

# Research Approval and Management Procedures

## Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

### Purpose

(1) These Procedures set out the processes for the approval and management of Research conducted by Southern Cross University or under its auspices.

(2) These Procedures:

- a. support compliance with:
  - i. Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
  - ii. HERDC specifications
- b. set out how Researcher performance, where relevant, is captured in the University's research management system, IRMA; and
- c. are designed to maximise the benefits to the University and the Researcher.

### Scope

(3) These Procedures apply to:

- a. all University Researchers, staff members and HDR students
- b. externally-funded activities which generate, or have the potential to generate research publications or other research outcomes, including HERDC research and Seed-funded research, Unfunded collaborations and Unfunded research.

## Section 2 - University Research Priorities

(4) The University prioritises resourcing for:

- a. Grants and Contract Research; and
- b. Higher Degree by Research Projects.

(5) Grants and Contract Research is prioritised over Unfunded Research and Unfunded Collaborations unless these are deemed by the Responsible Work Unit's Approver to be of particularly high strategic value for the University or Work Unit.

(6) Unfunded Collaborations are prioritised over Unfunded Research.

## Section 3 - Research Definition

(7) For the purpose of these Procedures, Research:

- a. includes HERDC research, Seed-funded research, Unfunded collaborations and Unfunded research; but
- b. does not include HDR research projects.

(8) Refer to Section 8 for other definitions.

## Section 4 - Research Approvals

(9) The Research Approval Process consists of two stages:

- a. An Expression of Interest; and
- b. Project Approval.

(10) Until such time as all Project Approvals associated with a Research Opportunity are obtained, a Researcher must not:

- a. submit a Grant application or agree to submission of a Grant application naming them or the University;
- b. commence negotiation of Contract Research, or agree for a Researcher or the University to be named in a proposal for Contract Research;
- c. commence Research.

### Part A - Expression of Interest

(11) Upon identifying a Research Opportunity, the Lead Researcher will submit an Expression of Interest and supporting information to the Approval Authority, as set out in Section 9.

(12) An Expression of Interest may only be approved if the Research Opportunity:

- a. aligns with the University's and Work Unit's Research Strategy; and
- b. is likely to:
  - i. for Grants or Contract Research, meet the definition of HERDC Research as set out in these Procedures, or would be HERDC Research if income was to be received by the University; and
  - ii. receive all required Project Approvals.

(13) Approved Expressions of Interest must be submitted by the Lead Researcher to the Grants and Contracts team:

- a. by the deadline specified by the Grants and Contracts team; or
- b. for Research for HERDC category 1 funding or otherwise relating to a significant Grant, where no deadline is specified, at least one month prior to any Grant submission or other external deadline.

(14) The Lead Researcher must provide the Expression of Interest to the Approver at least ten working days prior to the Grant submission or other external deadline. Failure to do so may result in the services provided by the Grants and Contracts team being reduced or the relevant Delegate refusing to approve the Research Opportunity.

### Part B - Project Approval

(15) The Lead Researcher develops the grant application or other proposal and compiles supporting information such as:

- a. Financial information, and where relevant, consulting with Finance and Administrative Officers regarding cash and in-kind contributions

- b. Other approvals, as relevant, such as:
  - i. human research or animal ethics approval;
  - ii. government licenses (for example, Working with Children Check);
  - iii. field work requirements;
  - iv. marine or national park permits;
  - v. site specific approvals.

(16) The Lead Researcher prepares and signs a Project Approval Form and certifies that the information provided is correct.

(17) The Associate Dean (Research) or Head of Work Unit reviews the Project Approval Form and associated information and assesses whether:

- a. all required approvals are in place; and
- b. the Research Opportunity:
  - i. aligns with the University's and Work Unit's Research strategy;
  - ii. is appropriate for the Researcher given their career stage, experience and research plan;
  - iii. for Grants or Contract Research, meets the requirements of HERDC Research as set out in these Procedures, or would be deemed HERDC Research if income were to be received by the University.
- c. the Responsible Work Unit is able to provide the required resourcing and commitment proposed.

(18) Once the Associate Dean (Research) or Head of Work Unit is satisfied that the proposal meets the criteria in clause (17), the project may be approved and the Project Approval Form forwarded to the Grants and Contracts team, who will:

- a. review Grant applications and proposals for Research for eligibility and compliance with external and internal requirements;
- b. provide guidance on the definition of HERDC Research and the evidentiary requirements from the HERDC Specifications;
- c. if concerned a project may not be HERDC Research or that evidentiary requirements may not be met, discuss with the Associate Dean (Research) or Head of Work Unit and, if consensus cannot be reached, with the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor); and
- d. if the Research Opportunity is a Grant, seek approval for submission of the Grant application from the relevant Delegate.

(19) If the Delegate approves submission of a Grant, the Grants and Contracts team will advise the Lead Researcher.

(20) Subject to the funder's requirements, the Lead Researcher may submit the Grant application following approval by the Delegate. If a requirement of the funder, the Grants and Contracts team will submit the application.

## **Section 5 - Research Agreements**

(21) Any Research involving an external party (whether an awarded Grant, Contract Research, an Unfunded Collaboration or Seed-funded Research) requires a Research Agreement.

(22) Research Agreements must be executed by the appropriate Delegate on behalf of the University. The Lead Researcher has no authority to accept a Grant or agree to a Research Agreement prior to the Research Agreement being executed

(23) Lead Researchers must advise Grants and Contracts upon receipt of any notification regarding the outcome of a Grant application.

(24) The Grants and Contracts team, in consultation with the Legal Office when required under the [Contract Procedures](#) will determine the appropriate type of Research Agreement.

(25) Throughout negotiation of the Research Agreement, the Grants and Contracts team will:

- a. provide support and advice to the Lead Researcher; and
- b. liaise with the external parties.

(26) Once the Research Agreement has been drafted, the Grants and Contracts team will prepare a Contract Compliance Statement and provide it to the Lead Researcher.

(27) The Lead Researcher is responsible for:

- a. reviewing the Research Agreement,
- b. amending and completing the Contract Compliance Statement (other than the contractual summary),
- c. obtaining further approvals required, and
- d. signing the Contract Compliance Statement, certifying that the information provided is correct and agreeing to comply with the terms of the Research Agreement.

(28) The Approver will review the Research Agreement, Contract Compliance Statement and other relevant documents and, where satisfied that all is in order, will sign the Contract Compliance Statement and forward it to the Grants and Contracts team.

(29) The Grants and Contracts team will:

- a. organise execution of the Research Agreement by the relevant Delegate and other parties, and
- b. provide a copy of the fully executed Research Agreement to the Lead Researcher.

(30) Where the University is to receive funding pursuant to a Research Agreement, the Grants and Contracts team will:

- a. obtain a project code from Financial Services for the funding and, where relevant, based on the budget information in the Research Agreement; and
- b. notify the Lead Researcher that a project code has been issued.

## Section 6 - Responsibilities

### Lead Researcher responsibilities

(31) The Lead Researcher is responsible for management of Research, including compliance with the Research Agreement. If the Research project is subject to a Research Agreement, the Research should not commence until the Research Agreement has been executed without confirmation that is allowable under the Research Agreement, and the approval of the Associate Dean (Research) (or Head of Work Unit), if the Responsible Work Unit is not a faculty).

(32) The Lead Researcher must:

- a. have completed and hold current research integrity training, consistent with the University's Research Integrity Training Guidelines;

- b. ensure the Research team complies with the terms of the Research Agreement, Seed-funding and any other project requirements;
- c. ensure ethics approvals, licensing or other requirements for the Research, are obtained (if required);
- d. ensure appropriate Research Governance is in place before commencing Research including, if relevant, ensuring all Researchers on the project are aware of and comply with the terms of any Research Agreements;
- e. ensure the Research is delivered on time, and within budget or otherwise within the approved resourcing;
- f. inform the Grants and Contracts team in advance, if they intend to involve a student in the Research, or an external party who has not already signed an agreement with the University for the Research;
- g. where the Research is externally funded and requires full expenditure by the end date or unspent funds to be returned to the funder, ensure all funds are expended by the end date or advise Grants and Contracts to request an extension from the funding body;
- h. if necessary, inform the Grants and Contracts team in advance that a variation to the Research Agreement is required and obtain approval from the Work Unit for this to occur; and
- i. notify the financial administration officer for their Work Unit:
  - i. at least two weeks in advance and in writing, when invoicing or an acquittal is required, and
  - ii. when the Research has been completed.

### **Finance Administration Officer responsibilities**

(33) For externally funded Research, the finance administration officer associated with the Responsible Work Unit will:

- a. invoice and arrange acquittals to the funding organisation according to the Research Agreement requirements and on instructions from the Lead Researcher;
- b. provide the Lead Researcher with access to timely information about their Research project expenditure; and
- c. escalate any financial risks or non-compliance to the relevant Associate Dean (Research) or Head of Work Unit.

### **Grants and Contracts Team responsibilities**

(34) The Grants and Contracts team will:

- a. where required and in consultation with the Lead Researcher, liaise with the external parties to negotiate an appropriate variation to the Research Agreement, and arrange for execution by the relevant Delegate and the external parties; and
- b. advise on issues raised about Research Agreements by the Lead Researcher, Responsible Work Unit or financial administration staff.

### **Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research & Academic Capability) responsibilities**

(35) The Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research & Academic Capability ) is responsible for:

- a. providing Researchers with access to a Grant-finding subscription database and training on its use to assist in identifying suitable Research Opportunities.
- b. storing and managing the records of Approvals and Research Agreements in IRMA.
- c. recording and reporting HERDC Research income to the Commonwealth government annually in accordance with the HERDC Specifications, and subject that submission to external audit.

### **Head of Work Unit responsibilities**

(36) The Head of Work Unit of the responsible Work Unit will:

- a. provide the Researcher with access to appropriate support to manage the Research project including but not limited to:
  - i. a senior contact for Research-related queries; and
  - ii. a financial administrator (within the Work Unit or through Financial Services) to support the Researcher with sound financial management practices and ensure compliance with any external funding requirements in the Research Agreement. support the Researcher to manage any financial risks identified by the Researcher while conducting externally funded Research; and
- b. unless extenuating circumstances arise, ensure any resources committed by the Work Unit to the Research are made available.

## Section 7 - Record-keeping

(37) All records associated with the approval and management of Research must be managed in accordance with the [Records Management Policy](#) and Procedures, [Privacy Policy](#) and [Research Data Management Policy](#).

## Section 8 - Definitions

(38) For the purposes of these Procedures the following definitions apply:

- a. Approver means the Approver specified in Section 9 of these Procedures, and Approval means the approval given by an Approver under these Procedures.
- b. Contract Research means HERDC Research which is not a Grant, where the University is named in the proposal for the research, whether or not the University receives funding from the research.
- c. Delegate means the person in a role which, according to the Delegation Rule and its Schedules, is authorised to approve submission of a Grant application or to enter into a Research Agreement, as the case may be.
- d. Expression of Interest means the document by which a Lead Researcher expresses interest in a Research opportunity containing information as specified by the Director, Research Data and Contracts.
- e. Grant means HERDC Research funded from a competitive funding scheme arising from an application led by, or naming, Southern Cross University, whether or not the University receives funding from the Grant.
- f. HERDC means Higher Education Research Data Collection; the Australian Government's annual collection of higher education research data.
- g. HERDC Research means research which generates income which is eligible to be included in the University's HERDC return and for which the University receives HERDC income. Contract Research and Grants includes HERDC Research and activities where there is no income to the University.
- h. HERDC Specifications means the Commonwealth government-issued specifications for the HERDC as it applies to a given year.
- i. Higher Degree by Research (HDR) student means a candidate enrolled in a University Higher Degree by Research degree.
- j. HDR Research Project is a research project undertaken by a University HDR student towards a Higher Degree by Research award
- k. IRMA is the University's research management system.
- l. Lead Researcher means the University Researcher who is proposing and will be ultimately responsible for the Research within the University. For Research proposed by an HDR Student, the Lead Researcher is the HDR Student's principal supervisor.
- m. Project Approvals means the approvals required pursuant to Section 5, Part B of these Procedures.
- n. Project Approval Form means the document which records all details of a Research Opportunity including the required Project Approvals.

- o. Research Agreement means a written agreement with an external third party to conduct Research.
- p. Researcher means a person who conducts, or assists with the conduct of, research at the University and includes all staff, students, adjunct and conjoint appointments, visiting academics, and research fellows.
- q. Research Governance means the processes and structures by which the Lead Researcher ensures that the Research is conducted according to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, established ethical principles, relevant legislation and regulations, the Research Agreement (if applicable) and institutional policy, as well as in a way that manages risk to the Research, participants (if any), funders and collaborators, staff and the University.
- r. Research Opportunity means applying for a Grant, commencing Unfunded Research, or negotiating a Contract Research project or an Unfunded Collaboration.
- s. Responsible Work Unit means the work unit to which the Research will be attributed and is normally the Work Unit in which the Lead Researcher is employed.
- t. Seed-funded Research means research funded internally by the University to support research that is intended to secure further funding from external funding bodies, whether or not a competitive process was involved in the application for seed-funding.
- u. Staff (for the purpose of this Procedure) means all persons who are academic or professional employees of Southern Cross University, including full time, part time, fixed term and casuals, and adjunct, visiting, emeritus and conjoint appointees who are engaged in supervisory and other research roles on behalf of the University.
- v. Unfunded Collaboration means research involving an external third party, which is not externally funded or Seed-funded Research.
- w. Unfunded Research means research which is solely supported by in-kind contributions by the University and does not involve any external third party, such as:
  - i. an HDR Student working on research separate from, or additional to, their HDR Research Project; or
  - ii. use of University equipment or resources, beyond the Research team's time or use of basic facilities such as University-issued computers.

## Section 9 - Approval Authorities

Approval Request	Approval Authority
Expression of Interest	Faculty: Associate Dean (Research) Other Work Unit: Head of Work Unit
<b>Project Approval</b>	
Resourcing from another Work Unit	Faculty Associate Dean (Research) Other Work Unit: Head of Work Unit
Centrally controlled resources	Pro Vice Chancellor (Infrastructure)
Purchase of assets	As per Delegation Rule and Procurement Policy
Involvement of an HDR Student and Stipends	Dean, Graduate School
Faculty of Health, other than the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine	Discipline Lead (endorsing that the named staff have capacity)
Faculty of Education	Executive Dean to approve all Project Approvals after endorsement from the Associate Dean (Research)
Project Approval Form	Faculty: Associate Dean (Research) Other Work Unit: Head of Work Unit





## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Not Yet Approved
<b>Effective Date</b>	To Be Advised
<b>Review Date</b>	To Be Advised
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor
<b>Approval Date</b>	To Be Advised
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Mary Spongberg Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor +61 7 55893361
<b>Head of Work Unit</b>	Joanne Edney Executive Officer
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Office of Research