

Research Institutes and Research Centres Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) Southern Cross University (SCU) has developed areas of targeted research excellence as evidenced by the national Excellence in Research for Australia assessment exercise. SCU will continue to strategically pursue research excellence and growth through a structure of Research Institutes and Research Centres.

(2) This policy affirms the role of a limited number of Research Institutes in allowing SCU to target research activity in areas for which we will be recognised for conducting research which is well above world standard, and globally significant.

Scope

(3) This policy applies to all research entities in the university, and the establishment and operation of SCU's Research Institutes, and their constituent Research Centres.

(4) Organisational units, joint ventures or strategic partnerships that conduct a broad range of activities are excluded from this policy. This includes units which may use the name 'Institute', 'Program' or 'Centre' e.g. Centre for Teaching and Learning.

(5) Externally funded entities that are legal entities in their own right are excluded from this policy, for example, Cooperative Research Centres or ARC Centres of Excellence.

Section 2 - Definitions

(6) Research Institutes are integrative units which undertake major programs of research to achieve a significant increase in knowledge towards a common research goal. They identify as areas of research excellence through the production of research outputs which are high impact and rated at well above world standard. They are involved in strategic national and international partnerships, and are led by a Research Institute Director who reports to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) (DVCR).

(7) Research Centres are collaborative units, within Research Institutes. They organise research activity around a discrete topic that contributes to the Research Institute's research performance and goal. They are led by a Research Centre Director, who reports to the Research Institute Director.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(8) SCU wishes to establish Research Institutes in areas of strategic importance, to build research capacity and improve performance through strategic leadership, coordination and collaboration between our researchers.

(9) SCU Research Institutes will normally be collaborative multidisciplinary groupings spanning more than one organisational area.

(10) SCU Research Institutes are expected to influence and drive research collaboration and performance by fostering

linkages within the University and with external partners (national and international).

(11) SCU Research Institutes will provide a platform for the establishment of Research Centres, and the academic communities and expertise contributing to these, to enable research excellence.

(12) Research Institutes and Research Centres will be approved if it can be demonstrated that a significant proportion of external funding has been awarded to support the underlying resource requirements. The proposed senior members must have the track record to earn research income, supervise Higher Degree Research (HDR) students and disseminate their research outcomes in high quality research outlets.

(13) Research Institutes are operated within the Research Portfolio under the management of the DVCR.

(14) SCU Research Institutes will have the following characteristics:

- a. Recognised nationally and internationally for their collective capacity, performance, research excellence and impact, including high quality research training programs and service to their relevant stakeholders.
- b. Have a clearly defined research theme that is aligned to SCU's overall strategic direction, and of national and global significance.
- c. Conduct research that is rated as well above world standard, focus on high quality research outputs, and sustain sufficient research capacity, and contribute to the attraction and retention of HDR students.
- d. Have Research Centres that are actively engaged in research and offer scope for cross-fertilisation within the Research Institute.
- e. Have the necessary research capacity to deliver and sustain research excellence and impact.
- f. Have the capacity to attract funding from a diverse income stream which may include competitive, philanthropic, industry and international sources.

(15) SCU Research Centres will have the following characteristics:

- a. Have a well-defined research plan that is clearly aligned to the host Research Institute's common goal and overall strategic direction of the University. The Research Centre's aims must be achievable within a specific timeframe of up to three years.
- b. Bring together sufficient research capacity and expertise required to achieve the defined research activity.
- c. Research Centres which are multidisciplinary must clearly define the role of each discipline.
- d. The researchers involved are encouraged to be from more than one Academic School or organisational unit.
- e. Have a designated Research Centre Director, who is responsible for management of the Research Centre, coordinating the activity and reporting.
- f. Research Centres will be established and managed under a Research Institute.
- g. The researchers within the Research Centres should normally have teaching and research appointments, with a reporting line to the relevant Head of School.
- h. Researchers holding a University research only appointment, research only fellowship or otherwise externally funded, will normally have a direct reporting line to the Research Institute Director.

Section 4 - Procedures

Establishment of Research Institutes

(16) Research Institutes will be established, according to clause (8), when the university has a research goal which it strategically wants to pursue, which has underlying research capacity that is considered to be well above world standard and globally significant.

(17) Research Institutes cannot commence operation until an operational and governance framework has been developed and approved. The operational framework must outline specific key performance targets over a five year period.

Operation and Review of Research Institutes

(18) Research Institutes will operate as designated work units under the portfolio of the DVCR.

(19) Research Institutes will be reviewed as part of the annual university performance and review cycle.

(20) Research Institutes will receive part of the annual Commonwealth Research Block Grant which will be adjusted for performance. They will be expected to use this funding to support the activities of their Research Centres as outlined in their annual organisational plan. In addition, they will be expected to earn a significant portion of their income from external funding sources.

(21) Research Institutes will be externally reviewed during the third year, and at the end of the fifth year. The feedback from these reviews will be used to revise each Research Institute's operational plans and targets.

(22) Research Institutes will have a term of up to five years, and subject to satisfactory performance following the fifth year review, may be renewed for a further five years.

Research Institute Advisory Board

(23) Each Research Institute will be governed by an Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will comprise the DVCR, Research Institute Director, and at least four members who are external to the University who have expertise relevant to the research, with at least two being from industry. The Advisory Board will be chaired by one of the external experts.

(24) The appointment of the Chair and members will be approved by the DVCR and Vice Chancellor (VC), based on nominations from the Research Institute Director.

(25) The Advisory Board will normally meet at least bi-annually and will be required to review research performance, and ensure that relevant KPIs are being met.

(26) The terms of reference for the Advisory Board will be subject to approval by the DVCR and VC.

Research Institute Management Committee

(27) Each Research Institute will convene a management committee to oversee operations, research performance and broader research culture.

(28) The management committee will consist of the Research Institute Director and Research Centre Directors.

(29) The management committee will be required to meet at least quarterly, to discuss and review the research activities, performance and management.

Membership of Research Institutes

(30) Membership of a Research Institute is through membership of a Research Centre, on the recommendation of the Director, and is subject to approval by the DVCR.

(31) Adjunct academics may be a member of a Research Institute, provided there is a demonstrated benefit to overall performance.

Establishment of Research Centres

(32) Applications for new Research Centres are to address the relevant criteria outlined in the guidelines. Applications for the establishment of a Research Centre will be assessed by a panel which will be chaired by the DVCR, and includes the relevant host Research Institute Director, Advisory Board Chair (or Advisory Board member as nominee), and one other member of the University's Senior Executive Group.

(33) Research Centres, recommended by the panel, will not commence operation until approved by the DVCR and VC.

(34) Research Centres will be managed by a Research Centre Director who will be responsible for the management of the program of research, and setting and achieving performance targets.

(35) Research Centres must have sufficient research capacity capable of delivering high quality research outputs.

Operation and Review of Research Centres

(36) Research Centres will be reviewed annually by the Research Institute Director and the Advisory Board.

(37) Research Centres will receive funding through the Research Institutes, allocated on a formula related to performance. In addition, they are expected to earn a significant portion of their income from external funding sources.

(38) Members of each Research Centre will receive basic support from their relevant organisational area such as access to facilities, basic infrastructure and administration.

(39) Research Centres will be appointed for an initial three years, and, subject to a satisfactory performance review at the end of the third year, may be renewed for a further three years.

Research Centre Management Team

(40) Each Research Centre will convene a management committee to oversee operations, research performance and broader research culture.

(41) The Research Centre management team will consist of the Research Centre Director and a small group of senior researchers within the Research Centre.

(42) The management team will be required to meet at least quarterly, to discuss and review the research activities, performance and management.

Membership of Research Centres

(43) SCU Academic staff within the Academic Schools with Teaching and Research, or Research only appointments, who meet the SCU Definition of [Research Productive](#), may be a member of one, but no more than two, Research Centres provided they have approval from their Head of School and DVCR.

(44) SCU Higher Degree by Research students can be affiliated with a Research Centre if their research is aligned to the Research Centre and their Principal supervisor is a member of the Research Centre.

(45) Membership of a Research Centre must be recommended by the Centre Director and is subject to approval by the Head of School and DVCR.

(46) Membership of any Research Centre may be terminated if the individual fails to contribute to the overall performance of the group.

Termination of Research Institutes and Research Centres

(47) Research Institutes that regularly fail to meet agreed targets, cannot demonstrate excellence or are no longer aligned to the overall strategic direction of the University, may be terminated at any time.

(48) Research Centres that fail to contribute to the overall performance of the host Research Institute, or are no longer aligned to the common goals and overall strategic direction of the University, may be terminated at any time.

(49) Research Institutes and Research Centres that have been terminated may only reapply for Research Institute status by invitation.

Applications and Approvals

(50) Approval for the establishment, renewal or disestablishment of Research Institutes is by the VC upon the recommendation of the DVCR.

Section 5 - Guidelines

(51) Nil.

Status and Details

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Head of Work Unit	Nicole Rice Executive Officer
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