

Resources

Pacific Research Protocols from the University of Otago

COMPILED AND EDITED BY JUDY BENNETT, MARK BRUNTON,
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AND GARY WITTE, WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY STUART DAWRS

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In November 2011, the University of Otago, New Zealand, formally launched a document outlining its Pacific Research Protocols. In keeping with its mission to document the growth and maturation of Pacific Islands studies as an academic field, The Contemporary Pacific (TCP) requested and received permission from the protocols' editors and compilers to reproduce a slightly updated version in its Resources section. The original version is available online at <http://www.otago.ac.nz/research/otago028669.pdf>

As part of the journal's standard referee process, the protocols were submitted to anonymous readers, which ultimately yielded two questions that the TCP editorial board felt were important to address when publishing the protocols: (1) why there is no reference in the document to either Russell Bishop or Linda Tuhiwai Smith, given their significance as scholars examining the nature of research among indigenous peoples of the Pacific, and (2) whether the protocols go far enough in repositioning relations between researcher and researched, such that true equality is engendered and reflected in the research project. In the second case, the reader who raised this question felt that, though the protocols call for collaboration, the researcher remains as the driver of the project, rather than one who is engaged in a mutually collaborative endeavor.

We therefore invited Professor Judy Bennett, coeditor and chair of the committee that compiled this document, to write an additional introduction for the journal, in part to address these specific questions, but also to

more broadly place the protocols within a context that might aid readers unfamiliar with the setting in which they were produced.

STUART DAWRS
Resources Editor,
 The Contemporary Pacific

Many thanks for the publication of the University of Otago's *Pacific Research Protocols*. In draft form this document was sent far and wide in New Zealand and to universities and some government departments in the wider Pacific. Comment was taken on board but someone has to take the first step, subject, of course, to revisions. No one raised the points your readers have, so we are grateful for the opportunity to respond.

While the eminent academics you mentioned have stimulated research thinking in regard to Māori ways of knowing and of kaupapa Māori research methodology, our view was that many Pacific thinkers have taken things further to better fit their specific situations and places, which often are not entirely comparable to Māori. Māori have a unique place in this country as a partner to the Crown/state under the Treaty of Waitangi. Your readers will appreciate this is an Aotearoa/New Zealand perspective where Pacific peoples are still a minority and who come from or whose immediate ancestors came from many different island states—from Kiribati south to Fiji, from Tokelau and the Cook Islands south to Sāmoa and Tonga, and others as well. Pacific peoples in this country share the same status as other tauīwi or settlers and are not first peoples of the land. They are seeking their own paths in this country. While respecting Māori, the tangata whenua (people of this land), Pacific people also look to their own communities' needs here, as well as in their former homelands, almost all of which have been independent states for thirty to fifty years. Unlike Aotearoa/New Zealand and Hawai'i, the vast majority of these Pacific homelands are not European/American settler societies and thus have their own intellectual, philosophical, and epistemological traditions, valued by their descendants here.

In the wider Pacific context, there have been many indigenous challenges to Western thinking in arts, education, and areas such as anthropology as well, and articulation of indigenous-based research methods, going back to at least the 1970s. Albert Wendt asserted Pacific values and poetics in "Towards a New Oceania" (1976); Epeli Hau'ofa advocated of a more humane anthropology (1975); and Mālama Meleiseā offered a critique of

introduced ideologies (1987). Konai Helu Thaman's work on education and Tongan ways of knowing spans the 1980s to the present (1988, 1998, 2000). David W Gegeo showed the significance of indigenous knowledge and empowerment in a rural development setting (1998). There is much too in Manulani Meyer's doctoral work on Hawai'i that has a perspective similar to Linda Tuhiwai Smith's on reclaiming indigenous ways of knowing in a colonial settler society (1998). Others have valued Pacific Island bases and frames of thinking too. Just two examples from many are Robert Underwood's work on Chamorro identity and education (1989), and the insights of human geographer Murray Chapman on the value of island biographies as ways of knowing (1995), as well as his decades of support for his Pacific students' use of Island-specific indigenous epistemologies in their postgraduate work in politics, geography, and sociology at the University of Hawai'i.

During this period too Pacific Islanders were given a philosophical and visionary template to consider, value, and develop their own ways of knowing and being in Epeli Hau'ofa's "Our Sea of Islands" (1993). In 2002, three years after Smith's book appeared, Sitiveni Halapua's "Tala-noa Process: The Case of Fiji" recorded in a very direct and clear way how Fijians go about seeking and creating knowledge (2002). *The Contemporary Pacific* published Elise Huffer and Ropate Qalo's article, "Have We Been Thinking Upside Down? The Contemporary Emergence of Pacific Theoretical Thought" (2004), which applies to Pacific education, with no mention of Russell Bishop or Linda Tuhiwai Smith, both specialists in Māori education. To us, this does not mean the writers or your journal undervalued the seminal work of these two leading researchers; it simply means that others in Oceania have taken up the search for their definitions of the basis for action in their own situations. It is probably a compliment to the acceptance and resonance of the basic principles articulated by Bishop (1998) and Smith in her *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) that we assumed that they were known to be significant in the wider field of many indigenous ways of knowing and researching, which would be soon revealed if one were to consult some the works suggested as references.

When it came to our protocols we had to be concise and the references we supplied were merely suggested readings, mainly written in the twenty-first century, not a bibliography of the history of the development and expression of indigenous epistemologies and methods. Such a list would be far longer as even the very brief summary above suggests. This policy statement is a living document, and the University of Otago will respond

to Oceania's changing currents. In due course references will be updated but probably not expanded to the extent of submerging the document's guidelines.

Regarding the question of whether the protocols go far enough in repositioning the researcher/researched relations, we were considering all cases and, since several of our researchers are and will be Pacific people, we hope that the research needs of their communities will be reflected in their research questions and the way research is carried out. Often in an academic setting, the researcher, whether of Pacific extraction or not, *is* the driver of the project, but the "researched" then want to be a real part of it and rightly will be, so the journey becomes a mutual one; often potential collaborators in or from Pacific communities here or in the Island states may be the ones who pose questions and seek research and study from the University of Otago into a particular issue. We see a spectrum of researcher-researched relationships and locations (Aotearoa/New Zealand and the Pacific states) as well as a range of methodologies, and have tried to reflect these (see page 108). These protocols are the condensed views of many Pacific researchers, thinkers, and communities, and all we, as a team, did was to consolidate and summarize to try to shape protocols and principles appropriate to the mission of the University of Otago—how they work out in situ will vary. We hope that their combination of respect for Pacific values and practical ways to "do" research will lead to productive outcomes for both communities and researchers.

JUDY BENNETT
Chair of the editorial committee,
 Pacific Research Protocols,
University of Otago

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Pacific Research Protocols

*Halo Olaketa, Malo ni, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Ni sa Bula,
Malo e Lelei, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Kia Ora, Greetings*

BACKGROUND

In recent years, the University of Otago has demonstrated a commitment to furthering the academic progress of Pacific students and supporting Pacific staff. It established a Pacific Islands Centre in 2001 to provide academic and social support for students from the Pacific and of Pacific heritage. The center continues to grow and flourish.

In 2006, the University of Otago's Pacific Peoples Reference Group (PPRG) was established to advise the university on how to achieve its goals and objectives for Pacific peoples and how these can be further developed in ways that align with the Pacific community. In time, the subject of research related to the Pacific community became a focus. In September 2009, the PPRG wished to consider the relationship between the Pacific community and university researchers. Soon after, some PPRG representatives met with the Human Ethics Committee (HEC) of the university and representatives from the Pacific Trust Otago. In December, the PPRG was fully briefed about this meeting. The PPRG subsequently asked for cooperation and support from HEC in drafting Pacific research protocols and endorsed a request to the vice chancellor asking for support of this project; the research protocols in this document are the result.

On other fronts, the university has continued to expand its connections with and interests in the Pacific community, the development of staff and students with Pacific affiliations, and Pacific-related research. In 2009, the Division of Health Sciences appointed its first associate dean (Pacific). Other divisions have appointed Pacific contact people at a divisional or departmental level to assist the development of Pacific students and to further Pacific interests.

In terms of Pacific research and teaching, the University of Otago has a thriving Pacific Research Cluster, which includes researchers from across the university. Pacific Islands studies is one of the programs coordinated by Te Tumu, the School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies. Te Tumu also coordinates Otago's participation in the fortnightly Pacific Talanoa research seminars presented at all of New Zealand universities' campuses on the Building Research Capacity in the Social Sciences—supported access grid (BRCSS). Within the Division of Humanities some other departments, such as anthropology and history, teach Pacific-related courses. The Division of Health Sciences has a Pacific Strategic Framework, of which one of the goals is to “encourage Pacific research excellence.” The division's Pacific Islands Research and Student Support Unit (PIRSSU) coordinates research into student recruitment, academic progress, and performance. Pacific health is taught in all health professional courses, and a senior lecturer position in Pacific health was established in 2003 in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine. The Centre for International Health, opened in 2008, also has a strong focus on Pacific health.

Over the last decade, the university has developed a close association with the National University of Samoa and has assisted some of its staff to gain higher degrees. Teaching and research relationships have been formalized in a memorandum of understanding between the two institutions and celebrated through the opening of University of Otago House in Apia in 2008. The university also has memoranda of understanding with the University of the South Pacific, the University of Papua New Guinea, the University of Hawai'i, and the Piula Theological College in Sāmoa.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to outline suggested protocols for university researchers in relation to research involving Pacific peoples in the Otago-Southland region, the rest of New Zealand, and, more generally, in the islands of Oceania. In doing so, the university acknowledges that the quality of the relationships it hopes to foster and maintain with Pacific communities is the essential foundation for all research development. Thus the university respectfully seeks to find mutually agreed protocols that both establish and enhance this relationship now and into the future.

This proposed set of protocols falls within the broad ambit of the University of Otago's Human Ethics Committee and other key strategic documents.

University of Otago Human Ethics Committee

The university requires that any research involving human participants be conducted in accordance with the highest ethical standards. The university seeks to promote ethical practices in research and teaching and to ensure that all researchers and teachers are aware of ethical issues concerning research and teaching activities that involve human participants. There are prescribed principles and procedures for determining whether teaching and research proposals involving human participants meet appropriate ethical standards.

Researchers, teachers, and other members of the university should always consider whether their work requires ethical approval.

The following principles are consistent with the university's obligations to maintain the highest ethical standards in the exercise of academic freedom. They apply to all teaching and research proposals that require ethical approval.

There must be:

- ~ Research or teaching merit;
- ~ Participants' informed consent, which is given free from any form of coercion;
- ~ Respect for participants' rights of privacy and confidentiality;
- ~ Minimization of the risk of harm to participants;
- ~ Special care for vulnerable participants;
- ~ Limitation of, and justification for, any deception;
- ~ Appropriately qualified supervision;
- ~ Avoidance of any conflict of interest;
- ~ Respect for societies and cultures of participants;
- ~ Freedom to publish the results of research, while maintaining the anonymity of individuals (if appropriate).

The University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (HEC) was a party to the initial meeting that resulted in the development of the Pacific Research Protocols, and members of the HEC were involved in the drafting process.

Strategic Direction

Imperative: Contributing to the National Good and to International Progress

Observation:

New Zealand is in the midst of major demographic, social, and economic changes that, over the course of the next few decades, will transform the country. Key elements underlying these changes include the deployment of research (often with a collaborative and/or applied focus) in the development of New Zealand, the growing size and voice of the Māori people, the increasing size and aspirations of the Pacific community, greater global connectivity, and the rise of Asia and the Pacific Rim in the world.

Response:

Otago will embrace a role that includes contributing to the regional and national good, being active in national debate about the future direction of the country, and being fully engaged internationally.

Resources will be deployed to encourage research that supports regional and national development or the needs of the developing world. Distance teaching in fields where the university has specialist knowledge and expertise will help sustain and enhance Otago's national and international role.

Building on the present relationship with Ngāi Tahu, the university will extend its partnership with Māori. This partnership will include collaboration in research, as well as efforts to increase the recruitment, retention, and achievement of Māori students.

Otago will strengthen its links with Pacific communities both within New Zealand and in the Pacific region. It will take steps to increase the recruitment, retention, and achievement of Pacific students and to support the development of higher education in the Pacific.

The University will undertake a wide range of community service activities, embrace its role as a critic and conscience of society, and act in an ethically, socially, and environmentally responsible manner.

University Investment Plan

The university's Investment Plan prioritizes support to improve educational outcomes for Pacific students, including the further development of a framework for strategic planning.

University Charter

More specifically, the university's approach to meeting the needs of Pacific peoples is enunciated in the charter at point 6. To quote:

Consultative and cooperative relationships with Pacific communities are the cornerstones around which the University's contribution to the development and success of Pacific peoples is made.

In making this contribution, the University commits to build and sustain:

- links with Pacific communities and organizations locally, nationally, and internationally;
- structures and processes that promote effective dialogue with and input from Pacific students and their communities;
- research and teaching which is relevant to the needs of these communities.

To give effect to its commitments to Pacific peoples, the University:

- develops and maintains positive relationships with Pacific communities;
- recruits and provides support to assist increasing numbers of Pacific students to undertake and successfully complete University study;
- recruits and supports the participation, retention, and development of Pacific staff;
- promotes and supports research and teaching in areas relevant to the needs and interests of Pacific peoples;
- develops and sustains cooperative relationships with Universities and other appropriate research and educational organizations in the Pacific region.

These statements provide us with a basis to propose principles for consideration for protocols, thereby enhancing the university's relationships with Pacific communities and furthering mutually beneficial research and research education. We can conclude then that these are the University of Otago's values in relation to Pacific research. We have not yet considered the context of Pacific values, and this is essential to begin to understand how research might best be carried out in the most productive manner. Some of these values will be best considered in the protocols, so this is a basic, introductory summation that follows.

PACIFIC VALUES

Pacific societies and communities are extremely varied and researchers should remember this. Pacific values, ways of living, and beliefs are certainly not uniform. Some thinkers, nonetheless, believe that there are certain common Pacific values, including:

- ~ Respect
- ~ Reciprocity
- ~ Family links and obligations
- ~ Community oriented—the good of all is important
- ~ Collective responsibility
- ~ Older people revered—gerontocracy
- ~ Humility
- ~ Love/charity
- ~ Service
- ~ Spirituality, most commonly associated with Christianity

These values, it should be realized, may be practiced differently in different communities as well as within respective Pacific groups. Such values influence behavior—for example, many Pacific peoples have perceptions of “time,” leisure, dress, food, property, and so on that may on occasion be very different from those of non-Pacific peoples. Wise researchers need to be aware of these differences before any research can be attempted (Ministry of Education 2001, 14).

GUIDANCE FROM PACIFIC PATHFINDERS

The University of Otago is fortunate to have access to the insights of other institutions that have faced similar situations. Many of these insights derive from the New Zealand experience. This document draws on the accumulated wisdom in the following publications:

The Health Research Council of New Zealand: Guidelines on Pacific Health Research (2005);

Pasifika Education Research Guidelines: Final Report (2001);

Human Research Ethics: A Handbook for USP Researchers (2009);
and

Solomon Islands College of Higher Education Policy on Applied Research (1990).

All of these publications have resulted not from one individual, but from the thinking of communities of minds from many Pacific places. Our aim is to develop the University of Otago’s guidelines from a consensus of Pacific thinkers and leaders here within our own community. Thus the

protocols that follow are offered as suggestions, not prescriptions. They are a beginning.

PROTOCOLS FOR PACIFIC RESEARCH

What Is Research?

Research is work undertaken systematically in order to increase knowledge and to use this knowledge in order to gain new insights into particular issues. It is the pursuit of enquiries to discover what is unknown, to question what is thought to be known, and to rediscover knowledge that has become lost.

Research may be interdisciplinary and may involve different approaches and methods. In its broadest sense, the aim of research is to produce benefits for humans and their communities.

What Is Pacific Research?

The term “Pacific research” can encompass various approaches to research. The primary role of Pacific research is to generate knowledge and understanding about, and for, Pacific peoples and their environments.

Pacific research requires the active involvement of Pacific peoples. This may be as researchers, community leaders, advisors, participants, and stakeholders. This active relationship demonstrates that Pacific peoples are much more than just subjects for research. Research into Pacific topics may be initiated by Pacific researchers themselves or by non-Pacific researchers.

As well as contributing to the Pacific knowledge base, Pacific research at the University of Otago will build the capacity and capability of Pacific peoples in research.

Pacific peoples and their environments can be those of New Zealand, a particular island state, or the wider Pacific region.

The source material for Pacific research will usually be derived from Pacific peoples and their environment, and from within Pacific realities, whether these be in the past, the present, or the future.

Pacific research design, methods, and approaches will be informed by a range of Pacific worldviews. Pacific approaches to research will aim to be responsive to changing Pacific contexts, whether social or environmental. Pacific cultural values and beliefs will underpin Pacific research. Such

research will be conducted in accordance with Pacific ethical standards, values, and aspirations (Health Research Council 2005, 11; Solomon Islands College of Higher Education 1990; USP Research Office 2009, 1).

Figure 1 summarizes the various levels of involvement of Pacific peoples in Pacific research. These range from research conducted mainly by non-Pacific researchers to full partnership with Pacific researchers and to research conducted primarily by Pacific researchers. The aims, methodologies, research paradigms, and outcomes can vary in a similar fashion.

PRINCIPLES

The following protocols are offered to provide guidance in the facilitation of research in the varied Pacific communities. They are intended to guide all researchers, whether staff, students, or clinicians of the University of Otago.

1. *Maximizing benefits to humans*

- 1.1 University of Otago researchers will make every effort to maximize the benefits of their research to individuals and communities and to avoid harm to them. This applies during the research project and after it has been completed. Ethical research is that which respects these values and provides opportunities for mutual benefit.

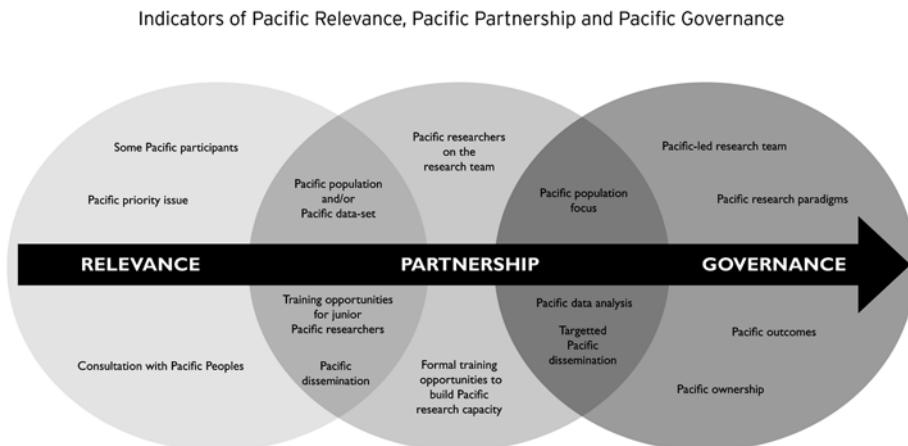


FIGURE 1 Indicators of Pacific relevance, Pacific partnership, and Pacific governance. Adapted from Health Research Council of New Zealand 2005.

2. *Relationships*

- 2.1 To develop, cultivate, and maintain principled relationships is integral to all ethical practice.

3. *Respect*

- 3.1 Respect is fundamental to all ethical relationships. Respect in the Pacific context acknowledges the primacy of the group as well as recognizing that the individual is a valued member of the group. In practice, respect is always context-specific and can vary in its interpretation and usage even within the same cultural context. Respect is demonstrated through humility and is reciprocal.

4. *Cultural competency*

- 4.1 To practice in a culturally competent manner, the researcher should have awareness of her/his cultural beliefs, values, practices, and an understanding of how these influence her/his interaction with others.
- 4.2 The beliefs, knowledge, and experience of the research participant is true to herself/himself, and the researcher must respect this even if it is different from his/her own beliefs, knowledge, and experience.
- 4.3 Researchers are encouraged to build their cultural knowledge of the Pacific communities with which they work.
- 4.4 Researchers are encouraged to create safe and enabling research environments that support culturally competent practice by:
 - seeking ethnic-specific and context-specific advice on culturally competent practice, and
 - understanding the importance of communicating appropriately translated information to Pacific people.

5. *Meaningful engagement*

- 5.1 Meaningful engagement between researchers and research participants requires developing, maintaining, and sustaining relationships that involve mutual trust. It is something that cannot be hurried. Researchers should:

- understand that effective “face-to-face” consultation is critical to establishing meaningful relationships with and among Pacific people;
- understand how to consult;
- identify with whom the researcher should consult; and
- establish, where appropriate, an advisory committee of informed and respected people. This is important when social or health research directly involves human participants.

6. *Reciprocity*

- 6.1 Reciprocity should be a guiding principle for research relationships. It should be demonstrated in practical ways (eg, capacity and capability building, reimbursement in cash or goods for time, and accessible dissemination. For the wider community, it may mean giving of skills or knowledge in situations not directly research related, such as taking a group of school children on a field trip or baking for a church event).
- 6.2 Reciprocity in research requires that knowledge gained through research will be used to benefit research participants and (where relevant) other people. Researchers should:
- build Pacific research capacity and capability to extend reciprocity;
 - provide training opportunities;
 - provide formal qualification opportunities for Pacific people;
 - build the research knowledge of the participants;
 - reimburse the costs of participation in research;
 - disseminate research findings so that they are accessible to Pacific communities.
- 6.3 If knowledge acquired from research is likely to generate significant financial benefit or intellectual property, researchers need to seek early advice from the Research and Enterprise Office to arrive at a clear, fair arrangement to benefit all concerned and to protect intellectual property.

7. *Utility*

- 7.1 A significant objective of Pacific research at the University of Otago is to help Pacific communities and Pacific states meet their needs and achieve their aspirations. Research involving human participants, informants, or guides will be expected to lead to

practical outcomes that benefit Pacific communities and environments. Researchers thus need to:

- clearly explain the potential of the research to improve/assist in areas related to human needs or aspirations;
- address priority issues of concern to the community or state;
- demonstrate how the research can inform policy or contribute to the knowledge base of the community; and
- develop Pacific methodologies, frameworks, models, analyses, and approaches.

8. *Rights*

- 8.1 Research should not be detrimental to research participants, as individuals, as members of a community, or as members of an identified ethnic group.
- 8.2 Each individual, group, or community has the right and freedom to make an informed choice as to whether or not to participate in any research.
- 8.3 Any risks inherent in a particular type of research must be made clear to the research participant, and they must feel completely free as to their decision to participate or not.
- 8.4 Participants must be able to withdraw at any stage of the research process with dignity and respect and without embedded disadvantage.
- 8.5 All research relationships are implicated with both rights and responsibilities to the other. Researchers must:
 - recognize that participants must be properly informed in order to consent;
 - ensure that all participants should receive all of the information;
 - uphold the right of participants to withdraw; and
 - alert participants to the need for confidentiality.

9. *Balance*

- 9.1 Balance is critical when practicing the ethical principles of Pacific research. It applies to the mutuality of power, control, and involvement.
- 9.2 Any research partnerships formed with Pacific peoples should be equitable and fair for both parties, engendering symmetry in the balance of power. Researchers should:

- aim for balance in who benefits from research (reciprocity); and
- aim for balance in research relationships and partnerships.

10. Protection

- 10.1 Primary knowledge that is based on experience and expertise belongs to the research participants and should be acknowledged as such.
- 10.2 Where appropriate, researchers should take protective measures to safeguard indigenous Pacific knowledge and knowledge holders appropriately.
- 10.3 Recognizing that Pacific research relationships are often based on structural societal inequalities, care must always be taken to protect those less powerful. Researchers should:
 - determine, from the knowledge source, the appropriate function of the knowledge that is shared, and
 - always acknowledge that the ownership of primary knowledge and data lies with the people who contribute that knowledge.
- 10.4 Protection of the environment, biosphere, and biodiversity: Pacific research will pay due regard to the connections and relationships among human beings, the land, the environment, and other forms of life. In the Pacific context, these relationships include traditional knowledge and skills and appropriate access to and utilization of resources.
- 10.5 Researchers need to be aware that certain methodologies may expose participants, in say a group setting, to subsequent harm. Where information is shared among participants, all need to be aware of confidentiality. Where there is a risk, the precautionary principle should govern and alternative methods should be adopted.

11. Capacity building

- 11.1 Capacity and capability building is critical to improving Pacific knowledge outcomes through research.
- 11.2 Capacity and capability building is a tangible example of reciprocity in action (see 6.3) and demonstrates a commitment to the empowerment of the Pacific community.

12. *Participation*

- 12.1 If research targets a Pacific population, Pacific peoples should participate at all levels of that research project. Researchers should:
- ensure that participation of Pacific peoples in a research project is encouraged on a number of levels, eg, investigators, advisors, students, and interviewers, and
 - provide support for Pacific members of the research team.
- 12.2 University of Otago supervisors of graduate students conducting research in a Pacific country may enter into a co-supervision agreement with an adjunct in-country supervisor who has appropriate knowledge and networks within the country to assist the graduate student with the on-the-ground needs of his/her research. (Sources: Health Research Council of New Zealand 2005, 60–64; USP Research Office 2009)

PROTOCOL DEVELOPMENT GROUP

This protocol has been developed by the following staff at the University of Otago:

Professor Judy Bennett

Professor Bennett convened this group and is an eminent researcher and teacher of Pacific history.

Associate Professor Jenny Bryant-Tokalau

Associate Professor Bryant-Tokalau is a leading Pacific researcher and teaches Pacific Island Studies in Te Tumu—School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies.

Dr Faafetai Sopoaga

Dr Sopoaga is the associate dean (Pacific) in the Division of Health Sciences and teaches in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine. She is also a member of the Pacific Peoples Reference Group.

Mr Mark Brunton

Mr. Brunton is the Research Manager Māori and a member of the Human Ethics Committee.

Mr Gary Witte

Mr Witte is the manager of academic committees and secretary of the Human Ethics Committee.

Ms Naomi Weaver

Ms Weaver is a planning and institutional research analyst and the secretary of the Pacific Peoples Reference Group.

APPENDIX I: CHECKLIST FOR RESEARCHERS UNDERTAKING PACIFIC RESEARCH

A series of issues and questions for researchers to consider when undertaking Pacific research.

Consultation

With whom have you consulted, eg, about the research design, scope, approach, methodology, and objectives? Are the people you have consulted sufficiently representative? (See Meaningful Engagement section.) Have you consulted with the key stakeholders? Have you considered (a) the communities you are targeting and (b) the research area you are approaching?

New Zealand

(a) Links:

If you have very few Pacific links, then a good person to start with is the Pacific manager of the relevant government department. They tend to have good links with the Pacific community and an extensive knowledge of Pacific people within your sector.

(b) Existing research:

It is often useful to ask within Pacific networks what research has already been undertaken in the area. Many unpublished projects have been carried out in Pacific communities that are otherwise hard to access. Letters of support from Pacific organizations and key individuals should be attached to proposals for funding.

Pacific States

(a) Permits:

You will find each country has its own organizations and bodies concerned with research. Some have more than one but most are based in a government department. All states require researchers from overseas to obtain a permit for research. And even if the researcher is a New Zealand-based person of Pacific heritage, these permits are still needed, so assume nothing. A fee is involved. Be aware that obtaining this permit usually takes considerable time, usually over a year, so start early. Some states, for example, will provide a permit only when you have approached authorities in

each province where you wish to work and sometimes they are just too busy to attend to letters. If possible, a preliminary visit to get a good understanding of the processes, people, and place will be the best path so that you become known. You are one of many researchers. You will do well to establish respectful face-to-face relationships. These are far more effective than e-mails.

(b) **Links:**

A researcher new to a country would be wise to establish some connection or relationship with an institution or ministry—university, college, government department, museum, archives, cultural center, church, nongovernment agency, or business—depending on your research area, to find out how best to proceed and how to begin to establish a fruitful relationship. The University of Otago has considerable contacts in the Pacific and you would be wise to talk to these staff members and certainly any members of the wider Pacific community here who can give good advice.

Ongoing Advisory Relationships

Have you organized and put in place mechanisms for receiving continued advice and support throughout the research project? What relationships have you established? Who is advising you on “best practice” when working with Pacific communities? What kind of support do you have in place for the research team and lead investigators who are working with the Pacific community? Note: If it is a large project with a significant Pacific component, you are best to establish a Pacific advisory committee that meets regularly to advise you on relevant issues (see Meaningful Engagement section).

Capacity Building

How are you committed to building the research capacity of Pacific peoples? Have you provided training opportunities, jobs for interviewers, and/or opportunities for Pacific researchers to gain qualifications or research experience from being involved with your project? What kind of knowledge and skill transfers can you arrange? How can you facilitate some form of research capacity and capability strengthening for the Pacific community while undertaking the research? Within the scope of the project, what is possible? Be innovative and keep the importance of research capacity building among the Pacific community on the agenda.

Research Design and Data Analysis

Are your recruitment measures going to work effectively with Pacific peoples? If you are researching a health problem, for example, have you identified Pacific health providers who can provide follow-up support for participants during or after the research ends? Have you named key people who are approachable, appropriate, and accessible for Pacific participants if they have questions or concerns about the research? How are you planning to deal with “English as a second language” speakers? Are you planning to include translations? Is there anyone on your research team who is bilingual or multilingual? Pacific research methodologies and theoretical frameworks are being developed (see list of references). Does your research build on any of these, employ Pacific approaches, or display specific methodological innovation? Contributing to the body of knowledge about appropriate research methods with/for Pacific peoples is a valuable endeavor.

Quantitative Research

- a) If it is a quantitative project, have you included a Pacific cohort of sufficient size to achieve sufficient statistical power for a separate analysis of Pacific data? (Note: this may require over-sampling.) If you are collecting blood or tissue samples, what is happening to these after the research is over? Are samples being stored and treated in a way that is not in conflict with Pacific views on blood and body parts?
- (b) If you, say, are doing geological studies, be sure to find out any tapu/sacred places that need to be treated with respect, as you will almost certainly need an informed person from that place to keep your team safe. In some societies at certain times women are not permitted to enter such places. Find these things out beforehand.

Qualitative Research

If it is qualitative research, how are your researchers planning to analyze the transcripts? Does the methodology work well cross-culturally? What are the paradigms and “worldviews” you are operating from? Will it be effective and/or appropriate when analyzing Pacific perspectives? Is it an approach that allows for and addresses cultural diversity? Is a Pacific researcher doing the Pacific analysis? If not, how will you ensure that the research team is culturally safe?

Dissemination

- (a) What is your plan for disseminating the research findings to the Pacific community in an appropriate and effective manner? This needs to be considered and budgeted for at the beginning of a project. Make linkages with people during the project who may be helpful in assisting with feeding the research back to the right people (see Reciprocity section for further detail). These people may be government or nongovernment organization workers, but most commonly community members are involved, and they too need to be considered.
- (b) Make sure that any and all publications are lodged in the libraries and centers of learning, especially in Pacific countries where these institutions often struggle for funds. Some researchers can give public talks to explain their findings, some set up ongoing exchanges and pass information on to interested people in the Pacific countries—there are many ways to get the information out in a form that is understandable, no matter how esoteric the research.

Intellectual Property

Are you aware that the university has policies in place to manage the ownership of intellectual property? The university claims ownership of intellectual property produced by staff in the course of their employment with the university. If you are working with a Pacific institution such as a university, you need to be clear about any contractual implications and arrangements well before the research begins. Consult the Research and Enterprise Office here at Otago early.

Budgets

Where appropriate, has the cost of interpreters and translators been included in the budget?

Other costs may include:

- a mea‘alofa/sevusevu (koha) for participants (see Reciprocity section for further discussion);
- costs of travel for participants and for people with whom you wish to consult; this may also mean costs of food need to be budgeted;
- catering for Pacific community network consultation meetings; and
- funding a Pacific advisory committee’s time and travel.

Damage Control

Research of any kind often falters. Wise researchers need to be creative, resilient, and adaptable. Often what seems appropriate while sitting at a desk, or in a laboratory, may simply not work out in a less-controlled environment. Researchers need to consider if their design or method is

- (a) appropriate to the reality, and
- (b) acceptable to the people involved.

The first is probably easier to deal with, but related to the second. The “people involved” may range from officials, who don’t have time to deal with your request, to participants, who for a number of reasons may not want to cooperate. If a researcher meets with total refusal by most participants, retreat is the best option.

Find another topic or piece of research. Consider why the first attempt went wrong and try again. It may mean an altered methodology is needed. It may mean you have not taken good advice or listened to informed advisors.

Knowledge is precious and thus highly political. Be aware of how others may perceive your research. Be aware that there are vested interests in and among any one community.

(Source: based on Health Research Council 2005)

APPENDIX 2: FURTHER READING AND REFERENCES

For those new to Pacific research, *The Health Research Council of New Zealand: Guidelines on Pacific Health Research* (2005) is the best statement of relevance to New Zealand and generally to the Pacific. It is essential reading and has been pivotal to our thinking in developing Otago's research protocols. It includes useful detailed discussion and makes clear the pitfalls for newcomers as well as providing sage advice. It applies to health research specifically but is of universal value. For those who need to know more, the following are valuable.

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