
Guidelines on Defining Research Productivity

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Purposes for Research Productive Staff Criteria

In order for UNE to maintain a strong academic culture it is expected that full-time continuing academic staff will maintain a mix of research-led teaching, service and academic research. Individual staff will have differing emphases in their mix of contributions, and different schools have their own needs in balancing work-loads, but the expectation of research contribution exists for all academic staff.

The management of workload and staff performance is conducted at a school level within the University of New England. These criteria are intended to provide guidance for schools and staff about what is minimally expected for staff to be considered to be research productive.

Principles for Research Productive Staff Criteria

Schools are expected to use a transparent system for allocating workload and staff performance evaluation to allow proper evaluation of research contribution. Schools are encouraged to adopt the following principles for evaluation and management of research productivity. The principles are based on a points-score approach.

1. Workload point scores for research should be managed within schools and / or disciplines, tailored to address their disciplinary or strategic needs, and their budgets and workloads. The aim is transparent workload allocation rather than a mechanistic approach.
2. Criteria for the recognition of research outputs need to be sufficiently broad to allow for discipline specific or strategic considerations (e.g. artistic performances, or leadership of major strategic initiatives). These will be applied at school level, but a mechanism is needed to ensure objectivity and maintenance of high standards across UNE. The point score guidance that follows is intended to support that standardization.
3. There needs to a reasonable degree of comparability and transparency in the treatment of research workload within and across schools, and encouragement for research activity. However, the negotiations will have to remain at School level because of differences in resources, strategic needs and teaching demands, and because workload is managed at a school level.
4. Evaluation and workload management systems maintain the teaching / research / services link, and ought not contribute to a breakdown of the expectation that all academics contribute in all three ways.

Minimum research activity

The following allocation of points is recommended for the recognition of research productivity, within workload negotiations within Schools.

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1. Research activity should be measured on the basis of publications, grants or other outputs measured by the UNE system for research outputs¹, with emphasis on ensuring that these form part of the UNE repository. Whilst there are problems with these systems at present, this requirement will inevitably increase their use and the pressure to maintain them at a high level of accuracy, and it will ensure transparency.
 2. Research activity should reflect both those outputs recognised for payment under Federal or state government incentives², and those which may not be designated for DEEWR funding points but which are recognised as important research within the discipline; with an appropriate adjustment for quality and significance.
 3. Schools should publish their methods for allocating workload including research, to all staff, and these should be evaluated for comparability and fairness at a Faculty level.
 4. An important element of the School level evaluation should be to ensure that there is an active process of peer review of the quality of outputs at a school or discipline level, and of the legitimacy of the points allocations to different outputs.
 5. Whilst there will be differences between schools and disciplines in the forms of output that are creditable research, the working group believes that minimum research activity expected of an academic can be correlated to an equivalent of DEEWR 'points' as follows, assessed over a three year cycle:
 - a. For a Level B or C continuing full time academic, the equivalent of 2 DEEWR points, plus successful supervision of 1 higher degree research student, plus \$10,000 in external research funding.
 - b. For a Level D or E, a doubling of this minimal expectation.
 6. The Academic Board recognises that there will be tradeoffs to be made at a school level, but believes that if the principles of transparency outlined above are maintained, then this will form a sufficient basis for all staff to understand minimum expectations of research activity.
 7. The Academic Board does not believe that this minimum level is the equivalent to a satisfactory level of research activity, but recognises that tradeoffs between teaching, research and service and the different situation of different schools will need to be carried out to determine what is satisfactory performance for individuals and for schools.

Principles for recognition of superior performance

The Academic Board believes there is a need to differentiate between minimum expectations, satisfactory performance and superior performance.

1. Minimum standards ought be clear to staff and managed as part of performance management. Encouraging superior performance (research outcomes, effort and contribution to UNE) requires consideration of incentives beyond workload allocations alone. The Academic Board believes that incentives for superior performance should also be determined by Schools and be able to be compared and examined in a transparent manner.
2. In relation to identification of superior performance, the Academic Board believes that school criteria should distinguish the quality or value of different research outputs and link to School-focused and UNE-focused strategic research objectives rather than to focus only on individual outputs or government research metrics as ends in themselves. Four key aspects of output are relevant in distinguishing quality and value of research outputs to UNE.

¹ For a descriptive listing of research outputs see, for example, http://www.research.utas.edu.au/publications/docs/2_publications_categories.doc. However note that this listing is being updated as new forms of output become recognised.

² The most common outputs identified for DEEWR purposes are A1 – Books (5 points); B1 - Book Chapters (1 point); C1 Refereed journal articles (1 point); and E1 - Refereed conference proceedings (1 point). These scores are pro-rated to the number of authors with the exception of book chapters where the number of contributing chapters for each author is considered.

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- a. Advancing knowledge in ways that have a demonstrable high impact within the discipline and the community;
 - b. Outputs which strengthen the UNE prestige and brand, and the university's strategic positioning,
 - c. Creation of knowledge which feeds directly into improving UNE teaching and learning strengths; and
 - d. Outputs which materially improve UNE resource strength/capacity (including the development of research teams, junior colleagues over and above individual contribution).

It should be noted that there are other important research contributions such as leadership of research groups, mentoring, development of research strategies and the like, which are elements of service and should be recognised as such for the purposes of workload, progression and reward.
