

## Policy Governing Research Institutes and Centres

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Related policies or other documents:

*Academic Quality Management Policy* (SED08/115)

*Knowledge Assets and Intellectual Property Policy* (VCD07/2838)

### 1.0 Rationale and Scope

1.1 This policy regulates the establishment, administration, approval and review of research Institutes and Centres. Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs) are not covered by this policy as they are subject to different approval mechanisms under the auspices of the Commonwealth Government. For further information on CRCs, refer to the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). Joint venture Institutes, Units and Centres are also not covered by this policy as their constitution and governance must be negotiated between UNE and the other joint venture partners. Such joint ventures would, however, have a formal reporting line to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research).

### 2.0 Purposes

2.1 Research Institutes and Centres are established to achieve the following outcomes:

1. an enhanced research reputation of UNE and its academics in the wider community;
2. Delivering, where appropriate, on the UNE vision of research-informed teaching and learning; and
3. maximising the amount of externally funded research conducted at UNE.

2.2 All approved Research Institutes and Centres are expected to establish and maintain a current web presence with a link advised to Research Services.

2.3 All Research Institutes and Centres, approved under this policy, are bound by the principles set out in the University's Knowledge Assets and Intellectual Property Policy.

### 3.0 Role of Research Institutes

3.1 Research Institutes are intended to pursue major UNE research initiatives and to be substantially self-funding. The precise funding arrangements and arrangements for the flow of Research Block Funding will be negotiated and agreed between relevant stakeholders as part of the process for formulating the proposal for establishing the Institute.

3.2 Institutes are managed and evaluated at a University level, with any UNE academic staff, excepting the Director, also reporting to relevant Heads of Schools for the purpose of workload and performance review. Institute staff may be drawn from across Faculties as well as appointed to the Institute for specific externally-funded projects.

3.3 It is expected that an Institute will demonstrate success against the following criteria, weighted as appropriate for the strategic objectives of the Institute in the context of the overall UNE Strategic Plan:

1. a coherent body of ongoing research and consultancy work, that represents a strong program, in either a focused area or a cohesive area of inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary work, that distinctively advances the UNE reputation and research income in areas of strategic importance to UNE;

2. interaction between the Institutes' funded research and the University's teaching and learning enterprise focused on Higher Degree Research students to help achieve UNE's vision and enhance its reputation with respect to research-informed teaching;
  3. provision of substantial collaborative opportunities for staff to be engaged in impactful and well funded research;
  4. relationships with or the capacity to develop relationships with national or international collaborators and with those in a position to adopt or drive adoption of the results of research;
  5. sufficient scale to allow UNE to enhance its brand and competitive capacity in the competitive research market; and
  6. ability to be fully or substantially self-funded.
- 3.4 These criteria, appropriately weighted, will form the basis of any Key Performance Indicators proposed for the Institute. The nature of the funding model to be applied in criterion 6 can be negotiated with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), in consultation with other relevant stakeholders as well as members of the University senior executive.

#### **4.0 Role of Research Centres**

- 4.1 Research Centres focus on externally funded research conducted through Schools, and are managed and staffed within the Faculty/School structure. Centres are the basis for researcher collaboration, with a particular emphasis on securing external resources for research activities. They assist with providing research development opportunities for staff, and to provide a focus for strengthening the School and Faculty's research reputation. Cross-disciplinary teams across schools are also encouraged with the reporting and other arrangements being agreed between the Schools concerned.
- 4.2 Centres are managed and evaluated at a School level, with any UNE academic staff reporting to their relevant Heads of Schools for the purpose of workload and performance review. Centre staff may be drawn from one or more Schools.
- 4.3 It is expected that a Centre will demonstrate success against the following criteria, weighted as appropriate for the strategic objectives of the Centre in the context of the overall UNE Strategic Plan and Faculty/School strategic objectives:
1. pursuit, by a number of staff, within and beyond the School, of a coordinated research and consultancy program or programs which will enhance the School's/Faculty's reputation and research income in areas of strategic importance to the School/Faculty;
  2. support of the research program through external funding;
  3. interaction between the Centre's research program and the teaching and learning enterprise of the School/s concerned to help achieve UNE's vision and enhance its reputation with respect to research-informed teaching;
  4. development of the research careers and reputation of the staff of the Schools concerned; and
  5. active collaboration with other relevant institutions and users of the research.
- 4.4 These criteria, appropriately weighted, will form the basis of any Key Performance Indicators proposed for the Centre.

#### **5.0 Reporting Structures**

- 5.1 All academic staff at UNE report to a School for the purposes of workload and performance reporting, to ensure coordination and the delivery of research-informed teaching. Research secondments to an Institute or Centre do not relieve an academic of their obligations of service, nor their obligations to support or engage in teaching roles for their School. The duration of any research secondment to a Research Institute or Centre for a staff member is subject to negotiation between the Institute or Centre Director and the relevant Head of School for the staff member.
- 5.2 The Director of an Institute is a Professor from within UNE and has the same status and administrative delegation as a Head of School on all matters except workload and performance review for UNE staff working into the Institute from Schools. An Institute Director:
1. reports to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) for the period of time they are the Director with salary and on-costs transferring to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) for the period of their Directorship;

2. is responsible for the budget, research direction and resourcing of the institute;
3. is responsible for the management of staff within the institute, subject to the reporting arrangements for academic staff; and
4. negotiates with relevant Heads of School for: (a) the release of staff to work within the Institute; and (b) the terms under which staff are released.

5.3 The Director of a Centre is a senior researcher within a School and reports to their Head of School (or to their relevant Faculty PVC/Dean, as appropriate, given the nature and level of the Centre. Issues of funding, workload and other matters are determined at the School level. A Centre Director:

1. is responsible for the budget, research direction and resourcing of the centre;
2. negotiates with Heads of School for: (a) the release of staff to work within the centre; and (b) the terms under which staff are released.

## **6.0 Establishment**

6.1 *Institutes*: Proposals should be assembled and submitted as described in the accompanying Procedures. The proposal will be reviewed by the Academic Board Research Committee, prior to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) making the final approval decision.

6.2 *Centres*: Proposals should be assembled and submitted as described in the accompanying Procedures. The proposal will be reviewed by the relevant Faculty Executive Committee and Faculty Research Director, prior to the relevant PVC/Dean making the final approval decision. Once approved at the Faculty level, the PVC/Dean will advise the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) of the Centre's approval.

## **7.0 Performance Review**

7.1 Institutes and Centres will submit an annual interim report in accordance with the guidelines set out in the accompanying Procedures to facilitate on-going monitoring and recording of achievements.

7.2 Institutes will be formally reviewed, informed by evidence of performance against nominated performance indicators, every three years, by a Review Committee established by the Academic Board Research Committee (ABRC).

7.3 Centres will be reviewed, informed by evidence of performance against nominated performance indicators, within the review and reporting cycle and process for Schools under the Academic Quality Management Policy.

## **8.0 Actions after Performance Review**

8.1 The relevant review committee shall recommend either that

1. The Institute or Centre be: a) continued, b) continued subject to modification and review as specified, or c) dis-established.
2. If the recommendation is: a) be continued, the review committee may recommend expected or suggested adjustments to the relevant Director.
3. If the recommendation is: b) be continued subject to modification and review, the committee shall specify modifications which are mandatory and shall also determine the review process and timing to evaluate compliance.
4. If the recommendation is: for c) dis-establishment, the committee shall determine the timing and mechanism for dis-establishment.

8.2 The only avenue for review of committee findings is to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) within 1 month of the review committee recommendations, and decisions by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) shall be final.

8.3 The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) will report to Academic Board on any decisions made with respect to establishment, modification or dis-establishment of a Research Institute or Centre.