



**OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

## **BI-ANNUAL REPORT**

**July – September 2023**

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Director, Office of Research & Postgraduate Studies,

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background Information**

It was in 2018 when the Office of Research was renamed as the Office of Research and Postgraduate Studies (ORPS). In delivering on its basic mandate of fostering a culture of research within SINU and providing support to faculty staff and students in research activities, ORPS supports academic research at SINU by building research partnerships, securing external research funding, overseeing research policy, managing knowledge transfer, providing administrative oversight of research functions, and ensuring ethical compliance.

In taking on the responsibility of managing the Postgraduate Degrees by Research (PDRs), ORPS developing and drafting policies, procedures and guidelines for the admission and enrolment of PDR candidates, and the management and administration of all aspects of PDR program delivery.

### **1.2 The purpose and function of the Office of Research and Postgraduate Studies**

Goal 3 of the SINU 2021-2025 strategic plan is: *“Knowledge Creation and Innovation”*. In order to achieve this goal and to ensure the sustainability of future research activity at SINU, ORPS has put in place strategies to build the cohort of research-active staff and graduates within SINU, and to promote the value of SINU’s research capability to potential partners, and collaborators.

### **1.3 Vision**

A quality National University, raising standards of education, training and research in the Solomon Islands and Pacific region, towards achieving better standards of living, foster nation building, creation of an inclusive society and empowerment of people and enhancement of the core universally accepted values of humanity.

### **1.4 Mission**

To actively promote the inclusive, relevant and transformative possibilities of knowledge development, skills enhancement, academic enquiry and research that it supports.

This will be achieved through fostering a culture of research within SINU, providing support to research activities across the various Faculties, Institutes and Departments, and coordinating the conduct of research activities. Academic research will be further supported by building partnerships with the wider research community, developing and securing strong relationships with sponsors, securing funds for research activities, facilitating knowledge transfer through presentations and seminars, providing administrative oversight, and ensuring compliance and the ethical conduct of research.

## 1.5 Values and Principles

The Office of Research and Postgraduate Studies is dedicated to encouraging innovation and creativity in the pursuit of solutions to local challenges; fostering mutual respect within a collegial research environment; helping to inspire and empower future leaders; and using available resources responsibly.

## 1.6 Strategy, Planning and Objectives

Following the review of the Research Office in 2018 and the inclusion of responsibility for postgraduate degrees by research in its charter, it was clear that a strategic approach would be essential to map out an effective pathway going forward. The Office now is developing the following guiding fundamentals to ensure that it best served the needs of SINU.

**ORPS STRATEGY** is developed to concisely articulate SINU's research-related priorities which are: *To RECOGNISE, AUGMENT, MOBILISE and PROMOTE the full complement of research skills and resources available at SINU.*

**ORPS STRATEGIC PLAN** is designed to deliver on the Strategy by focusing on three key objectives:

### 1. **CREATING AN ENABLING RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT**

- Leading research-related planning, advice and communication;
- Securing provision of essential research-related support services, systems and processes;
- Providing management oversight and coordination of research endeavours; and
- Planning and implementing appropriate management and resourcing of postgraduate research studies.

### 2. **DEVELOPING THE CAPABILITY OF RESEARCHERS**

- Promoting shared responsibility for professionalism, compliance and ethical conduct of research;
- Facilitating professional development to enhance the SINU research capacity; and
- Monitoring, promoting and rewarding excellence in research performance and publication.

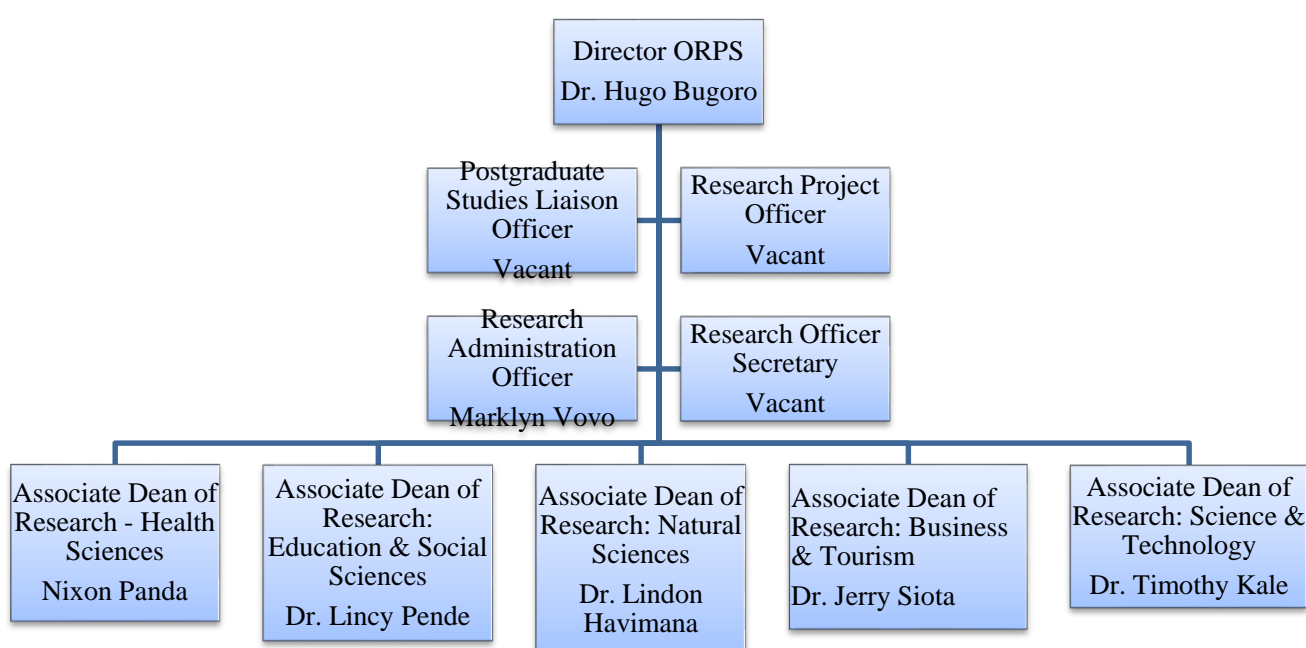
### 3. **ACCESSING EXTERNAL RESEARCH-RELATED SUPPORT**

- Acknowledging and expanding the SINU community of partners and supporters; and
- Actively and systematically seeking income-generating opportunities.

## 1.7 Staffing

A tentative structure for ORPS going forward, with its expanded areas of responsibility, the full staff establishment would be seven staff. However, presently, the office has only two full time staff. At full capacity, the Office will be headed by the Director who is supported by an Administration Officer, a Research Project Officer and a Postgraduate Liaison. Associate Deans of Research, who will have oversight of the research undertakings generated from each of the faculties, will be deployed to the faculties. Going forward, ORPS has an overarching role providing guidance and support in relation to both academic and applied research, as well as the management and administration of postgraduate degrees by research.

### 1.7.1 Office of Research and Postgraduate Studies Organogram (ORPS)



Position	Filled / Vacant	Name of staff
Director ORPS	Filled	Dr Hugo Bugoro
Postgraduate Studies Liaison Officer	Vacant	
Research Project Manager	Vacant	
Research Administrator	Filled	Mr Marklyn Jack Vovo
Associate Dean of Research – Health Sciences	Appointed	Mr. Nixon Panda
Associate Dean of Research – Education & Social Sciences	Appointed	Dr. Lincy Pende
Associate Dean of Research – Natural Sciences (FAFF)	Appointed	Dr. Lindon Havimana
Associate Dean of Research – Science and technology	Appointed	Dr. Timothy Kale

Associate Dean of Research – Business and Tourism	Appointed	Dr. Jerry Siota
Strategic Support Officer	Volunteer/Adjunct persons	Dr. Anouk Ride Professor Clive Moore

After the appointment of the Director ORPS the positions of Associate Deans - Research from each of the faculties were appointed. They had their first meeting in which they were welcomed by the Director and were briefed about their role as Associate deans of Research. Their first meeting also discussed the proposed Panatina Forum which will be held during the June/July semester break. The discussion on the Panatina Forum was led by Dr. Anouk Ride who is an adjunct fellow with the university. Other vacant positions are expected to be filled in 2024.

## 2.0 ORPS Highlights and achievements

Following the appointment of the new Director of ORPS, a strategy that was originally developed by the author (present Director) in 2018 is being re-visited, and strategic planning will be pursued. The highlights and achievements mentioned here reflect the progress made towards achieving some of the key elements.

### 2.1 Governance and Policy

With the increasing engagement of SINU academic staff in research (as evident in staff participation in conference presentations), it is essential that SINU has in place a comprehensive framework for the management and administration of a wide range of research projects. Depending on the funding source, different protocols may apply, and ORPS is systematically identifying and developing flexible frameworks to accommodate the needs of international development partners and donors, national and international government agencies, and SINU acquittal and reporting requirements needs to be followed accordingly.

To support the successful implementation of research activities within SINU, ORPS is progressing with the review and expansion of the suite of policies and procedures that guide researchers in developing and managing projects, obtaining funding, conducting research, and disseminating results in line with appropriate financial, ethical, infrastructural and human resource guidelines.

With the inclusion of the responsibility for PDRs in its charter, ORPS is also addressing the policy and procedural requirements to ensure that SINU has the necessary systems and procedures in place to competently and professionally manage candidates for Masters of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). This library of guiding documents will address all processes from admission and enrolment through management of all aspects of candidature to examinations and the final conferring of awards.

## 2.2 Engagement in Research

As an indispensable condition for conducting academic research, the availability of adequate, dedicated funding allocations will determine to a large degree the scope of research that can be undertaken. As a relatively new university which is in the early stages of developing its research capacity and reputation, SINU needs to be able to take advantage of every opportunity to demonstrate and improve the breadth and depth of its research expertise. In support of this, ORPS will be committed to pursuing and managing both external and internal research projects and the funding that they accrue.

### 2.2.1 Research projects and funding

For 2023, the funding generated via external signed contracts and agreements securing SINU's participation in research projects could not be made available but will be reported when writing the annual report later in the year. Below are some of the projects currently active.

	<b>2023 Agreed Projects Active</b>	<b>Total Project Value</b>
1	IWC-FNMHS	SBD\$619,190.60
2	Decentralised Rural Water - FNMHS	SBD\$391,521.60
3	RERIPA-ORPS	SBD\$476,117.70
4	FALAH-ORPS	
5	IPSOS/UNICEF-FNMHS	SBD\$618,135.00
6	Climate change and mobility/immobility – ORPS	SBD\$800,000.00
7	SPAR-Pacific - ORPS	
8	Urban dynamics in the Pacific – FST/FEH	
<b>TOTAL RESEARCH FUNDS</b>		

### 2.2.2 Externally funded research

1. The 3-year project through Griffith University's International Water Centre – Progressing inclusive, resilient and sustainable SDG6 and WASH outcomes in rural Pacific: approaches to enable effective community-based water management, managed by ORPS, involves six researchers from ORPS and FNMHS and is progressing as scheduled.
2. The Faith Based approach to water management in the rural communities has been implemented in Western and Isabel provinces. Now managed by ORPS, 3 staffs from the FNMHS and ORPS are presently participating and is progressing as scheduled.
3. Enhancing research and innovation ecosystem (RERIPA) project is a PIURN supported project. Work on the proposal is being led by 2 staff from the school of fisheries and supported by other 3 staffs from FST/VCO, FEH and ORPS respectively. The project has received approval and currently at the implementation stage.

4. IPSOS/UNICEF funded project is awaiting approval from the MHMS ethics committee. A staff from the FNMHS and ORPS are participating in this project.
5. Climate change and mobility/immobility project is a Auckland University led project that involved 2 staff from FNMHS and ORPS respectively. Funded by Auckland University, it looks at the effect of climate change on people movement in areas prone to effects of climate change.
6. SPAR-Pacific project is a FALAH led project that looks at the effect of COVID-19 on indigenous knowledge, practice and resilience in the pacific. 5 staff are participating in the project; 2 staff from FST, 1 from FAFF, 1 from School of Fisheries and 1 from ORPS.
7. Urban dynamics in the Pacific is a FALAH led project that looks at family agriculture, climate change and Health. 1 staff from FST and FEH respectively are participating in this project.
8. ORPS in collaboration with the Pacific Centre for Climate Change PCCC-SPREP is working on a climate resilient project that integrates Traditional Knowledge and Practices (TKP) and Ecosystem-based Solutions for Community Resilience in PICs. SINU is identified as one of the stakeholders and a partner in the project. The project includes Solomon Islands, Republic of Marshall Islands and Samoa.
9. The Arizona State University (ASU) and Tia Nero are in initial talks with SINU on a proposed partnership in establishing research and training on biodiversity conservation and living lab experiences. More on this partnership will be reported as it takes shape.
10. Planned symposiums and workshops for 2024 are as follows: the FALAH Workshop, jointly organised by PIURN, will be hosted by SINU on the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024. The theme focuses on Forestry, Agriculture, Fisheries and Health – Climate Change and Our Livelihood. This workshop will be funded by EU and SINU. The “Panatina Symposium” is planned for the June/July 2024 semester break. The symposium is a collaboration between SINU and the Australian National University (ANU), funded by the Australian government, DFAT.
11. There is an invitation to bid for the Takeda Foundation Grant on climate-ready health systems: using integrated surveillance and enhanced decision support to address environmentally driven infectious diseases. This bid is a collaboration between SINU, UQ, Samoa, and Tonga.

### 2.3 Staff development

In order to support continuous improvement and address the strong demand from academic staff, and in accordance with SINU’s quality procedures, the Office of Research submitted to the Quality Assurance Committee and then to the Senate, three Research Methodology Courses for 2018, articulated in classes related to the following areas of interest:

Education, Humanities and Business

Natural sciences, Fisheries and Technology

Healthcare



The courses were designed to prepare staff to understand and carry out the processes of academic research. They also addressed the steps involved in successful proposal writing, as well as the requirements for writing academic papers for publication.

## 2.4 Engagement of the community in dissemination and information sharing

1. 5<sup>th</sup> PIURN conference in Cook Islands, attended by 9 staff from SINU. Title
2. Symposium between Kyoto University and SINU at Panatina Campua
3. World Water Summit attended by a staff from FNMHS at Sweden date:
4. Presentation by Tyson Master student assessment from PAU as part of his requirement.
5. details from Kerzyiah Saepio the Fiji Workshop
6. 3 graduate students from DFS attended the Europe and China training on CC.
7. 3 other agriculture students attend training in Israel, not reported earlier
8. webpage development is currently in progress and is expected to be launched in early February

### 2.4.2 Publications

During this reporting period, a number of publications made by staff from SINU: below are from FNMHS, The ORPS will capture other activities from other faculties in the next reporting.

Mikael Burhin, Verzilyn Isom, Divinal Ogaoga, Sue Devine, Trevor Duke, **Hugo Bugoro**, Mathias Tamou, Caleb Mark, Nixon Panda. Child Health Nurses in Solomon Islands, piloting the 'Bachelor of Nursing: Child Health'. *International Nursing Review*, 2023: 1-10. DOI: 10.1111/inr.12836.

Lydia S. Kaforau, Gizachew A. Tessema, Jancey. J, **Bugoro. H**, Pereira. G. Prevalence and Factors Associated with Low Birth Weight in the Solomon Islands: Evidence From the 2015 Solomon Islands Demographic and Health Survey data, *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health* 2023: 1-9, DOI: 10.1177/10105395231158868

Burhin. M, Isom. V, Ogaoga, D, Devine. S, Duke. T, **Bugoro. H**, Tamou. M, Mark, C and Panda. N. Child health nursing in the Solomon Islands: A qualitative evaluation of the impact of the 'Bachelor of nursing – Child health', *International Nursing Review*, 2023: 1-9, DOI: 10.1111/inr.12832, [wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/inr](https://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/inr)

Lydia S. Kaforau, Gizachew A. Tessema, **Hugo Bugoro**, Gavin Pereira, Jonine Jancey. Lived experiences of women with low birth weight infants in Solomon Islands: A descriptive qualitative study. *PLOS Global Public Health*, 2022; 2(12): e0001008.

Adam Biran, Rosie Sanderson, Diana Gonzalez, **Hugo Bugoro**, Mohammad Kadir, David Gegeo, Jamesford Keboy, Clement Lifoia, Sheilla Funubo, Hellenda Honimae, Lanique Naolina Pitasua, Joana Tatalu, Patishadel Jonah, and Regina Souter. Formative research using settings and motives to explore child faeces disposal and

management in rural Solomon Islands. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 2022; 19, 9815.

Mark William Love, Cara Beal, Diana Gonzalez, Joe Hagabore, Collin Benjamin, **Hugo Bugoro**, Nixon Panda, Jael O'oi, Carol Offer, Regina Souter. Challenges and opportunities with social inclusion and community-based water management in Solomon Islands. *Development Policy Review*, 2022; 40:e12597

Lydia Sandrah Kuman Kaforau, Gizachew Assefa Tessema, Jonine Jancey, Gursimran Kaur Dhamrait, **Hugo Bugoro**, G F Pereira. Prevalence and risk factors of adverse birth outcomes in the Pacific Island region: a scoping review. *The Lancet Regional Health: Western Pacific*, 2022; 21: 100402.

Lydia Sandrah Kuman Kaforau, Gizachew Assefa Tessema, Jonine Jancey, Gursimran Kaur Dhamrait, **Hugo Bugoro**, G F Pereira. Prevalence and risk factors of adverse birth outcomes in the Pacific Island region: a scoping review protocol. *BMJ Open*, 2021, 11: e042423.

Adam T Craig, Nathan Kama, George Fafale, and **Hugo Bugoro**. 'Citizen Science as a tool for arboviral vector surveillance in a resourced-constrained setting: results of a pilot study in Honiara, Solomon Islands, 2019'. *BMC Public Health*, 2021, 21: 509.

Norma Denty Goulolo, **Hugo Bugoro**, Maxine Whittaker, Sarah Larkins, Humpress Harrington, Karen Carlisle, David Maclaren, and Rebecca Evans. Perspectives of Nurse About Factors Affecting Quality of Care at the Solomon Islands National Referral Hospital During the 2016-2017 Dengue Outbreak: A Qualitative Study, *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health* 2021, 33(6-7) 761-766; DOI: 10.1177/10105395211036266

#### **Book Chapter:**

**Hugo Bugoro**, 'Malaria' in *Solomon Islands Demographic and Health Survey 2015*, eds. Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the Pacific Community, 2017, pp 209-224 (Chapter 12).

### **3.0 Policy Development and Implementation progress**

ORPS has identified a number of policies that need to be reviewed or created to support the effective delivery of its obligations. While progress has been made in some areas, there are a significant number which will require interdisciplinary and/or university-wide collaboration and inputs.

As ORPS has been tasked with the implementation, management and administration of Postgraduate Degrees by Research (PDRs), this has been the area of most urgent focus, and a number of items relating to this undertaking are well in progress.

#### **3.1 Policy requirements for PDRs**

In helping to enable SINU academic staff to improve their qualifications and skills, ORPS has undertaken an audit of the policies procedures, guidelines and forms that might be required to properly manage and monitor the progress of its PDR candidates.

The following list is an indication of some of the documentation that is being created or is under review within ORPS.

Drafts have been prepared for a number of items including:

- PDR SINU Staff Letter of Offer
- PDR SINU Staff Scholarship Guidelines
- PDR Policy
- PDR Acceptable Research Environment
- PDR Appointment of Supervisors
- PDR Change of Supervisor
- PDR Responsibilities of Supervisors
- PDR Students' Annual Review
- PDR Research Skills Training
- PDR Supervision Record

Other items relevant to PDRs being addressed include:

- Application for Research Funds
- PDR Regulations
- Application for Admission
- Acceptance of Offer – Form
- Enrolment and Registration
- Annual Review – Procedure
- Acquittal of Research Funds – Form
- Approval of Continuance – Form
- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Upgrade/downgrade enrolment/registration – Form
- Change of Registration Status Request – Form
- Application for Leave – Form
- Application for Examination – Form

### **3.2 Other research-related policy requirements**

ORPS has also identified a number of other documents and policies that have wider application but that relate to considerations that are relevant to ORPS, which will also benefit from review and revision. Included among these are:

- SINU Academic Regulations
- SINU Consultancy Policy
- SINU Research Ethics Policy
- SINU Intellectual Property Policy
- SINU OH&S Policy

- SINU Biosecurity Policy

At present, ORPS has not begun to address these items

#### 4.0 Challenges and way forward

- Any challenges and issues
  - Staff vacancies, particularly the absence of appointees to the positions re: see organogram
  - Acquittal requirements by donor / funders were poorly managed by SINU finance
- Way forward to address challenges and issues
  - Vacant positions and appointments are urgently needed
  - Procedures for proper acquittals of donor funds held by SINU are being addressed
  - ***A revisit to the strategy re: section on strategies, plans and objectives needs to be made.***
- Key priority activities for next six months are:
  - To win additional externally funded research projects
  - To complete management framework, systems and processes for research projects
  - To complete policy-related documents for PDRs
  - To successfully oversee the admission and management of up to 5 PDR candidates