

CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr James E. Tener
Mathematical Sciences Institute
Hanna Neumann Building #145
Australian National University
Acton ACT 2601

james.tener@anu.edu.au
<http://math.tener.cc>

RESEARCH INTERESTS

My work is motivated by conformal field theory (CFT), and my research program seeks to build a unified mathematical framework for the study of CFT, as well as to study new mathematical connections which arise as a result. Mathematical objects which arise include operator algebras, subfactors, functorial field theories, vertex operator algebras, quantum algebra and tensor categories, vector-valued modular forms, and complex function theory.

EMPLOYMENT

Australian National University

Associate Professor (January 2026 - present)
Senior Lecturer (January 2021 - December 2025)
Lecturer (March 2019 - December 2020)
Mathematical Sciences Institute Research Fellow (July 2018 - March 2019)

University of California, Santa Barbara

Visiting Assistant Professor (September 2015 - April 2016, September 2016 - June 2018)

Max Planck Institute for Mathematics, Bonn

Postdoctoral Researcher (August 2014 - August 2015, June 2016 - August 2016)

VISITING POSITIONS

Research Member, MSRI Program on Quantum Symmetries (January 2020 - May 2020)

EDUCATION

University of California, Berkeley

PhD, Mathematics (September 2008 - May 2014)
Advisor: Vaughan F. R. Jones

Pomona College

BA, Mathematics (September 2004 - May 2008)
Magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, math department award, and thesis award

EXTERNAL FUNDING

1. ARC Discovery Project DP200100067 "Physical realisation of enriched quantum symmetries," 2020 - 2023, co-Chief Investigator
2. AMSI Scientific Workshop Funding 2021, "The Mathematics of Conformal Field Theory II"
3. AMSI Scientific Workshop Funding 2019, "Subfactors in Sydney"
4. AMS-Simons Travel Grant 2017-2019
5. NSF Graduate Research Fellowship 2010-2012

PUBLISHED ARTICLES AND PREPRINTS

1. *Every conformal net has an associated unitary VOA*
[arXiv:2507.20735](https://arxiv.org/abs/2507.20735), submitted (with André Henriques)
2. *The Bisognano-Wichmann property for non-unitary Wightman conformal field theories*
[arXiv:2506.10625](https://arxiv.org/abs/2506.10625), submitted.

Last updated: January 7, 2026

3. *Integrating positive energy representations of the Virasoro algebra*
[arXiv:2506.08684](https://arxiv.org/abs/2506.08684), submitted. (with André Henriques)
4. *The Segal-Neretin semigroup of annuli*
[arXiv:2410.05929](https://arxiv.org/abs/2410.05929), submitted. (with André Henriques)
5. *Non-unitary Wightman CFTs and non-unitary vertex algebras*
Selecta Math. (N.S.) 31 (2025), no. 66. [arXiv:2409.08454](https://arxiv.org/abs/2409.08454).
 (with Sebastiano Carpi, Christopher Raymond, and Yoh Tanimoto)
6. *Classification of finite depth objects in bicommunant categories via anchored planar algebras*
Commun. Math. Phys., to appear. [arXiv:2307.13822](https://arxiv.org/abs/2307.13822).
 (with André Henriques and David Penneys)
7. *Unitary anchored planar algebras*
Commun. Math. Phys. 405, 137 (2024). [arXiv:2301.11114](https://arxiv.org/abs/2301.11114).
 (with André Henriques and David Penneys)
8. *Unitary vertex algebras and Wightman conformal field theories*
Commun. Math. Phys. 395 (2022), 299–330. [arXiv:2203.10795](https://arxiv.org/abs/2203.10795).
 (with Christopher Raymond and Yoh Tanimoto)
9. *Fusion and positivity in chiral conformal field theory*
GAFA 34 (2024), no. 4, 1226–1296. [arXiv:1910.08257](https://arxiv.org/abs/1910.08257).
10. *Classification of extremal vertex operator algebras with two simple modules*
J. Math. Phys. 61 (2020), no. 5, 052302, 19 pp. [arXiv:1811.02180](https://arxiv.org/abs/1811.02180)
 (with J. Connor Grady, Ching Hung Lam, and Hiroshi Yamauchi)
11. *Representation theory in chiral conformal field theory: from fields to observables*
Selecta Math. (N.S.) (2019), 25:76. [arXiv:1810.08168](https://arxiv.org/abs/1810.08168)
12. *Positivity and fusion of unitary modules for unitary vertex operator algebras*
RIMS Kôkyûroku (2018), no. 2086, 6–13.
13. *Singular values of weighted composition operators and second quantization*
Int. Math. Res. Not. IMRN (2018), no. 20, 6426–6441. [arXiv:1612.03970](https://arxiv.org/abs/1612.03970)
 (with Mihai Putinar)
14. *On classification of extremal non-holomorphic conformal field theories*
J. Phys. A: Math. Theor., 50 (2017), 115204. [arXiv:1611.04071](https://arxiv.org/abs/1611.04071) (with Zhenghan Wang)
15. *Geometric realization of algebraic conformal field theories*
Adv. Math., 349 (2019), 488–563. [arXiv:1611.01176](https://arxiv.org/abs/1611.01176)
16. *Construction of the unitary free fermion Segal CFT*
Commun. Math. Phys. 355 (2017), no. 2, 463–518. [arXiv:1608.02095](https://arxiv.org/abs/1608.02095)
17. *Planar algebras in braided tensor categories*
Mem. Amer. Math. Soc. 282 (2023), no. 1392. [arXiv:1607.06041](https://arxiv.org/abs/1607.06041)
 (with André Henriques and David Penneys)
18. *Categorified trace for module tensor categories over braided tensor categories*
Documenta Math., 21 (2016) 1089–1149. [arXiv:1509.02937](https://arxiv.org/abs/1509.02937)
 (with André Henriques and David Penneys)
19. *Subfactors of index less than 5, part 4: vines*
Int. J. Math., 23 (2012), no. 3, 1250017. [arXiv:1010.3797](https://arxiv.org/abs/1010.3797) (with David Penneys)
20. *Unitary equivalence to a complex symmetric matrix: low dimensions*
Lin. Alg. Appl., 437 (2012), no. 1, 271–284. [arXiv:1104.4960](https://arxiv.org/abs/1104.4960)
 (with Stephan R. Garcia and Daniel Poore)
21. *Unitary equivalence of a matrix to its transpose*
J. Operator Theory, 68:1 (2012), 179–203. [arXiv:0908.2107](https://arxiv.org/abs/0908.2107) (with Stephan R. Garcia)
22. *Projections and idempotents with fixed diagonal and the homotopy problem for unit tight frames*
Oper. Matrices, 5 (2011) 139–155. [arXiv:0906.0139](https://arxiv.org/abs/0906.0139)
 (with J. Giol, L.V. Kovalev, D. Larson and N. Nguyen)

23. *Unitary equivalence to a complex symmetric matrix: an algorithm*
J. Math. Anal. Appl., 341 (2008) 640-648. [arXiv:0908.2201](https://arxiv.org/abs/0908.2201)

SELECTED RECENT INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (SINCE JUNE 2016)

1. Workshop on Subfactors and Applications
 Mathematisches Forschungsinstitut Oberwolfach, July 2025
2. Operator Algebras and Mathematical Physics (Yasu Festa 60)
 University of Tokyo, July 2023
3. Australian and New Zealand Association of Mathematical Physics Annual Meeting
 Plenary talk (via Zoom), February 2022
4. MATRIX workshop on 2D Supersymmetric Theories and Related Topics
 MATRIX (via Zoom), January 2022
5. Workshop on Subfactors, Vertex Operator Algebras, and Tensor Categories
 Minicourse, IASM-BIRS, Hangzhou, China (via Zoom), September 2021
6. MSRI Introductory Workshop: Quantum Symmetries
 Mathematical Sciences Research Institute, Berkeley, USA, January 2020
7. Workshop on Subfactors and Applications
 Mathematisches Forschungsinstitut Oberwolfach, October 2019
8. Workshop on Operator Algebras and Quantum Physics
 Simons Center for Geometry and Physics, June 2019
9. NCGOA/Shanks conference on Algebra and Geometry Quantized and Quantified
 Vanderbilt University, May 2019
10. Workshop on Subfactors and Fusion Categories
 Banff International Research Station, October 2018
11. Workshop on Geometric and Categorical Aspects of CFTs
 Casa Matemática Oaxaca, September 2018
12. Algebraic Methods in Mathematical Physics
 CRM Montreal, July 2018
13. (Sub)Factors in Maui, May 2018
14. Workshop on algebraic combinatorics and representation theory of finite groups and vertex operator algebras
 Kyoto RIMS, December 2017
15. Shanks workshop on subfactors and applications
 Vanderbilt University, October 2017
16. Workshop on Subfactors, higher geometry, higher twists and almost Calabi-Yau algebras
 Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences, Cambridge, March 2017
17. Southeastern Analysis Meeting 2017
 UT Knoxville, March 2017
18. Berkeley-Tokyo Autumn School on Quantum Field Theory and Subfactors
 UC Berkeley, November 2016
19. Modular Categories—Their Representations, Classification, and Applications
 Casa Matemática Oaxaca, August 2016
20. Workshop on Von Neumann Algebras
 Hausdorff Institute for Mathematics, Bonn, July 2016
21. Mathematics and Physics at the Crossroads trimester program seminar
 National Institute for Nuclear Physics, Frascati, June 2016

RECENT INVITED SEMINAR AND COLLOQUIUM TALKS (SINCE APRIL 2017)

1. UNSW Pure mathematics seminar, November 2024
2. Vanderbilt University Subfactor Seminar, December 2021
3. ANZ Geometry, Strings, and Fields Seminar, May 2021

4. Tokyo-Kyoto Operator Algebras Zoom Seminar, January 2021
5. Vanderbilt University Subfactor Seminar, November 2020
6. Wales Mathematical Physics-Physical Mathematics Zoom Seminar, July 2020
7. UC Davis Quantum Mathematics & Physics Seminar, February 2020
8. University of Rome Tor Vergata Operator Algebras Seminar, July 2019
9. University of Melbourne Pure Mathematics Seminar, March 2019
10. Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, April 2018
11. University of Arizona Mathematics Colloquium, February 2018
12. UC Davis Seminar on Algebra & Discrete Mathematics, November 2017
13. OSU Seminar on Quantum Algebra & Quantum Topology, September 2017
14. OSU Seminar on Non-commutative Geometry & Operator Algebras, September 2017
15. Claremont Colleges Mathematics Colloquium, April 2017

SUPERVISION

- Postdocs: Christopher Raymond (2020-2023).
- Associate PhD supervisor, current: Dongchang Liu, Dominic Weiller, Tom Xu
- Associate PhD supervisor, past: Bolin Han (2023), Jaklyn Crilly (2024)
- Honours supervision: Connor Grady (2018, UCSB), Andy Yin (2021, University Medal), Jake Lyons (2024), Kevin Zhou (2025), Tyler Le (2026), Yiran Mao (2026).
- ANU Future Research Talent scholars: Samyak Parashar (2025), Sonali Saha (2025)

CONFERENCES CO-ORGANISED

1. Workshop on Representation Theory, December 2025.
2. MATRIX workshop on Tensor categories, quantum symmetries and mathematical physics, November 2024. Funded by MATRIX, the ARC, and the Simons foundation.
3. The Mathematics of Conformal Field Theory II, July 2021. Funded by AMSI, AustMS, IAMP, and the MSI.
4. Subfactors in Sydney, February 2019. Funded by AMSI, AustMS, and the ARC.
5. Workshop on Quantum Symmetries, February 2019. Funded by the ARC.
6. Subfactors in Maui series, July 2019, 2017, 2013, and 2012. Funded by the NSF and DARPA.
7. Subfactor Theory in Mathematics and Physics, July 2014. Funded by DARPA.
8. QFTahoe Workshop, March 2013. Funded by the NSF.
9. Subfactors in Tahoe, February 2012. Funded by the NSF.

SERVICE AND ORGANIZATION

Current roles

- MSI HDR Convener (2025-present)
- MSI Equity and Diversity Committee member (2020-present)
- ANU College of Systems and Society HDR committee member (2025-present)
- MSI HDR committee chair (2025-present)
- Council of the Australian Mathematical Society member (2025-present)
- Webmaster for the Australian Mathematical Society (2025-present)

Past roles

- MSI Equity and Diversity Committee chair (2023-2025)
- ANU College of Science IDEA committee member (2023-2025)
- ANU HDR Committee member (2020-present)
- AustMS national meeting Program Advisory Board (2025)
- Co-organiser for the MSI Special Year 2020 in Mathematical Physics

Other service

- Grant assessor for the Australian Research Council
- Served as a referee for 36 articles at 25 journals, including Annals of Mathematics, Inventiones mathematicae, Journal of the AMS, Duke Mathematical Journal, Advances in Mathematics,

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, and Communications in Mathematical Physics.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND AWARDS

- ANU College of Science Dean's Commendation for Excellence in Education for Teaching Excellence (2023)
- Course convener, MATH3228 Advanced Complex Analysis (2018-present).
- Course co-convener, MATH2305 Applied Mathematics 1 (2025-present).
- Course co-convener, MATH1014 Mathematics and Applications 2 (2020 - 2024).
- Taught special topics courses: operator algebras, Lie groups and Lie algebras, 2d TQFTs and Frobenius algebras, representation theory of affine \mathfrak{sl}_2 and the Virasoro algebra
- At UC Santa Barbara, I was the instructor of record for 11 courses, including Calculus II (5 times), Transition to Higher Mathematics (4 times), and upper division Linear Algebra (2 times). Course sizes range from 150-350 for calculus and 35-60 for proof-based courses. On a scale of 1=excellent to 5=poor, my average course rating by students was 1.2.
- As a graduate student at UC Berkeley, I was the instructor of record for Matrix Theory and Differential Equations, and a teaching assistant for Calculus II, Precalculus, Matrix Theory, and Linear Algebra. I received an Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor award.