see "Research in te reo Māori | Provisions That Protect You" for the AUT provisions and supervision guidance.

What goes in, and what does not

Not everything you learned belongs in the thesis, and a thesis is not made weaker by what it properly withholds. What should not be written down is dealt with earlier in this phase.

Where material matters to the argument but cannot be public, there are options between including it and leaving it out. Describe the significance of knowledge without recording its content. Hold material in an appendix available to examiners and removed from the public version. Name that a restriction exists and who holds authority over it.

- Decide the status of restricted material before you write the chapter that depends on it, not after. Rewriting an argument around an absence is much harder than building it with the absence in place.

Writing for two readers at once

The examiner is reading for contribution, rigour and defensibility. The community is reading to see whether they were understood, and whether the person they trusted got it right.

These are not the same document and you cannot fully satisfy both in one register. What you can do is make sure nothing in the thesis would embarrass you if it were read aloud to the people it came from.

- Take one chapter that describes people and read it as though you were one of them. If any sentence would make you wince, it is not finished.

WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

For staff researchers and early career researchers the article is usually the main output rather than the thesis, and the obligations do not shrink because the format is shorter. Where to publish, and how to position the work for a journal, is dealt with in Phase 06. This section is about writing the thing.

Before you write

Three checks, and they are quicker to do now than to unpick later. Whether the consent you hold covers publication in this form. Whether the people concerned have seen what you propose to say about them. Whether anything in the material was shared on the understanding that it would not be published.

The third is the one that catches people. Material can be perfectly within your ethics approval and still have been given to you in a conversation where publication was not what anyone had in mind.

Authorship

Ask early who contributed knowledge to the work, and whether that contribution makes them an author rather than an acknowledgement. This is a conversation for the beginning of a project, not the week before submission.

Community and iwi co-authorship is appropriate more often than it happens. Where a rōpū shaped the question, guided the interpretation, or holds the knowledge the paper rests on, authorship is a reasonable question to put to them rather than a favour to offer.

Do not assume anonymity is a kindness. A knowledge holder may want to be named, and naming may be what respect looks like. Ask, and make sure your ethics approval allows for either answer.

- Have the author order conversation at the start of the project and write down what was agreed. Almost every authorship dispute is a conversation that was postponed.

Turning a chapter into an article

A chapter assumes the chapters around it. An article assumes nothing. The mandate, the methodology and the basis for rigour all have to be re-established inside six or eight thousand words, alongside the finding itself.

This is where the pressure to drop the Kaupapa Māori framing arrives, because the framing takes words and reviewers may not require it. Cutting it makes the paper easier to place and changes what the paper is. That is a decision to make consciously, with your advisor, rather than by attrition through successive drafts.

- If a journal's word limit will not accommodate the methodology the work actually used, that may be information about the journal rather than about your methodology.

Return before you publish

Communities see the work before the journal does. This is not a courtesy step at the end. It changes what gets published, because people who were there will correct things you did not know were wrong.

Build the time for it into the submission plan. Phase 06 sets out what returning findings properly involves.

EXAMINATION
CHOOSING EXAMINERS AND PREPARING FOR THE ORAL

Examination is where a Māori thesis is most exposed. An examiner who does not recognise Kaupapa Māori methodology will read relational accountability as bias, whakapapa as anecdote, and a wānanga as an under-specified focus group. Examiner selection is therefore a methodological decision, not an administrative one, and it should be discussed long before the nomination form is due.

Who chooses

Examiners are nominated by the supervisory team and approved through the faculty and the Graduate Research School. The candidate does not select their examiners. But supervisors should discuss the nomination with the candidate, and a candidate is entitled to raise a concern about a proposed examiner's capacity to assess the work, or a conflict with the iwi, hapū, or community connected to the research.

What supervisors should be looking for

Supervisors should look beyond disciplinary reputation to whether an examiner has published in Kaupapa Māori or Indigenous methodologies and can recognise mandate, relational accountability and community benefit as part of methodological rigour. A thesis written in te reo Māori also requires the language competence set out in the Handbook. Conflicts of interest must be considered through a te ao Māori lens because some will be evident to the communities involved even when they do not appear on a standard declaration.

The international examiner question

The Handbook says doctoral theses are normally assessed by two external examiners, one from New Zealand and one international, and that both may be international if a suitable New Zealand examiner is not available. It does not provide for two New Zealand examiners as of right. It does recognise that the usual 'international standing' requirement for examiners may not apply in disciplines with a very limited pool of examiners, naming Māori and Pacific scholars as an example. For tūturu Kaupapa Māori projects, meaning research conducted in te reo Māori, grounded in mātauranga held by specific iwi or hapū, or accountable to a named community, that recognition is the basis for asking the faculty and the Graduate Research School to approve a different examiner arrangement.

The case is made in writing by the supervisory team, on methodological grounds: that competent assessment of this thesis requires examiners who hold the relevant mātauranga, reo, and relational literacy, and that the pool of such examiners is largely in Aotearoa. This is an argument about examiner competence, not about lowering the standard, and it should be framed that way. It is far stronger made six months out than in the week nominations are due.

The oral examination

The Graduate Research School appoints the convenor and determines the arrangements for the oral. Ask about its cultural shape well before submission. Ask whether it opens with karakia and mihi, whether whānau, supervisors or community representatives can attend, and whether the format allows the candidate to speak from their own tikanga rather than perform an adversarial defence. The convenor must also understand the methodology well enough to recognise when questioning has moved beyond examining the thesis and into challenging the legitimacy of Kaupapa Māori research.

Raise these with your supervisor and the Graduate Research School at least three months before submission. They are straightforward to arrange in advance and very difficult to request on the day.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Begin the examiner conversation at least six months before submission, not at the point of nomination.
- Ask your supervisor to state, in the nomination, why each proposed examiner is competent to assess Kaupapa Māori research, not only why they are eminent in the discipline.
- Where the kaupapa requires it, draft the methodological rationale for a variation to the usual examiner arrangement with your supervisor, and lodge it in writing with the faculty.
- Ask the Graduate Research School in advance about karakia, whānau attendance, and the briefing given to the convenor.
- If an examiner report challenges the legitimacy of your methodology rather than its execution, do not answer it alone. Take it to your supervisor, your Associate Dean (Postgraduate), and Te Ranga Tukutuku. This is a known pattern, and there are people who have answered it before.

SUBMITTING WITHOUT SUPERVISOR SIGN-OFF

This provision exists in the Handbook, and knowing about it gives you a degree of confidence even if you never need to use it.

You have the right to request that your Confirmation of Candidature or your thesis be examined even if your supervisor does not believe it is ready.

If you submit your Confirmation of Candidature or thesis without supervisor approval, you must clearly identify this on the form, and acknowledge that if reviewers do not approve, you may be withdrawn from the programme. This is a significant step and should only be considered after all other options, including conversations with your Associate Dean, Te Ara Poutama, and Te Ranga Tukutuku, have been explored.

Most supervisory challenges are resolved well before this point. But where a genuine impasse exists, particularly around methodological positioning, it is important to know that the institution's formal review process can independently assess the quality of the work.

Methodological disagreement does not have to become a crisis. Knowing the available processes and support pathways, and accessing them early, can make difficult supervision conversations safer and more constructive.

If you are in this situation, seek advice first from: your Associate Dean (Postgraduate), Te Ara Poutama's postgraduate lead, Te Ranga Tukutuku, or the Dean of the Graduate Research School. They can help you understand the process and assess whether it is the right path.

RESEARCH IN TE REO MĀORI
PROVISIONS THAT PROTECT YOU

AUT has specific provisions for researchers writing in te reo Māori. These are important and most researchers are unaware of them.

Provision	What It Means
Appropriate supervision	Language capability is assessed informally before a student undertakes a thesis in te reo Māori. Best practice is for the supervisory team to include at least one supervisor who has supervised a doctoral thesis written in te reo Māori through to completion. Quality assurance for the thesis should sit within the supervision team. AUT is responsible for providing this support. Where this supervision is in place, external translator review of the thesis is not required.
Turnitin submission	Theses presented in te reo Māori are exempt from the compulsory Turnitin submission requirement. This applies to the final thesis submission for examination.
Confirmation of Candidature summary requirement	If your Confirmation of Candidature is written in te reo Māori, you must also supply an English summary of 250 to 500 words. This is a formal requirement.
Presentation and examiner language competence	If your Confirmation of Candidature is written in te reo Māori, your presentation must also be in te reo Māori. Examiners assessing a reo Māori thesis must have the appropriate language competency. Discuss examiner selection with your supervisor and Associate Dean early.

Writing a thesis in te reo Māori is an act of cultural authority and scholarly courage. These provisions exist to support you. Use them.

{06}

TE WAO NUI

RETURNING, PUBLISHING, AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Return knowledge, publish responsibly, and ensure Māori research benefit is visible.



Te Ara Tika Check | What this phase asks

Principle	Guiding question
Whakapapa	Is the knowledge returning to its relational source before academic publication?
Tika	Can communities understand, use, and challenge the findings in accessible form?
Manaakitanga	Is the timing and format of dissemination appropriate to community needs and relationships?
Mana	Who benefits from publication, recognition, and impact: the researcher, or also the community?

COMPLETION AND CONTINUING OBLIGATION

In the university system, research concludes at submission. In Māori contexts, research concludes differently. Where relationships have been formed, knowledge has been entrusted, and mandate has been granted, obligation does not end at graduation or contract completion. Completion must be understood as transition, not termination.

Community benefit must be defined with the Māori communities concerned, not presumed by the researcher or institution. The research design should identify what benefit means in that context, when and how it will be returned, who is responsible for sustaining it, and how the community will determine whether the commitment has been met. Benefit should be revisited throughout the research lifecycle as relationships and community priorities develop (Hudson et al., 2010).

Returning Findings | Community Return

Returning findings is not optional but an ethical closure. Communities and organisations that contributed must receive a clear summary of findings, accessible explanation of implications, and genuine opportunity to ask questions and challenge interpretation.

Returning only an academic article is not enough. Communities need findings in accessible forms and should know what was said, what was found, and how the work will be used.

Consider accessible formats: hui presentations, short written reports, executive summaries for governance boards, visual summaries, bilingual materials. Timing matters: findings should be returned promptly after finalisation, not years later. Publication must not precede relational closure (Allport, Johnson, & Bennett-Huxtable, 2023).

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Build your 'findings return' plan into your research design from the start, not as an afterthought after the thesis is submitted. Identify: who gets the findings, in what format, at what stage, and how you will facilitate a genuine discussion of the results.
- A one-page plain language summary is not a concession; it is a professional output. Write it. Translate it if necessary. Bring it back to the community before you submit your thesis.
- Host a hui to present your findings. Allow time for questions, challenge, and correction. If participants dispute your interpretation at this stage, treat it as a signal rather than only as something to record: a dispute arriving at the end usually means interim return did not happen, or did not happen in a way that let people speak freely. Where the thesis has not yet been submitted, there is still room to revise, and you should. Where it has been examined and deposited, the options narrow to a corrigendum (a formal published correction), an amended repository version, a separate community-facing report carrying their account, or an embargo. None of them fully undoes what has been published. This is why interim return is not optional. It is the last point at which disagreement can still change the work.
- If your thesis goes to Tuwhera (AUT's research repository), let your community partners know the link. Explain what that means, that it is publicly accessible. Give them the opportunity to raise concerns before it is live.
- After publication, follow up. Tell communities when a journal article has been published, when the research has been cited, when policy has been influenced. They participated in building this knowledge. They deserve to know where it went.

When the Community Asks You Not to Publish

This document has said repeatedly that community authority governs what may be shared, and that is right. There is a harder case it has not addressed.

Occasionally a community will ask a researcher to withhold a finding that shows harm. A provider that is failing people. A practice that is hurting someone. A pattern that would embarrass a leader. The request may come from real concern about how the finding will be used against Māori by others, which is a well-founded fear with a long history behind it.

Suppressing evidence of harm is not tika, and neither is publishing it in a way that hands a weapon to people looking for one. Both of those are failures.

What usually resolves it is separating the finding from its framing. Much of the fear is not about the fact but about how it will be read. A finding published with its structural context, with the community's own analysis alongside it, and with the community given the first word rather than a right of reply, is a different object from the same finding published cold.

Where agreement genuinely cannot be reached, the escalation is not to publish anyway and it is not to bury it. Take it to the governance arrangement you agreed at the outset, then to your cultural advisor, then to Te Ranga Tukutuku, and where a person is at risk, to the pathways that apply to any researcher who becomes aware of harm.

- Agree at design stage what happens if a finding is contested. A dispute process settled before anyone knows what the findings are is a fair one. A dispute process invented afterwards is not.

PUBLISHING AS MĀORI RESEARCHERS
NAVIGATING THE ACADEMY

Completing a research project is one milestone. Getting it into the world in ways that honour both academic standards and the communities your research serves is another, and it comes with its own set of challenges that most doctoral programmes do not explicitly prepare Māori researchers for.

Te Reo Māori in Published Material

This guidance applies to public-facing research material, such as resource books, apps, reports, and other outputs intended for publication or public release. For te reo Māori in a thesis, see "Te reo Māori in the thesis" and "Research in te reo Māori | Provisions That Protect You."

Where the researcher or research team is not highly proficient in te reo Māori, substantive Māori text intended for publication or public release should be prepared or reviewed by a translator currently licensed by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori. A second, independently engaged translator holding a current Te Taura Whiri licence should review the final Māori text against the source text and intended meaning before it is printed or released.

Where a proficient researcher or research team member prepares the Māori text, it should be reviewed by a translator currently licensed by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori before publication.

Give the translator or translators the kaupapa, intended audience, relevant context, and any agreed glossary or style guidance, and allow sufficient time and budget for the review. The review should consider meaning, terminology, grammar, dialectal choices, consistency, and readability for the intended audience (Kidd et al., 2019).

Where the text includes iwi- or hapū-specific reo, mātauranga, or tikanga, seek guidance from the appropriate iwi, hapū, or knowledge holders. Translator review does not replace their authority.

Where a title or other te reo Māori wording has been gifted by a kaumātua, whānau, iwi, hapū, or Māori advisory group, tell the translator who provided it and the context in which it was gifted. Confirm with the giver and, where relevant, the appropriate iwi or hapū authority how the wording is to be recorded, attributed, translated, and used. A translator may raise questions about spelling, meaning, dialect, or audience, but their review does not authorise them to change or replace gifted wording. Take any concerns back to the giver and relevant authority, agree the final form and any explanation, and record that agreement before publication.

Record the translator or translators' names, licence status, version reviewed, date, and agreed terminology. After typesetting, check the final proof for macrons, spelling, punctuation, and any changes introduced during design. Recheck any reo changes made after review.

Navigating Mainstream Journals

Mainstream academic journals are not neutral spaces. They operate within disciplinary traditions that have historically positioned Western epistemologies as universal and Indigenous knowledge frameworks as particular or supplementary. Māori researchers publishing in these spaces frequently encounter reviewers who do not recognise Kaupapa Māori as a legitimate methodology, who ask researchers to justify why tikanga is relevant to their research question, or who request engagement with Western theoretical frameworks that the research was deliberately not built within (Love & Hall, 2021).

Reviewer comments of this kind usually reflect the limits of a system that has not been designed around Māori research. Anticipating them, and knowing when to clarify the methodology, challenge the premise of a review or involve the editor, is part of the professional craft Māori researchers develop.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Before submitting to a journal, read five to ten recent articles in that journal carefully. Ask: does this journal publish Kaupapa Māori or Indigenous methodological work? If yes, what does that look like? If not, why not, and is that a barrier or an opportunity?
- Where the journal provides space for a cover letter, use it strategically. A good cover letter should do more than confirm that the article is original and not under review elsewhere. It can help position the work for the editor by briefly explaining how the article contributes to the journal's existing conversations, why its kaupapa matters for that readership, and what methodological tradition the work sits within. This is especially useful for Māori research, because it helps the editor find reviewers who understand what the article is built on.
- When a reviewer asks you to justify why Kaupapa Māori is relevant, treat this as an invitation to write the clearest possible articulation of your methodology, not a signal that you have done something wrong. The response you write will strengthen the thesis, and it may become a methodological contribution in its own right.
- If a reviewer fundamentally misunderstands your methodology rather than engaging with it critically, this is grounds for a response to the editor, not just a rebuttal to the reviewer. Editors have the authority to request different reviewers. You do not have to accept a review that treats Kaupapa Māori as methodologically invalid.
- Seek out Māori and Indigenous scholars who have published in your target journal and ask them directly about their experience. This information is rarely documented but widely held in the community.

Journal Selection | Strategic Positioning

Journal selection requires judgement about more than disciplinary fit or ranking. A journal may have the commitment and reviewer network to engage well with Indigenous scholarship, may be open to the work but still lack the expertise to assess it, or may continue to position Māori knowledge as supplementary to Western frameworks. Looking at what the journal has actually published will tell you far more than its statement of scope.

Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous scholarship journals, several of which are listed in Foundational Reading (page 132), are peer-reviewed and internationally recognised. Publishing in them is an academically ambitious choice made within a scholarly community that understands the work (Chavarro, Tang, & Ràfols, 2017).

For research that crosses into other disciplines, health, law, education, business, environmental science, consider whether there is a disciplinary journal with a strong Indigenous scholarship track record. These journals can be high-impact and will often have stronger reviewer capacity for your work than a general journal where your methodology will be evaluated by people who have never encountered it.

Open data requirements. A growing number of journals and funders ask authors to make underlying data publicly available at submission or on acceptance. Many authors, particularly early-career authors, assume this is non-negotiable. It is not. Journals almost always provide an exceptions pathway for data that cannot ethically be shared, and Indigenous data governance is a recognised ground.

Your options include declining to deposit, depositing a restricted or de-identified subset, depositing under mediated access requiring approval from you or from the community, or providing a data availability statement that explains the position. Something like the following is legitimate and increasingly common: the data supporting this study are mātauranga Māori held under the authority of [community] and are not publicly available; enquiries will be referred to the relevant governance body.

Decide this before you submit, and agree it with your community partners at the consent stage, not when a production editor asks for a dataset two weeks before publication. Write the data availability statement you intend to use into your data management plan at the start.

Community Dissemination | Knowledge Return

Academic publication is one form of dissemination. For Māori research, it is often not the most important one. Communities that trusted you with their knowledge deserve to receive it back before the academic world receives it, in forms they can actually use without a university login.

Community dissemination might mean: a plain-language summary delivered at a hui, an executive summary written for a governance board, a short video or visual summary for whānau, a bilingual summary in te reo Māori and English, or a follow-up conversation with participants about what you found and what it might mean. These are not concessions from academic work. They are the relational completion of the research process, the moment when the knowledge you gathered is returned to the people whose lives it concerns (Allport, Johnson, & Bennett-Huxtable, 2023). Record them in your curriculum vitae and staff profile alongside your publications. Whether they are counted as research outputs varies by faculty and by funder, so check how your faculty treats them rather than assuming.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Match the form to the audience. A governance board needs an executive summary; whānau may be better served by a short video, a visual summary, or a bilingual one-pager; participants may want a conversation rather than a document. Decide this with them, not for them.
- If you are writing for a governance board, write for that audience. A simplified version of your thesis abstract is not the same thing, and boards can tell.
- Choose open access wherever you have the choice. Pay-walled research is structurally inaccessible to many Māori communities, and a login requirement undoes much of what community dissemination is for.
- Where you have a choice between open-access and pay-walled options of comparable standing, the relational argument for open access is strong (Hudson et al., 2023).
- Record what you returned, to whom, and when. That record belongs in your methodology chapter and in your final report to any funder.

{07}
TE WĀNANGA

CONTINUING OBLIGATIONS, WELLBEING, AND FUTURE STEWARDSHIP

Honour continuing obligations after formal completion, including stewardship, wellbeing, repair, and future responsibility.



Te Ara Tika Check | What this phase asks

Principle	Guiding question
Whakapapa	What relationships continue after ethics closure, submission, or publication?
Tika	What obligations remain to data, to participants, to communities, and to future researchers?
Manaakitanga	How are the researcher, community, and future use of the work cared for over time?
Mana	Who safeguards the knowledge and the relationships after the project formally ends, and did the research produce outcomes the communities concerned recognise as equitable?

KIA MANAWANUI
ENDURANCE, LEGITIMACY, AND STANDING

Research undertaken as Māori is not only intellectual work. It is relational and political. It is often deeply personal. It asks researchers to remain accountable to whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori organisations, communities, and future generations, while also meeting institutional expectations of progress and output (Wilson, Mikahere-Hall, & Sherwood, 2021).

That accountability is part of what gives the work its integrity. Every research decision has relational consequences: how a question is framed, how participants are represented, how findings are returned, and how knowledge is stored or shared. These decisions can strengthen trust, or place it under strain, particularly for communities that have experienced generations of extractive research.

Much of this responsibility is invisible to institutional systems. Māori researchers may be asked to advise on tikanga, provide 'the Māori view', mentor tauira, translate concepts across cultural worlds, respond to microaggressions, or support colleagues and communities through moments of difficulty and loss. These responsibilities are not separate from Māori research practice, but they are rarely captured in a workload model, research proposal, or progress report (Kidman, 2019).

Māori doctoral candidates are often stretched beyond their own research focus because there are so few Māori researchers available across the university. Alongside their own kaupapa, they may be pulled into papers, committees, or collaborations simply because Māori expertise is needed. This can be meaningful and affirming, but it can also create an invisible workload that slows progress and places extra pressure on already demanding doctoral or research journeys.

He manawanui names the endurance required to carry this work. It also reminds us that endurance should not be romanticised. Cultural labour must be recognised and relational obligations supported. Māori researchers should not be expected to absorb institutional gaps as personal responsibility.

Māori researchers may also face repeated methodological scrutiny, particularly when working at disciplinary interfaces where Kaupapa Māori approaches are treated as unfamiliar or as needing external validation. That scrutiny can feel personal, but often it reflects structural limits in the institution's ability to recognise Indigenous authority on its own terms (Haitana, Pitama, & Cormack, 2020). The work must be robust. But Māori researchers should not have to defend their identity in order to defend their scholarship.

AUT COMMITMENTS TO MĀORI RESEARCHERS

Māori research excellence does not happen through researcher effort alone. It is enabled by an institution that actively supports the conditions for that excellence.

AUT has made genuine commitments in this space, through investment and the establishment of dedicated roles and resources. This section names those commitments so researchers know what to expect, and what to say when something is not working as it should.

Support pathways only matter when researchers know they exist and feel confident using them. Visibility and access are part of institutional care.

1. Safe Cultural Spaces

- AUT is committed to fostering environments in which Māori researchers can operate confidently as Māori.
- This includes recognition of diverse expressions of Māori identity and respect for reo Māori and tikanga within academic settings.
- Critique without cultural diminishment is the standard. Māori researchers should be able to defend their scholarship without also being required to defend their identity.
- If you experience cultural marginalisation or tokenisation, support pathways are available. Postgraduate students may begin with their Associate Dean (Postgraduate), Te Ara Poutama, or Te Ranga Tukutuku. Staff and students may also contact their Associate Dean (Māori), who provides Māori representation at School Executive level.

Te Whakaruruhau is reviewing koha, gift, and honorarium practice across faculties and is seeking consistency with tikanga, so that researchers are not required to negotiate the same obstacles individually in each faculty. Te Ranga Tukutuku and Te Whakaruruhau will also document instances where institutional policy and tikanga cannot be reconciled, and will raise them through the appropriate governance channels, rather than leaving individual researchers to absorb the cost of the mismatch.

2. Recognition of Cultural Labour

- AUT is committed to recognising cultural labour as legitimate academic contribution.
- This includes mentoring, tikanga guidance, community engagement, representation responsibilities, and advisory roles that sit outside formal job descriptions.
- Cultural labour should be reflected in workload planning conversations. If you are carrying significant cultural obligations that are not visible in your workload allocation, this is a conversation worth having with your Head of School or supervisor.

3. Data Sovereignty Infrastructure

- AUT provides New Zealand-based institutional storage systems for research data, including Māori research data.
- The AUT R: Drive is the recommended primary storage for sensitive Māori research data. Your faculty IT support can help you set this up.
- Questions about data sovereignty, secondary use, and access controls can be directed to your supervisor, faculty IT, or Te Ranga Tukutuku.
- You do not have to navigate digital sovereignty questions alone; there is institutional support available.

4. Access to Ngā Wai o Horotiu

- Ngā Wai o Horotiu (AUT Marae) is available to Māori postgraduate candidates for significant presentations like your Confirmation of Candidature or defence and other significant research milestones.
- Booking pathways exist. Contact your faculty postgraduate administrator to begin the process well in advance.
- Using the marae for your Confirmation of Candidature is not just ceremonially appropriate, it signals to reviewers the cultural grounding of your work.
- The marae is an operational cultural institution, not symbolic architecture. It is there to be used.

5. Culturally Responsive Ethics Processing

- AUTEC includes members with expertise in te reo Māori, tikanga Māori, and te ao Māori to ensure ethics review is culturally informed.
- If you have questions about how your Māori research design will be received by AUTEC, contact the AUTEC Secretariat early, before you draft your application.

6. Clear Procedural Guidance and Funding Access

- AUT provides dedicated support for Māori researchers accessing postgraduate processes, scholarship funding, and external research funding.
- The Scholarships Office, the Graduate Research School, and the AUT Research Office are all available to support you.
- If information is hard to find, ask. These people want to help you succeed.

Māori researchers are not navigating this alone. The support exists. Knowing how to find it and use it is part of what these guidelines are designed to provide.

LONG-TERM STEWARDSHIP
DATA AND MĀTAURANGA

One question must be answered at the completion of every research project: did this research produce equitable outcomes for Māori?

Equity here is not defined by the researcher. It is defined by the communities who participated. A published article is not automatically evidence of benefit. A thesis submitted is not automatically evidence of reciprocity. The mana dimension of Te Ara Tika (Hudson et al., 2010) asks who controlled this research and who received its benefits. Both questions deserve honest answers, not to generate guilt, but to inform how the next project is designed. Strong Māori research builds a track record of equitable outcomes that communities can point to. That track record is the foundation of sustained mandate.

Where researchers leave AUT, retire, or change roles, plans should exist for the responsible transfer of both data and obligations.

The data side is partly provided for. Your AUTEC approval carries retention and disposal conditions, and AUT's research data management expectations include a named custodian and an institutional storage location that survives your departure. Name that custodian in your data management plan at the start of the project, not at the end of it.

The relational side is not currently covered by any institutional process. Commitments made to a whānau, hapū, iwi, or rōpū to return findings, to keep material out of circulation, or to come back and report, do not transfer automatically, and no AUT system tracks them. Until one exists, the responsibility sits with the researcher and the supervisory team. Before you leave, tell your community partners. Tell them who holds the data and how to reach them. Hand over kanohi ki te kanohi where you can. And record the outstanding commitments in writing with your Head of School and with Te Ranga Tukutuku.

Te Ranga Tukutuku regards this as an institutional issue and is raising the establishment of a formal handover process through Te Whakaruruhau. Stewardship is not indefinite ownership. It is careful guardianship over time.

Strong Māori research is remembered not only for its intellectual contribution, but for how it conducted itself at the end. Completion is accountability made visible.

NGĀ KŪRAKURAKU
WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Navigating challenges with confidence and support

The research journey does not always go to plan. When a difficulty begins to affect the kaupapa, the relationships around it or the researcher's wellbeing, dealing with it early usually leaves more room to find a constructive way through. This section sets out the problems researchers most commonly encounter and the people and processes that can help.

Knowing who to approach and how AUT processes work can help researchers act before a problem becomes much harder to resolve.

Begin by naming the issue with the person best placed to help, whether that is a supervisor, Associate Dean, Te Ranga Tukutuku representative or trusted colleague. Keep a brief record of what has happened and when. Most problems are easier to resolve while the relationships are still intact and several options remain.

Cultural or Epistemic Disagreement

Cultural or epistemic disagreement should be anticipated in the project's governance design, not managed informally only after conflict arises. Before research begins, record who can decide matters concerning tikanga, mandate, mātauranga, data, interpretation, attribution, and dissemination; how disagreement will be raised; whose authority applies to each type of decision; and what escalation pathway is available when agreement cannot be reached.

Where disagreement arises, pause the affected activity, return first to the agreed mandate and governance arrangements, and document the issue, the authorities consulted, the decision reached, and any change required to the research. AUTEC approval, disciplinary seniority, or project ownership does not override Māori authority in matters of mandate, tikanga, mātauranga, or Māori data. Where the project's arrangements do not resolve the matter, seek support through the appropriate iwi, hapū, community, faculty, Te Ranga Tukutuku, Te Ara Poutama, AUTEC, data governance, or institutional escalation pathway according to the nature of the issue.

When Māori Authorities Disagree With Each Other

The document treats disagreement as something that arises between Māori authority and the institution. The harder disagreements are the ones inside te ao Māori, and every experienced Māori researcher has been in one.

A kaumātua and a rūnanga take different views. A hapū and a post-settlement governance entity both claim authority over the same kaupapa. Your cultural advisor and your Māori supervisor give you opposite guidance. Two iwi with overlapping interests want different things from the same piece of work.

The first thing to understand is that this is normal. Māori authority is layered, and layered authority produces genuine disputes about who decides. A researcher who treats disagreement as a sign that someone is wrong will make it worse.

The second is that it is not yours to resolve. You are not the arbiter of who holds authority within a community, and attempting to adjudicate is how researchers lose relationships permanently. Your job is to be transparent with each party about what you have been told and by whom, and to wait.

The third is that you should not proceed on the more convenient answer. Where two authorities disagree and you act on the one that lets the research continue, you have chosen a side and you will be seen to have chosen it.

- Say to each party, plainly, that you have received different guidance and that you are not in a position to decide between them. Ask how they would like it resolved.
- Where the disagreement is between your advisor and your supervisor, take it to Te Ranga Tukutuku rather than choosing. That is what the network is for.
- Where it is between iwi or hapū authorities, pause the affected part of the research, record what was said and when, and ask whether there is an established forum through which the parties resolve matters between themselves. There often is, and it is rarely a university.

Methodology Disputes

Supervisory relationships work best when there is shared understanding of the methodological approach from the start. Sometimes, as the research deepens, questions arise about Kaupapa Māori positioning, relational timeframes, or tikanga-based design choices. Most of the time these can be worked through, and doing so makes the research stronger.

Step	How to Approach It
Start with conversation	Name the specific issue in a direct conversation with your supervisor. Come prepared with your reasoning, why this methodological choice is right for this research. Most supervisors want to understand and support your work. Give them the opportunity to engage.
Seek additional perspective	If the conversation isn't progressing, contact your Associate Dean (Postgraduate) for guidance, or reach out to the Office of Māori Advancement. This is not escalation; it is using the support network that exists for exactly this purpose.
Consider co-supervision	A co-supervisor with Kaupapa Māori expertise can bring additional methodological understanding into the supervisory team. This often resolves the issue and strengthens the research design at the same time.
Formal support processes	If a significant breakdown in the supervisory relationship occurs, AUT has formal processes to support resolution. AUTSA (autsa@aut.ac.nz) can advise you on your options. The goal of these processes is resolution, not conflict.
Know your options	As a last resort, you have the right to request your Confirmation of Candidature or thesis be examined without supervisor sign-off. This is a significant step and should be discussed with your Associate Dean first, but the option exists, and knowing it exists can give you confidence to have difficult conversations from a position of strength.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Keep brief notes after supervision meetings, what was discussed and agreed. This is good research practice generally, and helps if you ever need to explain a pattern to a third party.
- Look up your faculty's Associate Dean (Postgraduate) contact now, before you need it. Having the name and email ready is useful preparation.
- Contact Te Ranga Tukutuku early if a supervisory challenge is affecting your research. They can help you think through your options before you decide how to proceed.

Community Withdrawal

When a community withdraws its support, the effect on the researcher and the project can be significant. The withdrawal is also the exercise of the authority the research committed to respect. What matters now is how the researcher responds.

Timing	What to Do
Immediately	Pause all data collection and engagement with that community. Do not attempt to work around the withdrawal by approaching individual members separately.
Understand why	Request a conversation, in person if at all possible, to understand what happened. Go with humility, not defensiveness. Listen completely before you respond.
Assess your data	Discuss with your supervisor and Associate Dean (Postgraduate) what the withdrawal means for data already collected. In some cases, data collected under an earlier mandate may need to be set aside or destroyed. This is a hard but necessary conversation.
Document and disclose	The withdrawal, its reasons, and how you responded must be documented in your progress reports and may need to be disclosed to your examiners. Transparency about this demonstrates research integrity, not failure.
Reconsider the scope	A withdrawal is also an opportunity to ask whether the research question needs to change, whether another community might be more appropriate, or whether the research can proceed on a different basis with genuinely new consent.

Honouring a withdrawal protects the cultural integrity of the research, even when it changes the project profoundly. The community is exercising its authority, and the researcher's responsibility is to respond in a way that respects it.

Funder Pressure | When Scope Changes Compromise Mandate

Grant funding can come with conditions attached after the fact, requests to expand scope, change methodology, include additional communities, or produce outputs that were not in the original design. When those changes touch Māori communities or mātauranga, they require a new mandate conversation. Funders do not have the authority to override that.

Step	Action
First	Do not agree to scope changes by return email. Ask for time. The deadline for your response to a funder is almost always more flexible than they imply.
Assess the change	Does the requested change require engagement with communities or knowledge that was not covered by your original mandate? If yes, that is a new mandate conversation, not an administrative amendment.
Return to community	Contact your governance partners before agreeing to anything. Explain the funder's request. Ask whether they are willing to extend mandate to cover the new scope. Document their response.
Negotiate with the funder	Go back to the funder with your community's position. If they will not agree to a timeline that allows proper consultation, that funder may not be the right fit for this research. Protecting mandate is not negotiable.
Escalate if needed	If a funder is making demands that compromise the integrity of Māori research, contact Te Ranga Tukutuku and the Research Engagement Manager, Māori (AUT Research Office). You should not be navigating this alone.

DATA MISHANDLING
WHEN DATA HAS BEEN MISUSED

Data mishandling includes: data stored on unapproved systems, data shared without consent, data used beyond the scope of the original agreement, or data accessed by someone not authorised to do so. When it involves Māori data, the harm reaches past individuals to the communities and relationships behind them.

Step	Action
Stop immediately	Cease the use of the affected data until the situation is understood and resolved.
Assess the breach	What data was affected? Who has accessed it? Has it been shared beyond AUT? Is it still in an unapproved location?
Notify your supervisor and Associate Dean (Postgraduate)	This is not optional. Data breaches involving human participants have reporting obligations under AUT policy and potentially under the Privacy Act 2020.
Notify the community	Communities whose data has been mishandled deserve to know. This is one of the hardest conversations in research. It is also one of the most important. How you handle a breach matters as much as the breach itself.
Contact AUT's Privacy Officer	AUT has a designated Privacy Officer who handles breaches involving personal data.

Discovering and disclosing a data breach, rather than concealing it, is an act of research integrity. The harm of concealment is always greater than the harm of honest disclosure.

Cultural Labour | When It Affects Your Capacity to Progress

Many Māori researchers find themselves contributing significantly to their department's cultural life, advising on tikanga, providing Māori perspectives in meetings, mentoring Māori students, reviewing work that touches on Māori content. This contribution is valuable. It can also become unsustainable if it is not recognised and managed (Love & Hall, 2026).

Cultural labour becomes invisible when it is not named. Recording it is what makes workload and recognition possible to argue about.

Situation	Response
Name what is happening	Identify specifically what you are being asked to do, how often, and what it is costing your research time. 'I have been asked to review five pieces of work touching Māori content this month, in addition to my research' is concrete and discussable.
Have the conversation	Bring the issue to your Head of School or supervisor as a workload discussion, not a complaint. Reference the AUT commitments, recognition of cultural labour is part of AUT's stated commitment to Māori researchers. Most leaders respond well to a clear, specific conversation.
Use your support network	Te Ranga Tukutuku can help you frame this conversation and think through your options. You do not have to approach it alone.
If unsafety is the issue	If you are experiencing behaviour that feels like marginalisation, harassment, or cultural disrespect, not just workload pressure, seek support early. For students, AUTSA (advocacy@autsa.org.nz) can advise you on your options, and Student Counselling is available on all campuses. For staff, raise the concern through your Head of School, Associate Dean (Māori), Te Kaiwhakatere, People and Culture, Office of Māori Advancement, AUT Ombudsman or your Union. The issue does not need to reach crisis point before it is named.

Naming this workload clearly gives the institution something it can respond to. It is an honest account of what the research is carrying, and it can open a more useful conversation about capacity and recognition.

Progress Difficulties | When You Cannot Say You Are Struggling

Māori researchers can experience isolation, imposter syndrome and stalled progress at every career stage, yet may be reluctant to say when the work has become difficult. Research environments were not designed with us in mind, and the cultural responsibilities carried alongside the formal work often remain invisible. In that context, asking for help can feel as though it confirms doubts that were already there.

Difficulty progressing is not evidence that a researcher lacks the ability to do the work. It may instead show that the support, time or institutional conditions around the research need to change. Understanding which of these is happening makes it much easier to find the right response.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Raise concerns early with the person or pathway most relevant to your role. For research students, this may be your supervisor, programme leader, Associate Dean (Postgraduate), or faculty postgraduate office. For staff researchers, this may be your research lead, Head of School, Associate Dean (Research), Associate Dean (Māori), Te Kaiwhakatere, or another trusted senior colleague. The earlier the conversation happens, the more options exist.
- If you need time away for tangihanga, whānau obligations, cultural responsibilities, illness, or your own wellbeing, use the formal processes available to you. Students may need to apply for leave of absence or an extension. Staff may need to discuss workload, leave, research timelines, or project delivery expectations with their manager or research lead. Informal silence rarely protects you; clear communication and documentation do.
- Contact your faculty's Te Ranga Tukutuku representatives before things are critical. Building that relationship while things are manageable means you have somewhere to turn when they are not.
- Seek out research community and peer connection. This may include postgraduate peer groups, Graduate Research School development opportunities, faculty research events, writing retreats, Te Ranga Tukutuku hui, Māori research networks, mentoring relationships, or informal writing and accountability groups. Isolation can affect Māori researchers at every stage, from Master's study through to senior academic work. Finding others matters.
- Use the wellbeing support available to you. Students can access Student Counselling and other student wellbeing services. Staff can access AUT's staff wellbeing support, Employee Assistance Programme, People and Culture pathways, or trusted leadership support. Burnout, anxiety, isolation, and imposter syndrome are not signs of weakness. They are signs you have been carrying something heavy for a long time.

THE HIGHER DOCTORATE
A PATHWAY FOR SENIOR MĀORI SCHOLARS

This section is for established Māori academics and long-serving staff who have built a substantial body of published work over their careers.

What Is a Higher Doctorate?

AUT awards two Higher Doctorates: the Doctor of Literature (DLitt) and the Doctor of Science (DSc). A Higher Doctorate is not an enrolled programme of study. It is awarded for a substantial collection of existing published work that constitutes an original, distinguished, and sustained contribution to scholarship.

Award	Scope
Doctor of Literature (DLitt)	For original contribution of excellence in philosophical, social, cultural, historical, or linguistic knowledge. This can encompass mātauranga Māori, tikanga, Kaupapa Māori theory, and Indigenous knowledge scholarship.
Doctor of Science (DSc)	For original contribution of excellence in a branch of science considered to have international and authoritative standing. This may apply to Māori researchers in health, environmental science, or other scientific domains.

Eligibility

- Must be an AUT graduate, a current long-standing academic staff member, or a person with a long-standing connection and contribution to AUT
- Minimum of 10 years must have passed since the qualifying degree was awarded
- The work submitted must not have been submitted for any other degree or diploma

What to Submit

Applications are submitted to the Dean of Graduate Research School with an application fee, and must include:

- Curriculum vitae including the date of the qualifying degree, positions held, honours and publications
- Copies of the published work on which the application is based
- A table of contents with full bibliographical references
- A statement confirming no work was previously submitted for another qualification
- A proposal of up to 3,000 words describing how and why the work meets the requirements for a Higher Doctorate

For Māori academics whose body of work spans mātauranga Māori, tikanga, Kaupapa Māori methodology, Indigenous data sovereignty, or related fields, this is a genuine pathway to recognition of lifetime scholarly contribution. The DLitt is particularly suited to this work.

Senior Māori scholars may have substantial bodies of work that qualify for higher doctoral recognition, but the pathway is often not well known or actively promoted.

Contact the Dean of Graduate Research School or Te Ranga Tukutuku if you believe your body of work may qualify. The application process is not trivial, but it is designed exactly for senior scholars who have made the kind of sustained, original contribution that many Māori academics have quietly been building for decades.

HE KŌRERO KI NGĀ PŪKENGA
FOR SENIOR MĀORI ACADEMICS

Most of this document speaks about senior Māori academics rather than to them. You appear in it as the cultural advisor, the co-supervisor, the reo-competent examiner, the person on the governance rōpū. All of that is real and none of it is the whole of your work.

Some of what follows will be familiar. It is written down because it is rarely written down.

The load does not reduce with seniority

It changes shape. The requests become institutional rather than local, they arrive from further away, and they are harder to decline because the person asking has more standing and the cost of refusing is visible. Meanwhile the people who could absorb some of it are the same few names.

Declining is not the problem. Most senior academics can decline. The problem is that declining moves the request to a more junior Māori colleague who is less able to refuse it. This is why individual boundary-setting does not solve a structural allocation, and why the conversation belongs with your Head of School and your Associate Dean rather than in your own diary.

› Where you decline something that will simply move down the line, say that when you decline. Naming the displacement is more useful than absorbing it.

Building capability rather than carrying it

The most valuable thing an experienced Māori researcher can do with a grant is fund somebody else onto it. Named co-investigator roles, funded doctoral scholarships attached to a project, and co-authorship that is real rather than courtesy all move capability in a way that advisory work does not. Advisory load is not inheritable. A research team is.

› When you are asked to advise on a project, consider whether the more useful answer is to ask for a role on it, with time and money attached, and a junior Māori researcher alongside you.

Making cultural labour count

Cultural labour is usually treated as evidence of citizenship rather than evidence of research. It can be both, and the difference is documentation.

Keep a record of advisory roles, mandate work, community relationships sustained over years,

reo Māori outputs, and reports written for iwi rather than journals. Where those shaped research outcomes, say so in your evidence portfolio and in promotion applications rather than listing them as service. Ask your faculty how it treats community and iwi outputs before you assume they will not count, and where the answer is that they do not, that is a matter for Te Whakaruruhau rather than something to accept quietly.

Succession

Much of what senior Māori academics hold is undocumented and personal. The relationships, the knowledge of which authority sits where, the history of what was promised to whom. When someone retires or moves, that goes with them and the next researcher starts again.

- Where you hold a long relationship on behalf of the University, introduce a second person to it before you need to. Where you hold knowledge of how a community prefers to be approached, write down what can properly be written down.

When you are the one who is asked

Advisory guidance can be misused. A researcher can hear what they wanted to hear, or represent your involvement as endorsement of something you did not see.

- Put your advice in writing where it matters, even briefly. Say what you were asked, what you said, and what you did not advise on. It protects the researcher as well as you, and it is what you would ask of them.

Research Timeframes | Extensions and Leave

The Handbook specifies maximum completion timeframes. For Māori research requiring extended community engagement, understanding these limits, and the protections available, is critical.

Maximum Timeframes

Programme	Timeframe
PhD full-time	Expected completion: 3 years. Maximum: 4 years.
PhD part-time	Expected completion: 6 years. Maximum: 8 years.
Professional doctorate (thesis component) full-time	Minimum: 2 years. Maximum: 3 years.
Professional doctorate (thesis component) part-time	Minimum: 4 years. Maximum: 6 years.
Master's research component (90/120 points)	Normally 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time. Maximum set by programme regulations (see the Academic Calendar).

Extensions

Extensions are not automatic. They are applied for through your supervisor and your Faculty Postgraduate Office, and the faculty approves extensions of up to six months for full-time candidates and three to twelve months for part-time candidates. Normally only one extension is permitted.. Extensions must be applied for before the deadline, not after. A pattern of multiple extension requests may trigger the unsatisfactory progress process.

Leave of Absence

Formal leave of absence is available, and time spent on approved leave does not count toward your maximum completion timeframe.

It is not intended for short absences. A week away for a tangihanga or a whānau obligation is managed through your normal supervisory arrangements: tell your supervisors, agree how you will pick the work back up, and note it in your next progress report. Doctoral candidates can normally take up to three weeks' leave a year in addition to the Christmas closure. This does not stop the clock. Leave of absence is for a substantial step away from the research, normally for at least one month and no more than twelve months at a time. Where you need that, for sustained whānau obligations, health, bereavement, or other significant circumstances, formal leave protects your timeline in a way that informal absence does not.

Apply before you go, not after. Leave is approved through your faculty postgraduate office on the recommendation of your supervisor. It can be backdated only in exceptional circumstances, and by no more than two months. International doctoral candidates can take no more than three months' leave in any 12-month period without risk to their student visa; check with International Student Support before applying.. Multiple leave requests without adequate explanation can trigger the unsatisfactory progress process, so set out the circumstances clearly at the time rather than leaving a pattern to be interpreted later.

Informal absence does not protect you. If you stop engaging with your supervisors without formal leave, the unsatisfactory progress process may be initiated, even if your absence was for entirely legitimate reasons. Always formalise time away through your faculty postgraduate office.

Unsatisfactory Progress, What Triggers It

The following will trigger the unsatisfactory progress process, which can ultimately lead to withdrawal from your programme:

- Failure to maintain regular contact with your supervisory team
- Multiple leave of absence requests without adequate explanation
- Non-submission or unsatisfactory submission of progress reports
- Exceeding maximum timeframes
- Failure to submit Confirmation of Candidature within required timeframes
- Actions noted in a Specific Progress Plan not completed by due dates

For Māori researchers, community obligations and relational tempo can affect all of the above. The protection is documentation and communication, not silence. A progress report or milestone declaration that clearly records engagement undertaken, hui held, governance discussions, and deliberate relational pacing is a professional record that demonstrates method, not delay.

The same applies to funded research. Where a milestone declaration is required to support a subcontract invoice or a funder report, as is standard practice in some faculties, record the relational work in the same terms. Mandate hui, governance consultation, and community engagement are deliverables. Naming them as such is how funders and institutions learn to read relational pace as method rather than as slippage.

GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Graduate Research School runs a series of development opportunities that many Māori researchers do not use, either because they do not know about them or because they do not see them as relevant to their work. They are.

Opportunity	Why It Matters
Doctoral Induction	Run by the Graduate Research School for new doctoral students. Covers processes, milestones, and resources. Attendance is strongly recommended. You will receive an invitation once you have an offer.
Writers' Retreat	Graduate Research School facilitated, off-campus, with academic writing experts. All costs covered including meals. Apply when invited. Preference given to those who haven't attended before. Apply the moment you receive the invitation.
Postgraduate Research Symposium	Annual event where students present their work. Mimics academic conference process. Building this kind of visibility early matters for Māori researchers in a system that underrepresents them.
3 Minute Thesis Competition	Significant prizes. Develops your ability to explain your research to non-specialist audiences, a skill that matters for community engagement, not just academic performance.
Research Week	Annual event for cross-disciplinary networking and dissemination. Building your research network early is a career investment.
Postgraduate Workshops	Year-round through eLab. Covers research skills, including writing and methods. Accessible to all enrolled research students.

KIA HAUMARU
RESEARCHER WELLBEING

For Māori early career researchers and mid-career academics, isolation can be less visible than it is for doctoral candidates but is equally real. Without the structured support network of a doctoral programme, the expectation of independence can prevent Māori researchers from seeking the collegial and institutional support they need. Te Ranga Tukutuku is not only for doctoral researchers.

The rest of this document asks researchers to carry significant academic, cultural and relational responsibilities. That work cannot be sustained without care for the person doing it. Looking after your wellbeing is part of protecting the research and the relationships that depend on you.

Researcher wellbeing can deteriorate quietly, especially when candidates feel responsible to supervisors, whānau, and communities at once. Peer connection can be a crucial protective factor.

He taonga tō hauora. Your wellbeing is a treasure.
The research cannot be done well if you are not well.

Researcher Safety

Where fieldwork takes you into participants' homes, to isolated locations, onto a marae for an overnight stay, or travelling alone, AUTEC will often require a researcher safety plan as a condition of approval. Prepare it with your supervisor before you submit rather than in response to a condition. It is a short document and it will save you weeks.

It should cover who knows where you are and when you are expected back, how you will make contact, what you will do if a situation becomes unsafe, and how you will debrief afterwards. For Māori researchers, the debrief clause matters as much as the location clause. Kaupapa close to home carry emotional and cultural load, and hearing difficult kōrero alone in someone's kitchen is a different experience from conducting an interview in a university room. Name in the plan who you will talk to afterwards, and make sure that person knows they are named.

The Particular Demands of Māori Research

Māori research carries demands that other research pathways do not. Alongside the intellectual rigour of a PhD, Māori researchers are often managing community relationships, mandate conversations, and the translation work of operating across knowledge systems. Many are also the first in their whānau to undertake doctoral study.

AUT has invested in support structures because it recognises that these demands are real. Using that support and protecting your own capacity are necessary parts of completing the work well.

The Cultural Load Is Real, and It Has a Name

Cultural labour, described earlier in this part and in Kia Manawanui, does not stay constant across a career.

For established Māori academics, the cultural labour burden frequently intensifies with seniority rather than diminishing. Professor-level Māori researchers may find themselves called on across the institution: to advise on tikanga for events, papers, and policies; to represent the Māori view in faculty and institutional decision-making; to mentor doctoral students and early career researchers across multiple departments; and to carry relationship obligations to external communities that extend well beyond any single research project. None of this appears in standard workload models (Love & Hall, 2026). Naming it and raising it with Academic and Research Managers is not a complaint. It is the precondition for a sustainable Māori research career.

This labour often goes unseen and uncompensated, but its effects accumulate across a research career (Smith, Le Grice, & Fonua, 2022).

Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994) is a useful frame for checking your own state across a long project. Ask yourself honestly, and more than once: taha tinana – am I sleeping, eating, moving? taha hinengaro – am I thinking clearly, or only reacting? taha whānau – are the relationships that sustain me being fed, or only drawn on? taha wairua – am I still connected to why this kaupapa matters? A whare with one wall carrying the whole load will eventually give way. The value of the frame is that it tells you which wall.

Strategy	How to Use It
Name it in your workload discussion	When you meet with your supervisor, Head of School, or manager, name the cultural labour you are carrying. Use AUT's commitments as a reference. Cultural labour should be recognised in workload allocation.
Know your limits	You are not obligated to provide cultural guidance to every colleague who asks. 'I am not able to take that on right now' is a complete sentence. Protecting your time and energy is an act of kaitiakitanga toward yourself.
Document it	If you are regularly performing cultural labour that is not reflected in your role description or workload, document it. This creates a record you can use in promotion discussions and workload negotiations.

Support That Exists, Use It

These services are available before a situation reaches crisis. Using them early can make it easier to address a problem while it is still manageable.

Resource	What It Offers
Student Counselling and Mental Health	Free, confidential counselling on all three campuses. City: Mōwai, Level 4, WQ Building. North: AE112. South: MB107a and MB107b, ph 09 921 9292. Online counselling also available. You do not need to be in crisis to attend. Going when things are difficult but manageable is good timing.
Student Medical Centre	Free nurse consultations on all three campuses. City: Mōwai, Level 4, WQ Building, ph 09 921 9992. North: AE107, ph 09 921 9998. South: MB109, ph 09 921 9992. Burnout, chronic stress, and sleep disruption have physical consequences. A conversation with a doctor is reasonable.
Te Pou Māori, Māori Liaison Services	Practical support and cultural connection for Māori students navigating the institution. City: WB304. North: AE113. South: ME101. Email: maori@aut.ac.nz
Te Ranga Tukutuku	Your research network. Not just for research problems, but for the ongoing experience of not being alone in this.
Graduate Research School peer groups and Mix n' Mingles	Student-led peer groups and social events run by the Graduate Research School. The isolation of doctoral research is one of its most consistent harms. Connection with other research students, especially other Māori research students, matters.
Writers' Retreat	Fully funded retreat with writing time and academic writing support. All costs covered. Apply when invited. It provides dedicated time away from the normal pressure and is worth prioritising.

When to Seek Help Sooner Rather Than Later

There is no specific threshold that determines when to seek support. But these are signs worth taking seriously:

- You have stopped enjoying any part of your research and cannot remember the last time you did
- You are regularly working more than 50 hours a week and not making progress
- You are experiencing persistent sleep disruption, loss of appetite, or physical exhaustion
- You find yourself avoiding supervision meetings
- You feel disconnected from the communities your research is meant to serve
- You are having thoughts that your research, your presence at AUT, or your identity as a researcher is a mistake

Any of these warrants a conversation, with a counsellor, with Te Ranga Tukutuku, with a trusted colleague, with your whānau. You do not have to manage them alone and you do not have to have hit a wall before you ask for help.

A Note on Imposter Syndrome | Belonging in the Academy in Māori Research

Imposter syndrome, the persistent feeling that you do not belong, that you have fooled people into thinking you are capable, that you will eventually be found out, can be experienced by Māori doctoral candidates. It may be particularly difficult for researchers who are reconnecting with their culture through their work, who are the first in their whānau at this level, or who are working in disciplines that have historically excluded Māori epistemologies.

Imposter syndrome often grows from being in an environment where few people share your background or your methodology. The feeling may be common, but it is not reliable evidence of your capability or the quality of your scholarship.

What helps, beyond counselling and peer connection, is accumulating specific evidence of your own competence over time. Keep a record of positive supervisor feedback, publications, presentations, community acknowledgements and moments where your knowledge made a difference. This is not about proving yourself to others. It gives you something concrete to return to when the doubt is loudest.

Looking After Each Other

Individual wellbeing and collective wellbeing are not separate in te ao Māori. How you care for yourself is connected to how you show up for others, your research community, your tauira, your whānau.

If you notice a colleague, tauira or fellow researcher struggling, reach out in a way that does not ask them to explain everything at once. Sometimes a simple message that lets someone know they have been seen is enough to open the door.

HEI WHAKATŪPATO
COMMON PITFALLS

Identified to strengthen foresight, not limit ambition

Difficulties in Māori research often emerge where different obligations pull the project in competing directions. Mandate may not move at the pace of a funding deadline, institutional timeframes may not allow for relational work, and the budget may not reflect what tikanga requires.

This section names the pressure points that repeatedly catch even experienced researchers. Recognising them early protects the kaupapa, the relationships around it and the researchers who follow.

1. Securing Mandate Too Late

Grant timelines are often compressed. Iwi, hapū and Māori organisational processes are not. Applications that seek support in the final weeks before submission often fail to secure durable backing, and risk damaging relationships for the researchers who come after. Mandate must precede submission, not follow it.

2. Under-Budgeting Tikanga

Koha, hospitality, travel for kanohi ki te kanohi engagement, venue costs, catering, governance honoraria, these are not incidental expenses. They are core components of relational accountability. Projects that under-budget tikanga place pressure on relationships and, in some cases, transfer costs onto communities. The true cost of operating in te ao Māori must be in the budget.

3. Assuming Ethics Approval Equals Mandate

An AUTEC approval letter does not replace iwi endorsement. It does not substitute for governance oversight. It does not legitimise research in the absence of relational mandate. Both pathways must be satisfied, and they are not substitutes for one another.

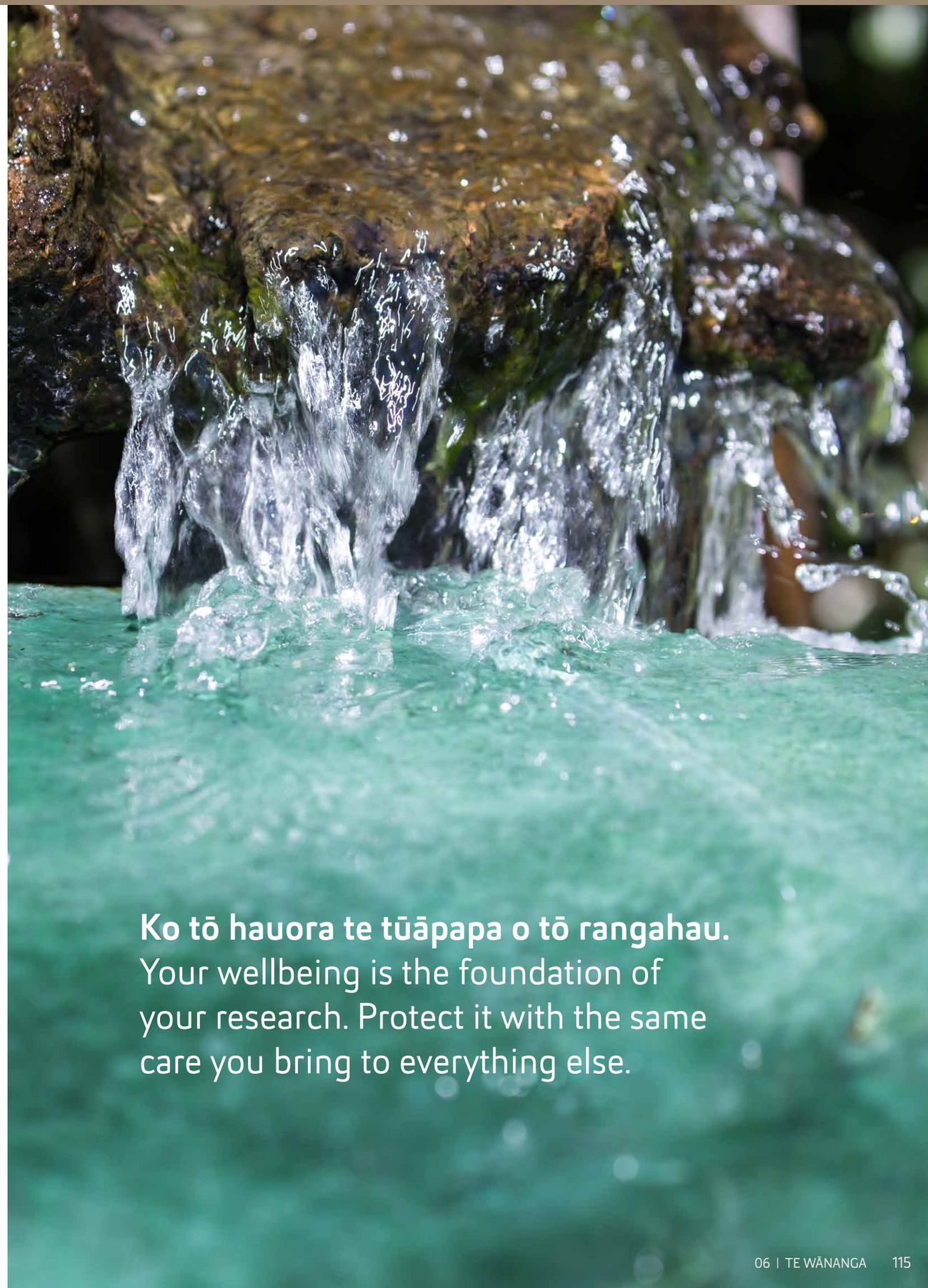
4. Publishing Without Returning Findings | Community Return

Where findings are not returned to communities before public dissemination, trust can be eroded in ways that take years to repair. The community that trusted you with their knowledge deserves to receive it back in a form they can use, before the academic world receives it.

5. Failing to Clarify Intellectual Property Early

Research involving mātauranga, community knowledge, or co-developed intellectual contributions must address intellectual property ownership at the outset. Unresolved questions around data ownership, co-authorship, commercialisation rights, and AUT Ventures obligations can create significant tension later. These conversations are far easier at the beginning, and they signal to partners that you take their authority seriously.

These are recurring structural risks rather than isolated mistakes. Planning for them strengthens the research and reduces the likelihood that communities or future researchers will carry the consequences.



NGĀ RAUEMI TAUTOKO

PRACTICAL TOOLS, TEMPLATES, AND APPENDICES

The following tools sit alongside Te Ara Rangahau Māori. They are a practical kete for researchers, supervisors and institutional leaders to draw on.

SUPERVISOR COMPANION GUIDE 117

APPROACH LETTER TEMPLATE 120

ETHICS PREPARATION CHECKLIST 124

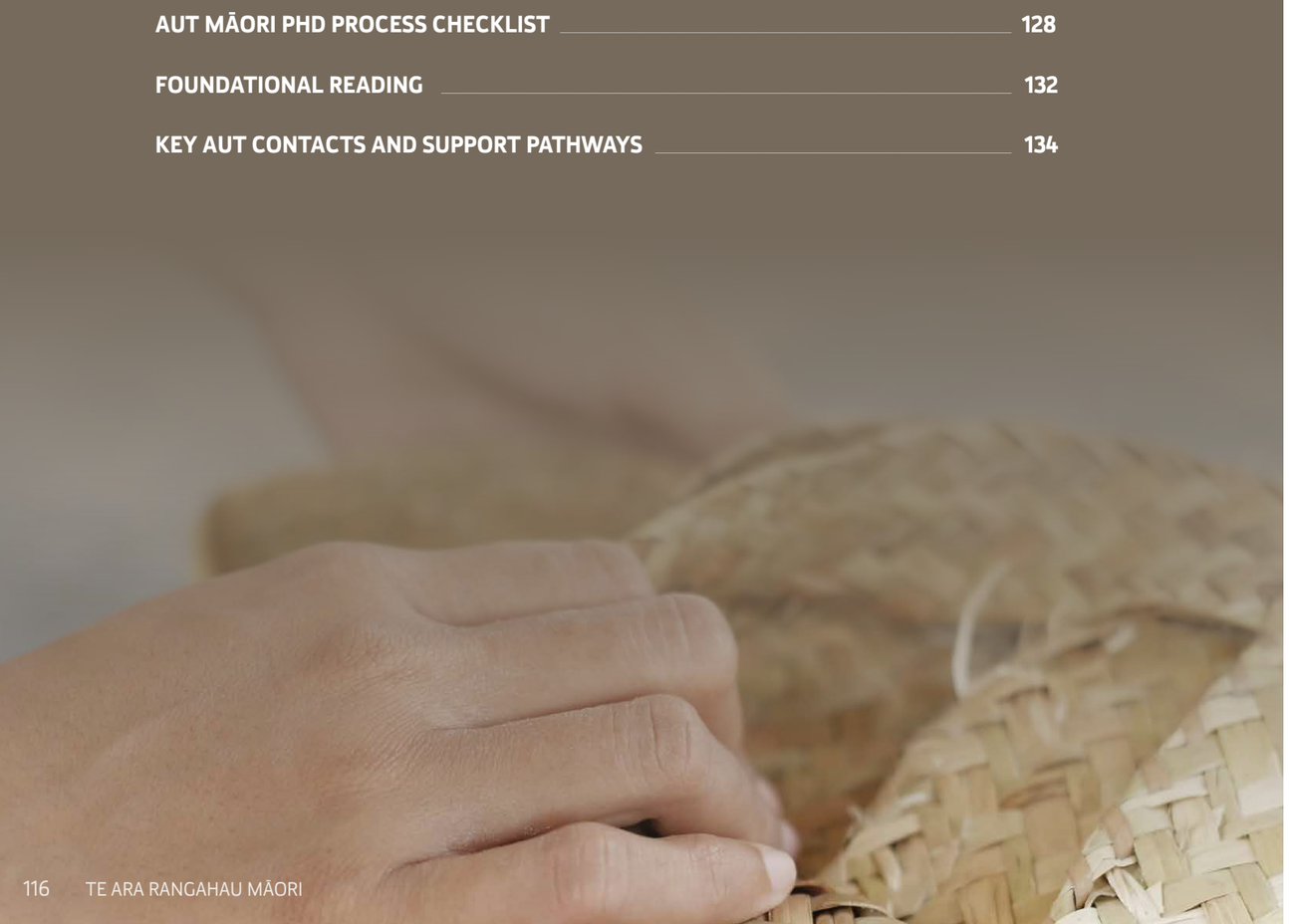
FUNDING PREPARATION CHECKLIST 126

FUNDING PATHWAYS 127

AUT MĀORI PHD PROCESS CHECKLIST 128

FOUNDATIONAL READING 132

KEY AUT CONTACTS AND SUPPORT PATHWAYS 134



SUPERVISOR COMPANION GUIDE

WHAT SUPERVISORS NEED TO UNDERSTAND, AND HOW TO PROVIDE IT

Supervising Māori Doctoral Researchers | A Companion Guide

These guidelines are written for Māori researchers. This appendix is written for the people who supervise them. It exists because the single greatest structural influence on a Māori doctoral researcher's experience, more than institutional policy, more than funding, more than peer networks, is the quality and orientation of their supervision.

Good supervision of Māori research requires more than disciplinary expertise. It requires understanding what Māori research actually is, why it operates the way it does, and what supervisors need to do differently, or stop doing, to genuinely support it.

What you need to understand about Māori research

Māori research operates within a different temporal logic from most Western academic research. Mandate conversations take months. Community relationships require maintenance before, during, and after data collection. Wānanga cannot be rushed. Tangihanga interrupt timelines. These are not inefficiencies or project management failures. They are the method (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020).

A supervisor who treats relational work as delay is a supervisor who does not understand what they are supervising.

Tikanga is not an ethical layer applied over a conventional methodology. In Kaupapa Māori research, tikanga is constitutive: it determines what counts as right conduct, what methods are appropriate, who holds authority to authorise the research, and how findings must be returned. A supervisor who asks a Māori doctoral candidate to justify why tikanga is relevant to their research has asked the wrong question. The right question is: how is tikanga being enacted in this specific research context (Mead, 2003).

The cultural labour your Māori doctoral candidates carry is real and often invisible. Alongside their research, they are likely advising colleagues on tikanga, mentoring other Māori students, serving as the representative Māori presence in departmental meetings, translating institutional decisions for communities, and responding to requests for 'the Māori view'. This labour does not appear in their workload allocation. It costs them time, energy, and sometimes emotional wellbeing. Acknowledging it explicitly in supervision conversations is not optional courtesy; it is part of your responsibility as their supervisor (Kidman, 2019).

WHAT GOOD SUPERVISION OF MĀORI RESEARCH LOOKS LIKE

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this

- Have an explicit conversation about methodology at the start of the supervisory relationship, not just about methods. Ask: what is the epistemological ground of this research? How does tikanga govern your approach? What does mandate look like in your specific context? These questions signal that you understand the terrain.
- Build relational time into your shared understanding of the research timeline. When your candidate's progress report shows slower-than-expected academic progress because of community engagement, do not treat this as a flag. Read the relational engagement record they are keeping and sign the report with a note that frames it as method, not delay.

Hei Whakatinana | How to enact this continued

- Learn the basics of Kaupapa Māori methodology, not to become an expert, but to be able to assess whether your candidate's methodological reasoning is rigorous rather than simply unfamiliar. Smith (1999), Hudson et al. (2010), and Bishop (1996) are starting points.
- If you do not have Kaupapa Māori expertise, say so honestly and bring in a co-supervisor who does. This is not a failure of your supervisory capability. It is recognition that Māori research requires specific methodological knowledge that not all supervisors hold. A co-supervisor from Te Ara Poutama, Te Ipukarea, Taupua Waiora or with Kaupapa Māori expertise will strengthen the research and protect your candidate.
- Ask your candidate what they need from you, not just academically but relationally. Some Māori candidates need a supervisor who will advocate loudly for their kaupapa in departmental settings. Others need someone who will hold the institutional line while they do community work. Others need space to develop their own scholarly voice without being asked to constantly justify their methodology. Ask. Then listen.
- Protect your candidate from having to explain Kaupapa Māori methodology to every person who questions it. When a reviewer or examiner panel member asks why tikanga is relevant, your candidate should not be required to conduct a doctoral-level seminar on Indigenous epistemology in a moment of examination pressure. Part of your supervisory role is preparing them for this, and part of it is advocating for them when the scrutiny crosses from rigorous engagement into structural disrespect. Choose examiners carefully – seek support and advice.

What supervisors should do

! Ask Māori doctoral candidates whether their methodology is appropriate for their research question and executed with rigour, not whether it resembles something more familiar to you (Haitana, Pitama, & Cormack, 2020).

! Stop treating tikanga obligations as optional or negotiable relative to funding deadlines. If a funder's timeline does not allow genuine community consultation, the timeline needs to change. A supervisor who pressures a candidate to compromise mandate in order to meet an external deadline is asking them to choose between their research integrity and their institutional survival. That is not a choice you should be putting in front of them.

! Stop absorbing cultural translation work into the supervisory relationship without naming it. When your candidate spends significant time explaining te ao Māori to you as well as conducting their research, that is additional intellectual labour that should be acknowledged (Love & Hall, 2026), and that should be prompting you to invest more in your own learning outside of supervision meetings.

! Stop assuming that completing institutional ethics approval is equivalent to obtaining Māori mandate. These are separate processes that must both be satisfied. A supervisor who treats AUTEC approval as sufficient endorsement of Māori research has not understood what mandate is (Hudson et al., 2010).

When things go wrong

If a community withdraws support mid-project, your first responsibility is to support your candidate in responding with integrity, not to find a way to protect the research timeline. Community withdrawal is not a failure of project management. It is the exercise of exactly the authority the research framework is built to respect. Help your candidate understand and honour that.

If a methodological dispute arises between you and your candidate about Kaupapa Māori positioning, seek external expertise before the dispute hardens. Te Ara Poutama and Te Ranga Tukutuku exist for this purpose. A methodological disagreement that cannot be resolved through genuine scholarly dialogue may be a signal that the supervisory team needs restructuring, not that the candidate's methodology is wrong.

If your candidate is struggling, with progress, with isolation, with the cultural load, with imposter syndrome, name what you are observing and create space for them to respond honestly. Do not wait for them to come to you. Many Māori doctoral candidates are less likely to seek help than their peers, not because they need it less but because asking for help in a system not designed for them can feel like confirming everything they fear.

The bigger picture

Supervising Māori doctoral research well is one of the most direct contributions an academic can make to Māori research excellence at AUT and in the academy more broadly. The researchers you support will in turn supervise the next generation. The methodological rigour you model, or fail to model, will shape how that next generation understands what Māori research can be.

The Māori researchers coming through the academy now are doing extraordinary work under conditions that are still far from equitable. They deserve supervisors who understand what they are doing, who will advocate for their kaupapa, who will hold the institutional line while they build the relational foundations their research requires. That is the standard to aim for.

If you are unsure whether your supervision practice meets this standard, the best thing you can do is ask your current and former Māori doctoral candidates directly. Their answers will tell you more than any checklist. And if you want support in developing your supervisory practice for Māori research, Te Ranga Tukutuku and Te Ara Poutama are available to you. This work belongs to all of us.



APPROACH LETTER TEMPLATE

A TEMPLATE FOR FIRST WRITTEN CONTACT WITH A GOVERNANCE BODY

Many iwi, hapū and Māori organisations publish their own guidance on how they want to be approached about research. Where that guidance exists, follow it. Where it does not, make your first approach by email or by phone, with the details of the project included, so that people can see what is being asked of them before they decide whether to take it further. Either way the same things need to be said, clearly and in a way that makes it easy for people to say no. This appendix gives you a starting point for that.

It is a template, not a form. Adapt the order, the length and the language to the people you are writing to, and cut anything that does not apply. A rūnanga board secretary and a kaumātua who has agreed to read something for you need very different letters. What matters is that all of the elements below are answered somewhere, because these are the questions the people receiving it will be asking whether or not you have answered them.

Before you send it

- Check whether the iwi, hapū or organisation publishes its own guidance on how it wants to be approached about research. Where it does, follow that rather than this template. Then confirm you are writing to the right level of authority. Iwi, hapū and organisational authority are not interchangeable, and a supportive individual is not a governance body. See Locating Authority Correctly in Phase 02.
- Take the draft to your cultural advisor. This is one of the things they are for. See Your Cultural Advisor in Phase 01.
- If you have a personal or whakapapa connection, use it to obtain an introduction to the right forum, not to substitute for it. Say in the letter who has supported you to make the approach.
- Do not let the letter be your only contact. Follow it with a phone call, and offer to come in person. The letter opens the door; kanohi ki te kanohi is what walks through it.
- Keep it to two pages. Put the detail in a one-page plain-language summary attached behind it.

The template

Text in square brackets is for you to replace. The italic notes explain what each part is doing and should be deleted.

[Date]

[Name and role of the person you are writing to]

[Rūnanga / board / trust / rōpū]

[Address]

Tēnā koe [name] / Tēnā koutou katoa

Mihi and introduction

[Three or four lines. Introduce yourself as a person before you introduce yourself as a researcher. Name your maunga, awa, waka, iwi, hapū and marae where that is appropriate. If you whakapapa to the people you are writing to, say so and say how. If you do not, say that plainly. If your connection is developing, interrupted, or something you are still learning, name that honestly rather than implying more than you hold. Name who has supported you to make this approach.]

Who I am and where I sit

[Your name], [doctoral candidate / researcher], [school and faculty], Auckland University of Technology. My [supervisor / research lead] is [name, role]. I am supported in this kaupapa by [cultural advisor name and role, with their permission].

What the research is about

[Two or three sentences in plain language. No methodology vocabulary. What the question is, and why it matters to people rather than to a discipline. If you cannot say it without academic language, it is not ready to send.]

Where the question came from

[Say honestly whether this arose from your own experience, from something a community has raised, from your professional practice, from a gap in the literature, or from a funding call. This is the whakapapa of the question, and people will ask it. Answering it before you are asked is a signal that you understand what you are doing.]

What I am asking of you

[Be specific and be numerate. How many people, how many hui, over what period, in what format, asking for what. Say clearly whether you are seeking endorsement, participation, governance oversight, access, or all of these. Vagueness here reads as either unpreparedness or as an attempt to keep options open at the community's expense.]

The template continued

What I am committing to give back

[Name the specific things. Findings returned in a form you can use, before anything is published. A hui to discuss them. A written summary for the board. Koha or honoraria for time and expertise, and say that it is budgeted. Also name what you will not do: what will not be published, what will not be deposited, what will not leave the relationship.]

Who holds the knowledge and the data

[Where the material will be stored and under whose control. Who can access it. Whether any of it could be used again later, and on whose authority. What happens to recordings and transcripts at the end of the project. Say plainly that decisions about what is published rest with you and them together, not with you alone.]

Timeline

[Realistic, and including the time you have allowed for this conversation itself. If your funder's deadline does not permit a proper mandate process, say so and say what you propose to do about it. Do not present a timeline you already know the community cannot meet.]

What happens next

[Offer to come and speak in person, at a time and place that suits them. Offer to answer questions in writing first if that is easier. Give a realistic date by which you would welcome a response, and make clear that the date is yours, not theirs.]

If this is not the right time, or not the right kaupapa for you, I would rather know that now than proceed without your support. A no, or a not yet, is a complete answer and I will respect it.

Nāku noa, nā

[Name]

[Phone] | [Email]

Attached: one-page plain-language summary of the research; letter from my supervisor; current ethics status.

Where the kaupapa has no incorporated governance body

Where you are approaching a whānau, a rōpū, a group of practitioners, or a single expert who holds authority in their own right, this letter will be too formal and probably too long. See When There Is No Authority Structure in Phase 02.

In those contexts the sequence usually runs the other way: a phone call or an introduction through someone known to both of you comes first, and the written note follows to confirm what was discussed. Write the note anyway. Individually conferred mandate is as documentable as a board resolution, and a short written record of who agreed to what, on what terms, and when, protects both of you. Keep the same elements: what the research is, where the question came from, what you are asking, what you are giving back, who holds the material, and how they can stop it.

After you send it

- Follow up once, in a way that makes a no easy to give. Once.
- If there is still no response, record the approach and record the silence. Silence is not consent. See Individual and Collective Mandate in Phase 02.
- Do not approach individual members separately to obtain a different answer through a different path.
- Keep the letter, the date it was sent, any response, and any conditions attached to a yes. This documentation belongs in your AUTEC application, your research proposal, and your methodology chapter.

ETHICS PREPARATION CHECKLIST

ETHICS PREPARATION CHECKLIST FOR MĀORI RESEARCH

This checklist supports researchers preparing an AUTEC ethics application for research involving Māori. It operates alongside, not instead of, Māori mandate processes.

Part 1 | Research Positioning

- ☐ Clearly identify research type: Kaupapa Māori / Māori-informed / research involving Māori
- ☐ Confirm which tikanga principles apply and how they shape the design. Name any conflicts of interest and any existing relationships here, even where no formal conflict exists. A whakapapa or professional connection that grants you access also carries a different level of accountability to that community, and should be declared
- ☐ Confirm whether Māori communities, data, or mātauranga are involved
- ☐ Identify whether collective or individual mandate is required
- ☐ Document who holds authority to endorse this research

Part 2 | Engagement Design

- ☐ Engagement format confirmed: kanohi ki te kanohi / wānanga / hui / online / mixed
- ☐ Participant selection criteria documented and culturally appropriate
- ☐ Whānau involvement considered, is collective participation appropriate and accommodated?
- ☐ Timeline reflects realistic relational tempo, not driven solely by funding deadlines
- ☐ Marae or community venue identified and booked well in advance
- ☐ Where a mandate approach received no response, this is documented and the research does not proceed on assumed consent

Part 3 | Consent

- ☐ Individual consent forms drafted in plain language
- ☐ Collective consent process designed where collective interests are engaged
- ☐ Consent covers: purpose, data use, secondary use, right to withdraw, storage location
- ☐ Participant Information Sheet is accurate, consider reo Māori version
- ☐ Withdrawal process clearly explained, including what happens to data already collected
- ☐ Consent model chosen and justified: single consent, staged or process consent, collective consent, or a combination

Part 4 | Koha

- ☐ Decision made on whether koha is offered
- ☐ Koha form, value and payment method documented
- ☐ Koha amount is proportionate to contribution, not tokenistic, not coercive
- ☐ AUT Finance policy requirements confirmed
- ☐ Governance or advisory honoraria planned and documented

Part 5 | Data Management

- ☐ Primary storage location confirmed as a New Zealand-based institutional system (e.g., AUT R: Drive)
- ☐ No unapproved offshore storage confirmed
- ☐ Transcription tool jurisdiction and data retention policy confirmed
- ☐ Access controls documented
- ☐ Retention period and disposal/archiving plan in place
- ☐ Secondary use conditions clearly stated, including whether data may be deposited with a journal or funder
- ☐ Position agreed with community partners on journal and funder open-data requirements, before submission

Part 6 | Intellectual Property

- ☐ Intellectual property ownership discussed with supervisors, Research Office, and community partners
- ☐ AUT Ventures disclosure completed if commercialisation is possible
- ☐ Co-authorship expectations clarified
- ☐ Attribution plan for mātauranga Māori contributions documented

Part 7 | AUTEC Submission

- ☐ AUTEC form completed, all Māori-specific fields addressed with specificity
- ☐ Participant Information Sheet attached
- ☐ Consent form attached
- ☐ Koha plan attached
- ☐ AUT Gifts, Koha and Donations policy (TUIA) reviewed
- ☐ Faculty administrator consulted on the payment mechanism at budget stage, not at payment stage
- ☐ Data Management Plan attached
- ☐ Researcher safety plan attached where fieldwork involves participants' homes, isolated locations, marae stays, or solo travel. AUTEC will often require this
- ☐ Letters of support or mandate documentation attached where relevant
- ☐ Tikanga costs included in research budget

Vague statements about 'cultural sensitivity' are insufficient. Specificity demonstrates seriousness, and protects you when questions arise later.

FUNDING PREPARATION CHECKLIST

FUNDING PREPARATION CHECKLIST FOR MĀORI RESEARCH

Part 1 | Before You Begin Writing

- ☐ Mandate secured, partner organisations have agreed and can provide letters of support
- ☐ Governance structure confirmed, advisory rōpū, steering committee, or named kaitiaki identified
- ☐ Research question shaped with community input
- ☐ Research Office engaged early
- ☐ Application timeline confirmed, allow 3–6 months for community consultation

Part 2 | Budget Preparation

- ☐ Koha for participants costed and included
- ☐ Governance and advisory honoraria costed
- ☐ Kai and hospitality for hui and wānanga costed
- ☐ Travel for kanohi ki te kanohi engagement costed
- ☐ Venue costs costed, including marae booking contributions where applicable
- ☐ Secure software, storage, and transcription subscriptions costed at the tier that excludes model training and provides jurisdiction control
- ☐ Time for collective review of application and outputs costed
- ☐ Researcher buy-out or protected time costed if applicable
- ☐ Translation and transcription costs

Reviewers familiar with Māori research will notice if tikanga costs are absent. Their absence signals that relational obligations have not been thought through.

Part 3 | Application Content

- ☐ Vision Mātauranga alignment articulated if applying to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
- ☐ Māori community benefit clearly stated
- ☐ Knowledge return plan described
- ☐ Data sovereignty addressed, storage, access, secondary use, community control
- ☐ Intellectual property and commercialisation position stated clearly
- ☐ Mandate evidence attached

Part 4 | If Unsuccessful

- ☐ Request reviewer feedback where the funder provides it
- ☐ Debrief with partners and supervisors
- ☐ Identify elements to strengthen
- ☐ Maintain community relationships, they exist beyond any single funding cycle

Funding success in Māori research is cumulative. Each application builds relationships, visibility and credibility, whether or not it succeeds.

FUNDING PATHWAYS

Funding Source	Overview and Key Considerations
AUT Te Aronui Doctoral Scholarship	Living stipend and fees for Māori doctoral candidates. Requires confirmed Letter of Offer. Apply immediately after receiving your offer.
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Vision Mātauranga	Research funding aligned with Māori knowledge, people and resources. Requires community partnership evidence and explicit benefit to Māori. Non-Māori researchers should contact the Vision Mātauranga advisers in Te Kāhui Poipoi Rangahau early when preparing external proposals.
Health Research Council (HRC) Māori Health Research	Health-focused funding requiring iwi or Māori organisational support. Ethics and data sovereignty must be clearly addressed.
Marsden Fund (Royal Society Te Apārangi)	Investigator-led research. From the 2025 round the Social Sciences and Humanities panels were disestablished and about half the Fund supports proposals with potential economic benefit to New Zealand, so most Māori research in the humanities and social sciences is no longer eligible. Check current eligibility and the Vision Mātauranga requirement before applying.
Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga	Māori-led research grants, awards and professional support for Māori students and researchers. Check current opportunities, eligibility and deadlines.
Tertiary Education Commission Capability Funding	Supports institutional research capability including Māori research leadership.
Faculty Research Support Funds	Internal AUT funding. Enquire early. May cover koha, kai, travel and research materials.

AUT MĀORI PHD PROCESS CHECKLIST

AUT MĀORI PHD PROCESS CHECKLIST, FROM SUPERVISION TO GRADUATION

This checklist maps the full doctoral journey for Māori candidates at AUT, integrating institutional milestones with cultural obligations. Use it alongside your supervisory agreement and the guidance throughout this document. Return to it at each stage; it will mean different things at different points in your journey.

Stage 1 | Secure Supervision (Pre-Application)

- ☐ Clarify broad research idea
- ☐ Identify potential primary supervisor
- ☐ Meet and discuss fit, including understanding of Māori methodologies and relational tempo
- ☐ Refine scope and feasibility
- ☐ Confirm supervisor agreement to support application
- ☐ Identify co-supervisor where research spans disciplines or knowledge systems
- ☐ Discuss enrolment mode (Full-time / Part-time)
- ☐ Discuss funding pathways and scholarship timing

You cannot apply without supervisory support. Choose carefully. The right supervisor will advocate for your kaupapa, not just your methods.

Stage 2 | Submit PhD Application

- ☐ Complete AUT PhD Application for Enrolment form
- ☐ Submit preliminary research proposal
- ☐ Upload curriculum vitae and academic transcripts

Stage 3 | Admission to Doctoral Programme, Faculty Proposal Approval

- ☐ Prepare formal proposal document
- ☐ Refine research question
- ☐ Clarify methodology and Māori research positioning (Kaupapa Māori / Māori-informed)
- ☐ Outline theoretical framing and contribution to Māori communities, if applicable
- ☐ Confirm mandate and community engagement position where the kaupapa requires it
- ☐ Supervisors review, raise any conditions or clarifications, and endorse
- ☐ Address supervisor conditions or clarifications before the proposal leaves the supervisory team
  - ☐ Proposal submitted through the primary supervisor to the School Postgraduate Committee
  - ☐ School Postgraduate Committee review, revise if required
  - ☐ Documentation forwarded to the Faculty Postgraduate Office for faculty review, revise if required
- ☐ Once proposal is approved, it is forwarded to the Graduate Research School

Stage 4 | Graduate Research School Review

- ☐ Proposal forwarded to the Graduate Research School by the Faculty
- ☐ Approval confirmed

Stage 5 | Offer of place

- ☐ Receive formal Offer of place from AUT
- ☐ Accept offer and confirm enrolment

Apply for scholarships immediately, most require a confirmed Offer of Place.

Stage 6 | Apply for Māori Scholarships (Post-Offer)

- ☐ Identify eligible Māori doctoral scholarships (e.g., AUT Te Aronui, Faculty scholarships)
- ☐ Confirm scholarship deadlines
- ☐ Prepare applications, seek supervisor feedback
- ☐ Submit applications on time

Scholarships may include:

- ☐ Living stipend
- ☐ Tuition fee coverage
- ☐ Research funding

Stage 7 | Early Candidature (Pre-Confirmation)

Administrative Foundations

- ☐ Complete Supervisory Agreement, clarify meeting frequency, authorship, data ownership, and intellectual property assumptions
- ☐ Confirm Conflict of Interest Declaration if applicable
- ☐ Confirm Embargo of Thesis Request if sensitive material involved
- ☐ Confirm AUT Ventures intellectual property disclosure if applicable

Māori Research Foundations

- ☐ Formalise mandate conversations with iwi, hapū or Māori organisations if required
- ☐ Plan koha and engagement budgets
- ☐ Determine data storage location, confirm it is New Zealand-based (the AUT R: Drive is preferred)
- ☐ Begin drafting culturally robust consent processes
- ☐ Confirm governance structures or advisory group where required

Ongoing Reporting

- ☐ Complete Progress Report every six months
- ☐ Document relational and engagement work in progress reports, relational work is method, not delay
- ☐ Review progress with supervisors
- ☐ Address flagged risks early

Stage 8 | Confirmation of Candidature (PGR9 form)

Preparing for Confirmation

- ☐ Finalise PGR9 document, ensure Māori research positioning is clearly articulated
- ☐ Address mandate, governance, data sovereignty, and reciprocity design
- ☐ Prepare structured abstract
- ☐ Confirm proposed date, time and location
- ☐ Identify appropriate reviewers and confirm availability
- ☐ Submit documentation to Faculty

Venue Considerations

- ☐ Consider Ngā Wai o Horotiu (AUT Marae), contact booking team well in advance
- ☐ Confirm availability before locking in reviewers
- ☐ Plan kai: at Ngā Wai o Horotiu you may bring your own; at other AUT venues use approved catering providers

Post-Presentation Process

- ☐ Receive reviewer feedback
- ☐ Provide written responses if required
- ☐ Revise PGR9 document and incorporate reviewer comments. Consider whether any amendments have resulted in material changes to the proposal that require going back to the community or organisation that gave the mandate.
- ☐ Revised PGR9 submitted through the Faculty Postgraduate Office to the University Postgraduate Research Board
- ☐ Receive letter of Confirmation of Candidature from the Graduate Research School

You are now officially a doctoral candidate.

Stage 9 | Ethics Approval

- ☐ Confirm AUTEC approval required
- ☐ Identify Māori governance requirements, separate from AUTEC
- ☐ Clearly state methodological framework and Māori positioning
- ☐ Clarify engagement format, kanohi ki te kanohi / wānanga / online
- ☐ Clarify koha arrangements and confirm payment method with AUT Finance
- ☐ Clarify data storage location, confirm New Zealand-based institutional storage
- ☐ Clarify access controls and secondary use permissions
- ☐ Complete AUTEC form, Participant Information Sheets, Consent Forms, Data Management Plan
- ☐ Where ethics approval is required, obtain it before recruiting participants or collecting data. Ethics approval does not replace Māori mandate. Ensure the mandate appropriate to your research is also in place before proceeding.

Stage 10 | Data Collection

- ☐ Ethics approval received
- ☐ Māori mandate confirmed and documented
- ☐ Koha process ready
- ☐ Data storage confirmed as New Zealand-based
- ☐ Faculty research support funding applied for and approved before incurring costs
- ☐ Governance groups informed
- ☐ Distribute koha as approved and record for audit compliance
- ☐ Upload data to AUT R: Drive or approved institutional system
- ☐ Continue supervisory meetings and six-monthly progress reports

Stage 11 | Analysis and Writing

- ☐ Transcribe and organise data, de-identify if required
- ☐ Confirm secure storage maintained
- ☐ Apply methodological framework and identify themes / results
- ☐ Cross-check against research questions
- ☐ Confirm thesis structure
- ☐ Draft chapters iteratively, circulate to supervisors and revise
- ☐ Continue progress reports every six months

Stage 12 | Submission and Examination

- ☐ Supervisor approval to submit – discuss examiner choice and their location with supervisors – consider whether an international examiner will understand the work. Most faculties expect one New Zealand examiner and one international examiner, unless there is a good methodological argument for an exemption.
- ☐ Confirm formatting compliance and examiner nominations
- ☐ Examiner nomination discussed with the candidate, including each examiner's competence to assess Kaupapa Māori methodology
- ☐ Exemption from the international examiner expectation sought in writing where the kaupapa requires it
- ☐ Oral examination tikanga discussed with the Graduate Research School: karakia, whānau attendance, convenor briefing
- ☐ Submit thesis electronically and confirm receipt
- ☐ Examiner review, outcome issued – Plan the oral examination with the Graduate Research School, the convenor and your supervisors
- ☐ Prepare response to examiner reports if required
- ☐ Revise thesis and resubmit
- ☐ Faculty confirms amendments complete, the Graduate Research School confirms the award

Stage 13 | Completion and Graduation

- ☐ Submit final corrected thesis
- ☐ Confirm repository deposit and embargo settings
- ☐ Confirm fees paid and no outstanding obligations
- ☐ Confirm graduation ceremony attendance (optional)
- ☐ Receive transcript

Post-Completion Responsibilities

- ☐ Return findings to communities, before or alongside academic publication
- ☐ Fulfil governance commitments that continue beyond submission
- ☐ Maintain data retention requirements
- ☐ Ensure data remains under institutional control if you leave AUT
- ☐ Ask, with the communities concerned, whether the research produced outcomes they recognise as equitable, and record the answer

The university may close the file.
The relationship may not close. Honour both.

FOUNDATIONAL READING

FOUNDATIONAL MĀORI RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP, A STARTING READING LIST

This reading list is a starting place, not a complete map. It will be updated by Te Ranga Tukutuku through the annual hui, and we invite researchers to suggest additions. The scholarship is living and growing. Stay connected to it.

Kaupapa Māori Theory and Methodology

Author / Date	Text and Notes
Smith, L.T. (1999)	Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. Zed Books. The foundational text in the field.
Smith, G.H. (2003)	Kaupapa Māori Theory: Theorizing Indigenous Transformation of Education and Schooling. Kaupapa Māori Symposium, NZARE/AARE.
Mead, H.M. (2003)	Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values. Huia Publishers. Essential grounding in tikanga as a governing framework.
Pihama, L. et al. (2002)	Creating methodological space: A literature review of Kaupapa Māori research. Canadian Journal of Native Education, 26(1), 30–43.

Māori Data Sovereignty

Author / Date	Text and Notes
Te Mana Raraunga (2018)	Principles of Māori Data Sovereignty. Available at: https://www.temanararaunga.maori.nz. The definitive principles document.
Kukutai, T. & Taylor, J. (Eds.) (2016)	Indigenous Data Sovereignty: Toward an Agenda. ANU Press. Open access.
Walter, M. & Andersen, C. (2013)	Indigenous Statistics: A Quantitative Research Methodology. Left Coast Press.

Ethics and Relational Accountability

Author / Date	Text and Notes
Hudson, M. et al. (2010)	Te Ara Tika: Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics. Health Research Council. The primary ethics framework for research with Māori.
Bishop, R. (1996)	Collaborative Research Stories: Whakawhanaungatanga. Dunmore Press.
Pene, B.-J., Gott, M., & Clark, T. (2024)	Research at the interface: A novice researcher's reflections on weaving Kaupapa Māori and grounded theory methodologies. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 23. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241289348
Pere, R. (1991)	Te Wheke: A Celebration of Infinite Wisdom. Ao Ako Global Learning.
Durie, M. H. (1985)	A Māori perspective of health. Social Science & Medicine, 20(5), 483–486.
Durie, M. H. (1994)	Whaiora: Māori Health Development. Oxford University Press. Introduces Te Whare Tapa Whā: taha wairua, taha hinengaro, taha tinana, taha whānau. Used well beyond health as a framework for holistic wellbeing, including researcher wellbeing.
Henare, M. (2001)	Tapu, mana, mauri, hau, wairua: A Māori philosophy of vitalism and cosmos. In J. Grim (Ed.), Indigenous Traditions and Ecology. Harvard University Press. The basis of the koru of ethics: Māori ethics grounded in tapu, mana, mauri, hau, and wairua rather than in Western ethical categories. Particularly useful for business, organisational, and environmental research.
Spiller, C., Erakovic, L., Henare, M., & Pio, E. (2011)	Relational well-being and wealth: Māori businesses and an ethic of care. Journal of Business Ethics, 98, 153–169. Applies Māori relational ethics to organisational practice.

Key Journals

MAI Journal: A New Zealand Journal of Indigenous Scholarship

AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples

Journal of the Polynesian Society

Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society

International Indigenous Policy Journal

This reading list will be updated periodically by Te Ranga Tukutuku.
Researchers are encouraged to suggest additions through the annual hui.

KEY AUT CONTACTS AND SUPPORT PATHWAYS

The AUT system is large and navigating it is a skill in itself. These are the specific contacts most relevant to Māori researchers, some well known, some not.

How your paperwork actually travels. Forms go first to your primary supervisor, or, in a co-supervision arrangement, to the supervisor who holds the administrative role. Your supervisor takes the form to the School Postgraduate Committee, which considers it alongside all candidates in the school and generates a school-level report. The documentation then goes to the Faculty Postgraduate Office, and from there to the Graduate Research School. For doctoral candidature milestones, the final approval sits with the University Postgraduate Research Board. Most forms travel this same route: supervisor, School Postgraduate Committee, Faculty Postgraduate Office, Graduate Research School. Extensions and examiner nominations go from your supervisor to the Faculty Postgraduate Office directly.

Knowing this matters for two reasons. Your supervisor is a step in the process, not a courtesy copy, so a form sitting unread in their inbox is a stalled form. And the school committee meets to a cycle, so something lodged the day after a meeting may wait several weeks. Ask your supervisor when the School Postgraduate Committee next meets, and work backwards from that date.

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Within Your Faculty

Role	When to Contact
FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS	
Associate Dean (Postgraduate)	Your senior academic contact for progress concerns, supervisory difficulties, methodological disputes, and escalation where a matter cannot be resolved with your supervisor. Note that applications for extension and examiner nominations go through your supervisor to the Faculty Postgraduate Office, not directly to the Associate Dean.
Faculty Postgraduate Office	Holds the formal record for all postgraduate processes and confirms deadlines. Forms reach this office through your supervisor and your school, not directly from you.
Head of School / Programme Leader	First escalation point if issues cannot be resolved with your supervisor.
FOR STAFF RESEARCHERS AND EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS	
Associate Dean (Research) for your faculty	Your primary contact for all matters relating to staff research projects, grant applications, ethics approval, workload allocation, and research capacity. For Māori staff researchers and early career researchers, this is the first port of call for institutional research support.
Faculty Research Office / Research & Enterprise	Administrative and strategic support for external grant applications, research contracts, budget management, and compliance. Contact before submitting any external funding application.
Vision Mātauranga advisers, Te Kāhui Poipoi Rangahau (AUT Research Office)	Primary support for non-Māori researchers seeking Māori input or Vision Mātauranga support for external research proposals or projects. Refer to Te Ranga Tukutuku where Māori researcher connection, wider strategic Māori research consideration, or potential collaboration is required.
Te Ranga Tukutuku	Peer connection and cultural support for Māori researchers at all career stages. Not a substitute for formal institutional support pathways, but a complement to them.

Māori-Specific Support

Contact	Role and Details
Te Ara Poutama, Faculty of Māori & Indigenous Development and Te Ipukarea Research Institute	Māori researchers in any faculty can seek guidance and support there for matters relating to Māori research.
Te Pou Māori	Student support services for Māori students navigating AUT, **maori@aut.ac.nz**
Research Engagement Manager, Māori (AUT Research Office)	Dedicated support for Māori researchers engaging with external funders, including Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment Vision Mātauranga, the Health Research Council, and the Marsden Fund. Contact early when preparing major funding applications.
Te Mātāpuna | AUT Library research data and Tuwhera services	Advice on data deposit, repository options, embargo, licensing, and metadata for both data and theses. Contact early if your data may be deposited, or if community partners have asked about long-term access to the material.
Te Ranga Tukutuku	AUT Māori Research Network. Your first port of call for peer connection and for guidance on navigating the institution as a Māori researcher. **terangatukutuku@aut.ac.nz** **terangatukutuku.aut.ac.nz**
Office of Māori Advancement	The university-level office supporting Māori advancement across AUT. A pathway for staff and students where a matter cannot be resolved within the faculty, including cultural marginalisation and methodological disputes.

Institutional Escalation

Contact	Role and Details
Graduate Research School	Responsible for doctoral and Master of Philosophy enrolment, examination administration, and progress oversight.
Dean of Graduate Research School	Ultimate institutional authority for doctoral matters. If faculty-level issues cannot be resolved, the Associate Dean (Postgraduate) can escalate on your behalf.
AUTSA, AUT Student Association	Contact for complaints, grievance navigation, and advocacy. **advocacy@autsa.org.nz**. Independent of all academic departments. If you feel your concerns are not being heard, AUTSA will help you navigate the formal complaints process.
Scholarships Office	For all scholarship queries including Te Aronui and other Māori-targeted funding.

NGĀ RAUEMI TAUTOKO

GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES



GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

HE KUPUTAKA | GLOSSARY OF MĀORI TERMS

These terms appear in Te Ara Rangahau Māori or underpin the practice it describes. The glossary positions each term in research context, showing how it shapes what researchers do and how communities and researchers relate.

Ako

Reciprocal Teaching and Learning.
The principle that the teacher learns and the learner teaches. In research: how you learn from and with communities, not just from them. One of the six Kaupapa Māori principles named in Phase 03.

Aroha

Disciplined Care and Compassion. The rigour that comes from care. In research: how you treat people's time, dignity, and knowledge with respect even when the work is difficult. How you stay in relationship when disagreement arrives.

Awa

River. The river a person belongs to and names in pepeha. In research: part of how you locate yourself before you locate your question.

Hapū

Kinship Group. A group descended from a common ancestor, holding its own authority over its people, its whenua and its knowledge. Hapū are not subdivisions of iwi. Historically the hapū is the primary political and land-holding unit and iwi are aggregations of hapū, though the relationship is expressed differently in different rohe. The level at which many communities exercise authority and make decisions about research.

Hauora

Health and Wellbeing. The whole state of a person, not the absence of illness. In research: your own capacity to do the work, treated as a condition of the research rather than a private matter.

Hei Whakatūpato

As a Caution. In research: the common pitfalls named in this guide, identified to strengthen foresight rather than to assign blame.

Hinengaro

Mind. Thought, emotion, and the way a person makes sense of things. One of the four sides of Te Whare Tapa Whā. In research: whether you are thinking clearly or only reacting.

Hui

Formal Gathering. A meeting, usually with formal process, for discussion and decision-making. The appropriate forum for many research conversations.

Iwi

Tribe. A people bound by descent, territory, and shared history. The level at which some research authority and mandate sits.

Kai

Food. Shared food as part of hosting and being hosted. In research: a budgeted cost of every hui and wānanga, not an extra.

Kairaranga

Weaver. A practitioner of raranga, the art of weaving. In research: an expert whose authority is conferred by teachers and communities and who may hold mandate in their own right.

Kaitiaki

Guardian. The responsibility to care for something on behalf of others. In research: how data, knowledge, and relationships are held and protected.

Kaitiakitanga

Guardianship. The practice of that responsibility over time. In research: long-term stewardship of data and mātauranga after the project formally ends, and care for your own capacity as a researcher.

Kanohi ki te Kanohi

Face to Face. The principle that important conversations happen in person. In research: why a letter is never your only contact, why a phone call must follow, why the first approach is not complete without kanohi.

Kapa Haka

Māori Performing Arts. Composition and performance carrying knowledge, history, and relationship. In research: a creative practice that embodies mātauranga and can be the method as well as the subject.

Karakia

Incantation or Prayer. Words that open, close, and protect a gathering or a piece of work. In research: how a hui, wānanga, interview, or oral examination may properly begin and end.

Kaumātua

Elder. A person of standing and knowledge whose guidance carries authority. In research: who to approach for cultural advice and approval, whose voice shapes whether the work is tika.

Kaupapa

Purpose or Founding Principle. The matter at hand and the values that hold it. In research: the reason the work exists and the thing that must stay grounded through every stage.

Kaupapa Māori

Māori Topic or Approach. It takes the validity and legitimacy of Māori for granted, and is concerned with autonomy over our own cultural wellbeing. Its catch-cry: to be Māori is the norm (G. H. Smith, 2003).

Kāwanatanga

Governance. The first article of Te Tiriti. In research: the institution's responsibility for its own systems, and its answerability for whether those systems enable or obstruct Māori research.

Kete

Basket. A woven container. In research: used in this document for the appendices, a practical set of tools carried alongside the pathway rather than a further stage of it.

Kia Haumaru

Keep Safe. In research: researcher wellbeing and safety, treated as a condition of the research rather than a private matter.

Kia Piki Ake i ngā Raruraru o te Kāinga

Addressing Structural Inequity. The principle that research should engage the material conditions shaping people's lives rather than treat them as background. One of the six Kaupapa Māori principles named in Phase 03.

Koha

Gift and Reciprocal Obligation. A gift given with the understanding that relationship and reciprocal obligation follow. In research: acknowledgement of community members for time and expertise, recognising that their contribution carries obligation beyond the transaction.

Kōrero

Story or Conversation. Spoken knowledge and testimony. In research: the accounts, experiences, and knowledge that communities share.

Kupu

Word or Words. Te reo Māori words. In research: maintaining te reo as the primary language of expression rather than translating into English.

Mana

Authority and Prestige. Standing that is earned and conferred. In research: the authority that communities and individuals hold over their own knowledge. Recognition that you do not bring mana to the work; you enter into relationships where mana already sits.

Mana Motuhake

Self-Determination. The autonomous authority that belongs to a people. In research: Māori authority over Māori knowledge, data, and decisions about use.

Manaakitanga

Hospitality and Responsibility. The obligation to care for others and the space between you. In research: feeding people at hui, honouring time commitments, recognising that relationships carry obligations beyond the research itself.

Manawanui

Patience and Endurance. The capacity to persist with care and integrity over time. In research: recognising that relational work takes longer than extractive work. That is not inefficiency; it is method.

Manukura

Leader. A person who leads within a community or a field of practice, whose standing is conferred by others. In research: an expert who may hold mandate in their own right.

Marae

Meeting Place. The physical and social space where a whānau, hapū, or iwi gathers. Often the appropriate site for research conversations and gatherings.

Mātauranga Māori

Māori Knowledge. Knowledge systems developed by Māori over generations. Not opposed to Western science but grounded in different worldviews, values, and ways of knowing.

Maunga

Mountain. The mountain a person belongs to and names in pepeha. In research: part of how you locate yourself before you locate your question.

Mihi

Greeting and Acknowledgement. The formal opening that establishes who is present and how they are connected. In research: how a hui, a wānanga, or an oral examination is properly opened.

Mokopuna

Grandchild or Descendant. Those who come after. In research: the generations the work is ultimately accountable to.

Mōteatea

Traditional Chant. Sung poetry carrying whakapapa, history, grief, and knowledge. In research: both a source of mātauranga and a creative research method.

Ngā Wai o Horotiu

The AUT marae, on the City campus. Available to Māori postgraduate candidates for Confirmation of Candidature presentations and other significant research milestones.

Ngā Kūrakuraku

Difficulties. In research: the situations in which things go wrong, including cultural or epistemic disagreement, community withdrawal, funder pressure and data mishandling, and how to respond to them.

Noa

Ordinary or Unrestricted. The complement to tapu. Knowledge or information that is not restricted.

Noho Puku

Deep Internal Reflection. Sitting with and dwelling within material. Used as a disciplined analytical method grounded in Māori oral tradition. Treated as rigorous analysis, not researcher bias.

Ōritetanga

Equity. The third article of Te Tiriti. In research: the entitlement of Māori researchers and communities to the same conditions of success as anyone else, and to research that produces benefit they recognise as benefit.

Pono

Integrity and Truth. Alignment between what you say and what you do. In research: when your methodology matches your philosophy, when your return matches your promise, when the researcher position is named honestly.

Pūrākau

Story as Method. Narrative as a way of carrying and transmitting knowledge. Connected through whakapapa rather than linear sequence. A legitimate research methodology.

Rangahau

Research. The systematic investigation and inquiry into questions. Understood as including Kaupapa Māori and mātauranga Māori approaches alongside Western academic methods.

Rangatahi

Young People. Youth and young adults. In research: a participant group whose involvement usually carries additional consent and safety considerations.

Rangatiratanga

Chiefly Authority. The authority exercised by those with the standing to lead. Where this document discusses Māori authority over research, the fuller term tino rangatiratanga is used; see below.

Raranga

Weaving. The art of weaving with harakeke and other materials. In research: a creative practice that embodies mātauranga and can be the method as well as the subject. See also kairaranga.

Rongoā

Traditional Healing. Māori medicine and healing practice. In research: knowledge that commonly carries restrictions on what may be recorded, transcribed, or published.

Rōpū

Group or Collective. A group, collective or advisory body. A rōpū may hold authority for a kaupapa even if it is not formally incorporated.

Rūnanga

Council or Assembly. A formally constituted iwi or hapū governance body. In research: often the forum a first approach should be made to, rather than an individual.

Tā Moko

Māori Tattooing. The practice and the marks themselves, carrying whakapapa and standing. In research: a specialist practice whose practitioners hold knowledge conferred by teachers and communities.

Tangata Tiriti

People of the Treaty. Non-Māori who belong here through Te Tiriti. In research: the counterpart to tangata whenua in Te Aronui, AUT's Te Tiriti framework.

Tangata Whenua

People of the Land. Indigenous people with connection to and authority over a place. In research: whose authority and permission is needed in a particular location or context.

Tangihanga

Funeral Rites. The obligations that follow a death, which take precedence over other commitments. In research: a legitimate and unavoidable interruption to a timeline, to be documented as method rather than delay.

Taonga

Treasure. Anything highly prized, material or intangible, including language, knowledge, and the kōrero entrusted to a researcher. Protected under Article 2 of Te Tiriti.

Taonga Tuku Iho

Ancestral Knowledge. Knowledge, values and practices handed down from tīpuna. Treated as a legitimate foundation for research. One of the six Kaupapa Māori principles named in Phase 03.

Tapu

Sacred or Restricted. Knowledge, places, or people that carry restrictions on who may know about them, handle them, or speak about them. In research: what cannot be written down, transcribed, or published.

Tauira

Student. A learner at any level. In research: those a Māori researcher is often mentoring alongside their own work, frequently without that labour appearing in any workload model.

Te Aka

The Vine. Phase 04 of Te Ara Rangahau Māori. In research: conducting the research with care, tending relationships, tikanga, ethical responsibilities and the integrity of the work as it develops.

Te Ao Māori

T**he Māori World**. The relational world with its own cultural and political order, its own tempo, and its own structures of authority. Not simply the setting research takes place in; it shapes how the work proceeds.

Te Ara Tika

The Right Path. The Māori research ethics framework developed by Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell and Smith (2010) for the Health Research Council. Its four principles are whakapapa, tika, manaakitanga and mana. In this document a Te Ara Tika check opens each part of Te Ara.

Te Aronui

AUT's Te Tiriti framework. It positions Te Tiriti as a living framework at the centre of university life and commits AUT to Tiriti-honouring action. Te Aronui is also the name of AUT's doctoral scholarship for Māori candidates; the two are distinct.

Te More

The Taproot. Phase 02 of Te Ara Rangahau Māori. In research: establishing authority, mandate and relational legitimacy before the research proceeds.

Te Pū

The Root, or Origin. Phase 01 of Te Ara Rangahau Māori. In research: grounding the kaupapa, locating its origins and the researcher's position before design begins.

Te Rea

The Growth. Phase 05 of Te Ara Rangahau Māori. In research: bringing the research together through analysis, writing, examination and te reo Māori provisions.

Te Wānanga

The Forum. Recalls Tāne-te-wānanga, a name of Tāne, atua of Te Wao Nui, in recognition of his quest for ngā kete o te wānanga. Phase 07 of Te Ara Rangahau Māori. In research: continuing obligations, wellbeing and future stewardship after formal completion. Distinct from wānanga as a research method (see Wānanga).

Te Wao Nui

The Great Forest. Phase 06 of Te Ara Rangahau Māori. In research: returning, publishing and sharing knowledge with the people and communities connected to it.

Te Weu

The Rootlet. Phase 03 of Te Ara Rangahau Māori. In research: designing the research with tikanga, ethics and sovereignty, including methodology, funding, data and consent.

Te Ranga Tukutuku

The Māori Research Network. AUT's network for Māori research. Peer connection, cultural support, and guidance on navigating the institution for Māori researchers at every career stage, and the first port of call for the matters this document describes.

Te Reo Māori

The Māori Language. In research: potentially the language of the thinking, the method, the analysis, the relationships, and the kaupapa itself, not an add-on or a problem to be resolved through translation.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi, 1840, in its Māori text. Its three written articles are kāwanatanga, tino rangatiratanga and ōritetanga. A fourth article, concerning ritenga or customary and religious practice, is understood to have been spoken at Waitangi and is not in the written text. Its standing is contested, and this document treats it as a widely held understanding rather than a settled provision. These guidelines work from the articles rather than the Crown-derived principles.

Te Whakaruruhau

The Protective Shelter. The governance body overseeing Te Ranga Tukutuku and ensuring Kaupapa Māori integrity. The body that reviews contributions to this guide, approves research network direction, and carries institutional obstacles into governance.

Te Whare Tapa Whā

The Four-Sided House. Mason Durie's (1994) model of holistic wellbeing: taha tinana, taha hinengaro, taha whānau, and taha wairua. Used in this document as a frame for checking researcher wellbeing across a long project.

Tika

Correctness and Rightness. Being appropriate to time, place, and relationship. In research: whether the methodology fits the kaupapa, whether the question is timely, whether the process honours the people it concerns.

Tikanga

Custom and Protocol. The correct way to do things in a particular context. The ethics and practices that govern behaviour. In research: the protocols that shape how research is conducted, who is involved, what can be shared. Tikanga does not sit alongside methodology; it determines whether methodology is legitimate.

Tinana

Body. The physical body and its needs. One of the four sides of Te Whare Tapa Whā. In research: sleep, food, and movement sustained across a long project.

Tino Rangatiratanga

Full Authority and Self-Determination. Guaranteed to Māori under Article 2 of Te Tiriti. In research: when Māori hold authority not only over participation but over the whole research enterprise: question, design, conduct, findings, and publication.

Tīpuna

Ancestors. Those who came before. In research: the source of taonga tuku iho, and part of what a whakapapa connection carries into the work.

Tohunga

Expert Holder of Knowledge. A person who holds specialist knowledge conferred by teachers and communities and exercised under obligation. That authority is collective, held by a person, not merely personal.

Toi

Art. Māori visual and creative arts. In research: a creative practice that embodies mātauranga and can be the method as well as the subject.

Tūturu | He tangata i tipu ake i te ao Māori

True, Real, Fully Grounded. Used of a person, he tangata i tipu ake i te ao Māori describes someone who grew up within te ao Māori, with te reo, tikanga, marae, whakapapa and collective responsibility as part of everyday life. Used of research, tūturu describes work conducted in te reo Māori, grounded in mātauranga held by particular iwi or hapū, and accountable to a named community. The word describes a form of upbringing and a form of grounding. It is not a ranking of researchers, and this document does not use it as one. Phase 01 addresses this alongside the experience of researchers who are reconnecting.

Wāhi Tapu

Sacred Place. A place carrying restrictions on access and on what may be recorded or published about it.

Waiata

Song. Sung composition carrying knowledge, history, and feeling. In research: both a source of mātauranga and a creative research method.

Wairua

Spiritual Dimension. The real spiritual aspect of existence. Not metaphorical. A methodological consideration in research engaging mātauranga, taonga, or ancestral knowledge, and part of participant safety.

Wairuatanga

Spirituality. Understood as a spoken fourth article of Te Tiriti concerning ritenga, customary and religious practice. Its standing is contested and it does not appear in the written text. In research: karakia, tapu and noa, and wairua as a methodological consideration. The right to write and be examined in te reo Māori rests on AUT policy and the status of te reo as an official language, not on this article alone.

Waka

Canoe. The ancestral canoe a person descends from and names in pepeha. In research: part of how you locate yourself before you locate your question.

Wānanga

Intensive Learning Gathering. A collective space for deep exploration, deliberation and knowledge exchange, often residential or multi-day. Not a workshop or a focus group: the understanding that emerges belongs to the collective.

Whakairo

Carving. Carved work in wood, bone, or stone, carrying whakapapa and narrative. In research: a creative practice that embodies mātauranga and can be the method as well as the subject.

Whakapapa

Genealogy and Relationship. The connection that runs through all things: people, knowledge, land, time. In research: tracing your question back to its origins, naming who you are connected to, understanding what those connections require of you.

Whānau

Family. Extended Family. Grounded in whakapapa, and also used for kaupapa whānau, groups bound by a shared purpose. The fundamental social unit. In research: who is implicated by the work, who has standing to make decisions.

Whanaungatanga

Kinship and Connection. The principle of relationship and connection. In research: how you build and maintain the relationships that make research possible. How you recognise shared ancestry or connection.

Whenua

Land, and also placenta. The ground a people belong to and are responsible for. In research: often both the subject of the kaupapa and the reason a community holds authority over it.

Whetū

Star. The stars our tīpuna navigated by. In research: the image this document uses for guidance that helps you read the sky without dictating the voyage.

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