

Research Centres and Institutes Policy

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Description	This policy describes organisational structures the University establishes to give profile to areas of research strength, especially of an interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary nature.

Related documents

[Research and Innovation Plan](#)

[Higher Degree Research Policy](#)

[Intellectual Property Policy](#)

[Appointment of Academic Managers](#)

[Position Statement - Research Centre/Institute Director](#)

[The Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[Academic Centres Policy](#)

[Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Griffith University is a leading research-intensive university in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region with focussed areas of research excellence. A key strategy within the Griffith University *Research and Innovation Plan* is to use the *Research Centres and Institutes Policy* to support a selected range of key research themes and programs. It serves as an enabling Policy for the University in pursuit of its vision to be a university of influence making a major contribution to society.

Support for research of the highest quality through the Research Centres and Institutes enhances the University's national and international profile, promotes strategic linkages with external collaborators and end users, assists in attracting and retaining outstanding researchers and providing them with an outstanding research environment, secures additional external research funding, attracts higher degree by research students, and boosts high quality research outputs.

This policy applies only to those Research Centres and Institutes established in accordance with section 2 of this policy. It defines their purpose, the scope of activities, establishment, governance, funding, and reporting and review arrangements.

2. ESTABLISHMENT

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), on the recommendation of Research Committee, may authorise the establishment of a Research Centre or Institute and the parameters under which it shall operate. Proposals to establish a Research Centre or Institute may be made at any time in accordance with the requirements set out in [Section 6](#). Research Centres and Institutes will normally be established for an initial period of three years with the option for further extension.

3. RESEARCH CENTRE OR INSTITUTE STATUS

This policy applies only to those research centres and institutes designated as having University-level status. Such designation signals recognition of critical mass, research excellence, and thematic coherence of a research grouping. Research groupings hosted by an Academic Group or element may be established outside the terms of this policy.

A small number of Research Centres may be assigned Research Institute status on the basis of scale and funding self-sufficiency, exemplary research performance and international profile. Institutes may include centres or groupings that reflect thematic divisions within the Institute.

This policy does not apply to externally funded research centres that are supported by a fixed grant and managed according to the rules of the relevant scheme. Examples include ARC Centres of Excellence, NHMRC Centres of Research Excellence, and Cooperative Research Centres.

The requirements for Academic Centres can be found in the *Academic Centres Policy*.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Centres and Institutes share the characteristics of:

- Added value. A Centre or Institute must add value to the University's research profile and performance in a manner that cannot be met through a business-as-usual approach within academic elements alone.
- Critical mass. A minimum of 10 Full Members contributing all of their research time to the Research Centre or Institute.
- Financially sustainable. A Centre or Institute must have a sustainable funding model.
- Fixed-term. A Research Centre or Institute is approved to operate for no more than three years before undergoing review.

Aims

Research Centres and Institutes aim to:

- Undertake research to national and international standards, with some achieving the highest quality in the particular field;
- Aggregate research activities in related fields into coherent themes;
- Attract external funding exceeding national averages;
- Drive research collaboration internally and with external partners from research institutions, business and industry, and other stakeholder groups.
- Support the provision of high quality research training for Honours and HDR students;
- Provide a supportive and productive research environment for staff, including mentoring arrangements for early career researchers.

5. RESEARCH CENTRE OR INSTITUTE DIRECTOR

In accordance with the *Appointment of Academic Managers* Policy, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) is responsible for appointing Research Centre and Institute Directors (including for externally funded Research Centres) following receipt of a recommendation from the relevant Group Pro Vice Chancellor. Appointments must be notified to People and Wellbeing which is responsible for formalising these arrangements.

Research Centre and Institute Directors will normally report to a Group Pro Vice Chancellor. Research Centre and Institute Directors appointed under this policy will be paid a responsibility allowance in accordance with the prevailing University policy on Remuneration for Research Centre Directors. Thematic leaders or Deputy Directors may receive a responsibility allowance where in the judgement of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) the workload warrants such payment.

6. PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH OR REORGANISE A RESEARCH CENTRE OR INSTITUTE

Proposals for the establishment of new Centres and Institutes (including the significant reorganisation of existing ones) must have the support of the relevant Group Pro Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) prior to the submission of a formal proposal to Research Committee. This extends to proposals for existing Research Institutes to be positioned outside of an Academic Group. The establishment of new Griffith Research Centres or Institutes will be subject to the availability of funding to support an additional Centre.

Proposals should address the criteria set out in [Appendix One – Proposal to establish or reorganise a Research Centre or Institute](#).

7. MEMBERSHIP

Centres and Institutes may set the criteria for membership within the following categories:

Full members can include academic staff at any level who meet pre-defined, discipline-specific research performance standards set down by the Centre or Institute. Only full members may belong to more than one Centre or Institute however this cannot extend beyond two centres – for reporting purposes joint membership will be split 50:50.

Associate members include academic staff who do not meet the Centre or Institute's requirements for full membership. Research-related staff who do not have an academic staff classification may also be included within this category.

Adjunct members are members who have been appointed according to the University's procedures for adjunct or honorary appointments.

HDR student members must be enrolled in a HDR program at the University, have a member or associate of the Centre/Institute as their principal or associate supervisor, and be undertaking a research project which is aligned with the Research program of the Centre. Honours students should also be encouraged to participate in the activities of Centres and Institutes as appropriate.

8. FUNDING

Research Centres and Institutes are eligible to receive University research funding; however, there is no guaranteed level of support or funding permanency. Under normal circumstances, Centres and Institutes will be provided with annual funding for a period of three years, subject to satisfactory annual progress reports.

The funding model will be based on performance against key research indicators (primarily research income, outputs, and timely HDR completions) and where appropriate will take into account disciplinary

variations. The model will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) in response to external policy drivers and to take account of the number of Centres and Institutes to be funded.

9. RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOLS/DEPARTMENTS

Each Research Centre or Institute will develop a formal agreement/s with the relevant Academic Groups from which staff who are full members of the Centre are drawn. These agreements will specify funding contributions from Groups or Departments/Schools, distribution of research block funding from the Group, strategy for distribution of block funding within the Research Centre, responsibility for staff support, how the performance of Centre or Institute employed staff is to be counted for operational plans and budgets, responsibility and activities for mentoring new staff, research support above the minimal standard that is provided by the School/Department, and space and facilities. These agreements should be reviewed annually and attached to the Centre's Annual Report. It is the role of the Group Pro Vice Chancellor to ensure that the support provided by Centres to staff and students is appropriate across the Group. Where a Centre's membership is drawn from more than one Academic Group, the relevant Group Pro Vice Chancellors will agree on the Group support to be provided and will ensure a consistent approach across the Groups.

10. ANNUAL REPORTING

Centres and Institutes will provide a brief annual progress report to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), via the relevant Group Pro Vice Chancellor and Dean, Research. The report for the preceding year should be submitted by the end of April on the reporting template provided by the Office for Research.

11. THIRD YEAR REVIEW

In the third year of funding, the University will conduct a review of each Research Centre or Institute. The Review Panel, established by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), will assess performance and shall make a recommendation to Research Committee regarding the ongoing status and funding.

The review will take into consideration the Centre or Institute's strategic plan at the outset of the three-year period, performance over the review period, and the contribution made towards the achievement of *Research and Innovation Plan* goals.

Research Centres and Institutes will provide a review report on the reporting template provided by the Office for Research which will include:

- The Centre's performance against University key performance indicators;
 - External peer and/or stakeholder feedback;
 - Internal stakeholder feedback - the Dean Research/PVC will be asked to comment on the Centre's performance and achievements;
 - Proposed future directions of the Centre and a detailed plan for the operation of the Centre for the next three years.
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12. DISESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRE OR INSTITUTE

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), after consulting with the Group Pro Vice Chancellor, may authorise the disestablishment of a Research Centre or Institute. In determining whether to disestablish a Centre or Institute the following circumstances may be taken into account:

1. performance is found to be unsatisfactory or consistently falls short of agreed KPIs;
 2. a review report recommends closure;
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3. membership falls below the required level of critical mass, or there is a loss of key staff;
 4. lack of financial viability;
 5. merger into another structure; or
 6. the strategic objectives of the University are no longer met.
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13. RESEARCH CENTRE AND INSTITUTE POLICY REVIEW

Research Committee will review this Policy and its implementation at least every five years and will report to Academic Committee on its effectiveness in achieving the University's research goals.

Appendix One

Proposal to Establish or Reorganise a Research Centre or Institute

A proposal to establish, renew or reorganise a Research Centre or Institute should include the following:

1. Title of the Centre;
2. Proposed Director's details, research profile and evidence of demonstrated leadership capability;
3. Brief summary of the Centre or Institute's role and principal goals (5-10 lines);
4. Rationale for the Centre or Institute explaining why it is necessary to establish/reorganise, rather than conduct the research within existing University structures;
5. Evidence of national and international standing;
6. **Strategic Purpose and Benefit**
 - a. The ability of the Centre or Institute to accelerate University research, commercial research and research training priorities;
 - b. The extent of competition from other organisations in the same research field, and the uniqueness of this proposal;
 - c. The ability to contribute to regional and national research priorities, and/or to be a recognised international contributor in a defined area of research strength;
 - d. The relationship to the University Research and Innovation Plan;
 - e. The ability to develop verifiable public good outcomes, and to define the possible impacts of these outcomes;
 - f. The capacity to leverage additional external funding support;
 - g. The expected contribution to the development of Early Career Researchers and student research trainees.
7. **Analysis of strengths, opportunities and competitive environment**
 - a. **Strengths**
 - Who are the research leaders within Griffith?
 - Which are the major contributing groups/centres in the University?
 - Is there sufficient existing critical mass to be internationally competitive?
 - Are there gaps in our existing expertise that need bridging?
 - Does the Area have coherence in terms of actual and potential internal collaboration and research programs that form common themes?
 - Provide performance data that indicates current and projected research strengths.
 - b. **Opportunities**
 - What is the anticipated capacity for growth for the Centre or Institute and revenue base?
 - With whom do we currently collaborate, how successfully and how might they wish to continue their engagement with us?
 - How do we propose to secure significant leverage for research?
 - What are the major external funding sources for research in the area, and how successful are we in securing funding from these sources?
 - How well does the area align with University and National Research Priorities?
 - c. **Competitor Analysis**
 - Provide a short analysis of local, national and international competition in the area.
8. Key performance indicators and targets set for the Centre or Institute against which performance can be assessed annually and at the third-year review. These should as a minimum include

research grant and contract and consultancy research income, HDR load and completions, publication volume and quality, research engagement and societal impact;

9. Membership – criteria for membership within each defined category and names of proposed members (full and associate members as a minimum)
10. Centre budget showing estimated annual income and expenditure for the first term of the Centre/Institute;
11. Centre governance – a brief outline of how the Centre or Institute will be managed including the composition of advisory board;
12. Agreement between elements contributing to the Centre or Institute and confirmation that all parties have agreed to participate as outlined;
13. Staffing arrangements including details about support and development opportunities for early career researchers and HDR candidates;
14. Accommodation, infrastructure and equipment arrangements with an indication of how these will be met; and
15. Approval from the relevant Dean, Research and Group Pro Vice Chancellor indicating support for the establishment of the Centre/Institute and statement of anticipated value-add.

Completed proposals should be forward to the Secretary, Research Committee.