

Kia ora Graduate Students

Welcome back to semester 2. We are fortunate in Aotearoa to be back conducting day-to-day business within our borders relatively unencumbered by the ravages of the pandemic, although of course each of us must remain vigilant. Activity in our laboratories, clinics, kano ki te kano (face-to-face) meetings, and data collection within New Zealand have returned, and we hope that your transition back into research is coming along well. This update from the dedicated team in the Graduate Research School provides guidance for you regarding upcoming research activities and events, a guide for procedures if things do not go to plan, details on the independent review of harassment, and a congratulations to graduands. As always, if you have any questions that we can help you with, please let us know by emailing grs@aut.ac.nz.

Nigel Harris
Acting Dean, Graduate Research School

What is the Graduate Research School?

The GRS provides support and researcher development for students, supervisors, and staff to assist in the growth of a vibrant research culture. The GRS is independent of all faculties, although works with faculty to support the graduate research process. GRS is here for you as a research student to facilitate and assist, so do reach out as needed. For more information on the GRS see [Student Hub Online](#).

Upcoming Events

2020 AUT 3MT Competition Finals

Three Minute Thesis (3MT) is a research communication competition where competitors have three minutes to present their thesis and its significance in an inspiring and captivating way. Register to attend in-person, or by watching the live-stream for this year's AUT 3MT Competition Finals taking place 4 September on [Guidebook](#).

2020 National Universities Masters 3MT Competition

On 17 September AUT is hosting the 2020 National Universities Masters 3MT Competition, the next level of competition for the 3MT for Masters research students. More information is available on [Guidebook](#).

Postgrad Students Wellness Toolkit

This online session, facilitated by a mental health advisor/counsellor, will allow you opportunities to socialise, meet new people, participate in lively discussions, and build your own 'wellness toolkit' to support your personal well-being. There's no need to register. Please use the direct access links provided below:

- Wednesday 19 August 3:00pm to 4:30pm – 'How to get enough sleep'
- Wednesday 16 September 3:00pm to 4:30pm – 'Managing low mood'
- Wednesday 21 October 3:00pm to 4:30pm – 'Review'
- Wednesday 11 November 3:00pm to 4:30pm – 'To be confirmed'

Continuing your development as a researcher

Use the [AUT Postgraduate Researcher Development Planner](#) to find additional upcoming activities which will support your research. Workshops and webinars to support your researcher development are offered by a variety of departments across the University and available for registration through Elab.aut.ac.nz once you have logged in with your AUT username and password. GRS is also continuing to develop and offer online resources for graduate research students and their supervisors on the [Student Hub Online](#) and [Thesislink](#).

Independent Review of Harassment at AUT: Information for Research Students

You may have heard in the news about some recent allegations of harassment at AUT. The University has now commissioned an [independent review](#) of its policies, systems and practices regarding harassment. The review will be led by [Kate Davenport QC](#). Although the allegations reported in the news have not involved research students, we are aware that the graduate research process is unique. Students who have experienced harassment at AUT (including but not limited to sexual harassment) can report their experiences to the independent review if they wish. They can do so by emailing the reviewer at autreview2020@gmail.com or phoning 0800 121 223.

Participants in the review will have the opportunity to be interviewed and give views on improvements or issues. The reviewer is external to AUT, and reports made to the reviewer will remain confidential. No information identifying participants in the review will be provided to the University (unless requested by that participant). The results of the independent review will be made publicly available. The reviewer will make recommendations to AUT, and an implementation programme will respond to the recommendations.

It's important to note that, while the independent reviewer will write a report and make general recommendations, she will not be able to take action regarding individual cases. If you wish to make a complaint, please follow the processes outlined in the Bullying and Harassment procedures outlined below.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying or Harassment of any form are not tolerated at AUT. AUT regards harmful and/or inappropriate behaviours involving staff and/or students, whether on or off campus, as unacceptable. It is important that staff and students feel safe and supported as well as encouraged to speak up if they have experienced an instance or instances of harassment, bullying or inappropriate behaviours. If you experience bullying or harassment, from other students, staff or your supervisor, there are processes to follow in order to ensure safety, and to ensure concerns or grievances are heard. Graduate research students who perceive that they or another student are being bullied or harassed can contact the Manager of Student Conduct to discuss options via email studentrelations@aut.ac.nz or phone 021 956 082.

AUT takes all allegations and experiences of sexual harassment and harm extremely seriously. AUT invites students to either report anonymously or provide contact details to get support from an advisor [here](#).

If things don't go to plan: resolution of problems

A productive supervisor/student relationship does not happen automatically; it develops over time and requires a commitment from both parties from the outset. As you progress through the research journey there can occasionally be issues such as your working relationship with a supervisor. It is hoped that most of the problems which arise are able to be resolved through discussion, with or without the assistance of a third party, but the process outlined below explains how issues can be addressed:

1. If you have an issue you should discuss this with your supervisor(s) in the first instance. If the issue is not then resolved, or you are not comfortable approaching your supervisor(s), your next step should be to contact the programme leader/head of postgraduate in your School. This [link](#) provides details on Faculty contacts.
2. If your programme leader/head of postgraduate is unable to resolve issues, they might refer you to the Associate Dean (Postgraduate) for the Faculty. Should the issue or complaint still not be resolved then the Associate Dean (Postgraduate) can raise it to the Dean of the Graduate Research School for you.

Lodging a complaint

If you feel your issue is not adequately resolved, you might choose to communicate a [complaint directly to the University](#). You are strongly advised to seek support for this process from the AUT Student Association (AUTSA). AUTSA is independent from all academic departments at AUT and will greatly assist you with navigating problem resolution or complaints at any stage in the process. Contact AUTSA at autsa@aut.ac.nz or (09) 9219805.

If you are not initially comfortable discussing your concerns in person you can do so via the [Student Feedback page](#) on the AUT website.

Congratulations to all our Graduands

On August 26 and 27 we celebrate the graduation of 1339 postgraduate students, including 90 doctoral students. It is a time to cherish alongside friends, whānau, staff, and colleagues. For many of you, it represents another milestone towards higher study, and for doctoral graduands, a pinnacle of academic endeavour. Our ceremonies are unique to AUT - the graduation regalia and ceremonial aspects are steeped in hundreds of years of medieval history, but we incorporate Māori tradition, and Pacific performances. Such celebrations remind us all to look forwards with optimism.