

Research Entity Establishment and Operation Guidelines

Section 1 - Overview

- (1) This Guideline must be read in conjunction with the Research Entity Policy.
- (2) The Research Entity Policy provides for three defined entities for focused research activity:
 - a. Research Cluster (RCL);
 - b. Research Centre (RC); and
 - c. Special Research Centre (SRC).
- (3) Research active staff would normally be a member of one research entity only, but may be a member of more than one research entity. Where a staff member is a member of more than one research entity, research outputs for that staff member may only be contributed to the total research outputs of one Research Entity. Adjunct staff may be included in applications to establish a Research Cluster (RCL), Research Centre (RC) or Special Research Centre (SRC), but the research outputs of these adjunct staff must contribute to the total research outputs of Southern Cross University.
- (4) All research entities that exist as at 30 June, 2009 will be reviewed and classified by the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) (DDVCR) in accordance with the new Research Entity Policy, and will be given a six-month period to comply with the new requirements. To be recognised as a SCU research entity, all entities must comply with the Research Entity Policy.

Section 2 - Guidelines

- (5) In preparing proposals for designation as a SCU Research Entity, applicants must be able to address the specific criteria which are detailed in these guidelines.
- (6) When completing the Application Form:
 - a. Section A4. of the Application refers to Part A - Research Cluster, clause (7)c of these guidelines;
 - b. Section B4. of the Application refers to Part B - Research Centre, clause (9)c of these guidelines; and
 - c. Section C. of the Application refers to Part C - Special Research Centre, clause (11)d of these guidelines.

Part A - Research Cluster (RCL)

- (7) In preparing a proposal for recognition as a Research Cluster (RCL):
 - a. The RCL should have evidence that the group would comprise a critical mass of full time academics.
 - b. It is to have capability and capacity in an area of research expertise with at least 2 full time academic staff committed to and identified. Research active staff should be capable of being ranked on the second or third tier

of the ERA levels.

- c. Research active and Early Career Research (ECR) staff associated with a RCL would need to demonstrate a good track record over the most recent three (3) year period. This record would include an aggregate of:
 - i. Applications for National Competitive Grant awards;
 - ii. One or more successful applications for DDVCR internal Collaborative Grants;
 - iii. History of externally funded research (in the order of \$250,000 p.a.);
 - iv. Publications in top tier (A and A*) academic journals, and a high level of overall publication output; and
 - v. PhD completions.
 - The balance of these activities may vary, such that the research outputs are consistent with the discipline specific criteria used in the ERA process for assessing quality, i.e. the portfolio of activity needs to be of high national standards.
 - Special consideration will be given to research staff who have had their career interrupted for recognised personal reasons, e.g. maternity leave.
- d. The RCL would provide for research development opportunities with identified potential for attracting industry and grant funding.
- e. The RCL would be contained in a School and operated as a part of the School or Faculty Cost Centre.
- f. In general a RCL will have limited resource or funding requirements. Any such requirements would be the responsibility of the associated Cost Centre.
- g. The RCL would undertake postgraduate student training and supervision as a part of its research activities.

Establishment

(8) Prior to the development of a proposal for a RCL, the proposed Director, Research Cluster should discuss the matter with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Executive Dean of the Faculty, and Head of School.

Part B - Research Centre (RC)

(9) In preparing a proposal for recognition as a Research Cluster:

- a. The RC must comply with the definition of a Research Centre as described in the Research Entity Policy.
- b. It is to have capability and capacity in an area of research expertise with at least 3 full time academics, research associates, or post-doctoral students committed and identified under the Research Centre. Centre Directors must be capable of being rated in the top 2 ERA levels. All full time staff associated with a RC need to meet ERA assessment criteria.
- c. Research active and ECR staff associated with a RC would need to demonstrate an exceptional track record over the most recent five (5) year period. This record would include an aggregate of:
 - i. Multiple National Competitive Grant awards;
 - ii. Externally funded Research (in the order of \$1million p.a.);
 - iii. Regularly publishing in top tier academic journals, and a very high level of overall publication output; and
 - iv. Regular HDR/Doctoral completions each year and demonstrable growth in HDR/Doctoral completions.
 - The balance of these activities may vary, such that the research outputs are consistent with the discipline specific criteria used in the ERA process for assessing quality, i.e. the portfolio of activity needs to be of highest national standards and high international standards.
- d. An RC would be established to better utilise cost centre resources and facilities and to present and market capabilities with identified potential for attracting industry and grant funding.
- e. A RC would be contained within a School or Faculty and would operate as a part of that cost centre.
- f. A RC would have considerable commitment of Cost Centre resources and facilities and would require

establishment under an approved business plan and operate against an annual operating plan.

- g. A RC would undertake postgraduate student training and supervision as a part of the research activity of the Research Centre.
- h. A RC may be multi-disciplinary drawing capability and researchers from multiple Schools across the Faculties.
- i. A RC may have external institutional involvement.

Establishment

(10) Prior to the development of a proposal for a RC, the Director of the potential Research Centre should discuss the matter with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Executive Dean of the Faculty and Head of Schools or Schools. To establish a RC a proposal document is required that would cover:

Part C - Special Research Centre (SRC)

(11) In preparing a proposal for recognition as a Special Research Centre:

- a. Academic staff proposing a SRC would have current active research programs that would logically fit into the proposed Special Research Centre.
- b. The SRC would be expected to be operational for at least 5 years and staff would be expected to commit to SRC participation over this period.
- c. It is to have capability and capacity in an area of research excellence, with at least 5 full time academics, research associates, or postdoctoral students committed and identified under the Centre. The Centre Directors must be capable of being rated at the highest ERA level. All academic staff associated with a SRC need to meet ERA assessment criteria.
- d. Research active and ECR staff associated with a SRC would need to demonstrate an exceptional track record over the most recent five (5) year period. This record would include an aggregate of:
 - i. multiple and regular National Competitive Grant awards over a sustained period;
 - ii. externally funded Research (in excess of \$2 million p.a.);
 - iii. consistently publishing in top tier academic journals, and a very high level of overall publication output; and
 - iv. a consistent record of a high level of doctoral completions each year.
 - The balance of these activities may vary, such that the research outputs are consistent with the discipline specific criteria used in the ERA process for assessing quality, i.e. the portfolio of activity needs to be of the highest international standards.
- e. A SRC would be established against SCU Research Strategy and Objectives and is likely to have independent resources and facilities with the capacity to market the Centre capabilities, and attract industry and grant funding.
- f. A SRC would be an independent Cost Centre reporting directly to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research). A SRC is likely to have affiliations with Schools and Faculties but there would be no managerial, administrative or financial links associated with these affiliations.
- g. A SRC would have considerable commitment of Cost Centre resources and facilities and would require establishment under an approved business plan identifying all existing and required resources.

Establishment

(12) Prior to the development of a formal proposal for a SRC, the proposed Director, Special Research Centre should develop an outline of the Special Research Centre for discussion with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), who will consult with the Research and Research Training Advisory Committee as to whether a formal proposal should be developed. The proposal will need to include:

Operation

Governance and Responsibility

(13) The SRC will operate as a self-sufficient Cost Centre against agreed annual operating budgets that identify all sources of funding for the centre. The Cost Centre Head for each SRC will be the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research). The Director, Special Research Centre will report to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

(14) The SRC will establish an Advisory Board that includes external and independent representation.

(15) A SRC may apply for any of the available internal funding support that may be available under the DDVCR.

(16) The University may provide financial support to a SRC. In such cases, the financial support will reflect the SRC contribution to the research outputs of the university. (Refer to Research Funding Support Policy).

(17) In general a SRC will:

- a. fund project staff and all project costs from project budgets.
- b. be responsible for all equipment acquisitions from generated funds and from earned Block Grants.
- c. provide an AOP covering a financial budget for the ensuing year and a 3 year projection. It should also indicate the capital and space resourcing requirements for the Centre updated annually as well as performance criteria for successful operation of the Centre.
- d. need any staff not funded by projects to be funded internally by the Centre using Research Funding Support, Block Grants and Centre generated funds. Staff are to be employed under the associated Cost Centre (DDVCR). The Annual Operating Plan will need to identify such resource requirements.
- e. operate as separate functional and financial units and are to have the capability and resources to operate in this way but should make use of existing administrative and Human Resources facilities of the governing Cost Centre (DDVCR) where possible.

Students

(18) Special Research Centres would be eligible to enrol postgraduate students, and would be expected to include significant participation of postgraduate students in research training, projects and research activity.

(19) Senior academic staff within a SRC would be expected to supervise a cohort of postgraduate students.

(20) The SRC would be responsible for attracting suitable students to work on SRC research projects. This would include providing scholarships through industry participation and from Government allocations through grant funding bodies ([ARC](#), [AusAID](#) and others).

(21) A SRC should participate in relevant University academic boards and committees that deal with research (RRTAC) and postgraduate students.

(22) For assistance in preparing a proposal for designation as an SCU Research Entity, it is important to contact the Business Manager in the Office of Research.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	14th August 2012
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Head of Work Unit	Nicole Rice Executive Officer
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