

UNE Research Plan 2012–2015

OUR MISSION

UNE is a regionally based, globally networked university that is renowned for the quality of its student experience and the excellence of its research specialisations. We provide a formative educational experience on campus and we bring our research and teaching to the world through the latest communication technologies.

OUR VISION

Regionally based and globally connected, UNE will be known throughout the world for the quality of its on-campus student experience, the accessibility and flexibility of its distance education, and its focus on research that is of particular significance to rural and regional communities. UNE aims to be the nation's university of choice for research into regional issues of global significance.

See UNE Strategic Plan 2011–2015 Learning without Limits

The **UNE Research Plan 2012–2015** supports the UNE Strategic Plan 2011–2015, Learning Without Limits, which identifies five strategic priorities:

- To distinguish ourselves by the quality of our on-campus experience
- To lead the nation in the innovative use of educational technology for distance education
- To achieve international distinction in all our specialist fields of research
- To set the standard for social inclusiveness and access for all to higher education
- To foster business processes that maximise efficiency, promote a service culture and meet the needs of students and staff.

The **UNE Research Plan 2012–2015** primarily responds to the university's aspiration '*to achieve international distinction in all our specialist fields of research*'. The specific strategies and activities that will underpin the achievement of this strategic priority are outlined in the following pages.



OUR RESEARCH STRENGTHS

The University of New England has a proud history of undertaking high quality research and producing valuable research outcomes. UNE will identify and deliver innovations of value to society and industry, in Australia and internationally, with a particular emphasis on inter-disciplinary research for tackling complex problems in rural and regional Australia. This research normally involves extensive engagement in large-scale collaborations within UNE, nationally and internationally.

UNE had submitted for ERA 2012 assessment a total of 25 discipline profiles at 4-digit Field of Research (FoR) code level and 17 discipline profiles at 2-digit FoR level. UNE has achieved ERA 2012 ratings at or above world standard (ERA ratings 3, 4 and 5) in 29 disciplines (17 at 4-digit FoR code level and 12 at 2-digit FoR code level), more than doubling our world standard rated disciplines from 2010. More than 2/3 of UNE assessed disciplines are now rated at world standard or above. In comparison, for ERA 2010 we had achieved ratings at or above world standard across a total of 12 disciplines (7 at 4-digit FoR code level and 5 at 2-digit FoR code level).

THE UNE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The university is operating in a higher education sector that is becoming increasingly competitive and is changing rapidly. ERA outcomes are being used by government to determine the allocation of a portion of Government Research Block Grants funding. The quantum and proportion of government funding that is determined on the basis of research performance is certain to increase with time. It is therefore imperative that UNE continually improves both the quantity and the quality of its research if we are to compete successfully for research funds in this new environment.

Accordingly, rather than aspiring to perform strongly across a large number of research areas, the university has chosen to strategically concentrate its research effort and resources into those areas of research that have a history of achieving strong research outcomes, as well as in those areas that align with UNE's mission and have the potential to achieve international standing. UNE will also focus on areas of research that support economic and social development such that the university will aim to be Australia's university of choice for research into regional issues of global significance.

Notwithstanding this deliberate research focus, the university will also implement a number of initiatives to build research culture and capability across the university: to enhance research infrastructure; to grow the number of international HDR students, and to strengthen the availability and use of research data for decision making.

Within this new environment, the university aims to increase its research publications by 15 per cent by 2015 (above 2011 figures) and to increase total research income by 30 per cent over the same period.



RESEARCH PLAN RESPONSES TO RELEVANT STRATEGIES IN THE UNE STRATEGIC PLAN

Preserve and enhance research specialisations that achieve rankings of 3 or better in the ERA exercise.

Promote new areas of research that are consistent with our mission and have the potential to achieve international standing.

- Build research culture and capability across the university and achieve research excellence in identified priority areas.

A preference for research on rural and regional innovation

- Articulate the contribution that UNE makes to rural and regional innovation.

Build the number of international HDR students, and establish a network of academic and social support programs to facilitate English language proficiency and provide academic support.

- Grow the number of international HDR students and provide them with increased support.

Expedite academic and administrative processes.

- Strengthen the availability and use of research data for decision making purposes.

RESEARCH PLAN STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

1. Build research culture and capability across the university and achieve research excellence in identified priority areas.

1.1 Mentoring our people

- 1.1.1 Use workforce planning and recruitment processes to enhance our research capability.
- 1.1.2 Make research development a core part of the PPR process.
- 1.1.3 Enhance the ECR mentoring scheme.
- 1.1.4 Strongly support, reward and invest in staff whose research performance meets or exceeds the stated expectations.
- 1.1.5 Through staff development and mentoring programs, increase the number of academic staff who are able to supervise HDR students.
- 1.1.6 Increase the number of HDR students and improve completion rates.
- 1.1.7 Establish alternative pathways and academic support programs that address Indigenous and low SES student participation in higher degree programs.
- 1.1.8 Introduce career development programs for our HDR students.
- 1.1.9 Benchmark and improve research related policies and procedures to achieve sector best practice.
- 1.1.10 Establish and provide funding for university-wide research mentoring and grant development programs to achieve improved grant success rates.

1.2 Providing support

- 1.2.1 Define and publicise UNE's research performance expectations.
- 1.2.2 Strengthen and support staff and student collaborative research networks.
- 1.2.3 Improve the structure, efficiency and productivity of the Research Services Directorate to provide improved services to the university's research community.
- 1.2.4 Promote UNE's research strengths to relevant stakeholders and the broader community.
- 1.2.5 Maximise our research impact by leveraging our research partnerships.
- 1.2.6 Produce quality research outcomes of high impact with the assistance of annual UNE Research Seed Grants that focus and accelerate research in priority areas. Seek and obtain external research funding aligned to our research strengths and priorities.
- 1.2.7 Establish and provide funding for a range of strategic university-wide programs aimed at increasing HDR student numbers, increasing the portion of high quality grant applications, and increasing the number of research outputs, as measured by high quality publications achieving high citation rates and HDR student completions.

2. Articulate the contribution that UNE makes to rural and regional innovation and prepare and implement a UNE rural and regional innovation strategy.

- 2.1 Prepare indicative impact narratives illustrating the contribution of UNE research to rural and regional innovation and economy.



3. Grow the number of international HDR students and provide them with increased support.

- 3.1** Build the number of international HDR students.
- 3.2** Establish pastoral care programs for international HDR students linked to the colleges to support English language proficiency and provide academic support.
- 3.3** Continue and enhance funding support for international HDR stipends.

4. Strengthen the availability and use of research data for decision-making purposes.

- 4.1** Establish ERA reporting strategy and processes to maximise the university's position in research rankings.
- 4.2** Improve the timeliness and completeness of research publication reporting by academic staff.
- 4.3** Install and operate research administration software (Research Master) to improve the management of research processes and associated data.
- 4.4** Embed research data collection and reporting within the Corporate Intelligence Unit as a part of normal business operations.

Glossary

ERA – Excellence in Research for Australia

ECR – Early Career Researcher

HDR – Higher Degree Research

PPR – Performance, Planning and Review