Research Centres and Research Networks Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) This Policy outlines the principles for the definition, establishment, operation and closure of Research Centres and Research Networks.

(2) Research Centres and Research Networks facilitate a number of outcomes for the University, including:

a. Building research capacity and assembling capabilities across the University to advance its strategic priorities and be responsive to end-users;
b. Enabling the external profiling of the scale and quality of research activity generated by a group of researchers with a common goal, which span multiple supervisory units of the University;
c. Meeting the needs of a variety of external stakeholders who wish to invest in the establishment of a Centre to achieve scale of research activity and profile or a program of research underpinned by a Research Network; and
d. Fostering collaboration of UQ researchers across supervisory unit boundaries in the pursuit of generating greater scale from multidisciplinary teams, in research innovation.

(3) This Policy clearly distinguishes between Research Academic Units that are established under this Policy (Research Centres and Research Networks), and Supervisory Units of the University which are established under the Organisational Structure Policy.

Section 2 - Principles and Key Requirements

Operational Principles

(4) The following operational principles define the nature of Research Academic Units (Research Centres and Research Networks) in comparison to Supervisory Units (Schools, Faculties and Institutes):

a. Appointments
   Staff hold appointments in Supervisory Units, not in Research Academic Units. Creation of a Research Academic Unit does not permit staff to be appointed into the Research Academic Unit.
b. Affiliations
   Academic and Professional staff may become an affiliate researcher with a Research Academic Unit. Staff may hold affiliations with more than one Research Academic Unit.
c. Supervisory Lines
   Creation of a Research Academic Unit does not change the supervisory line of either the academic lead, or other academic or professional staff affiliated with the Research Academic Unit.
d. Finance Division
   Creation of a Research Academic Unit does not involve the creation of a finance division in the University finance system (UniFi). Research Academic Units are not directly funded under the UQ budget model and are ineligible for direct secondary returns from HERDC.
e. Administration of Research Funding
   Research projects held by researchers (as budget holders) associated with the Research Academic Unit

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continue to be administered as projects in the finance system under the Supervisory Unit of the budget holder.

f. Financial Delegation
   Financial delegation (i.e. final assurance that expenditure is consistent with UQ policy) remains with the Supervisory Unit, as a finance division is not created. Note that financial delegation is different from the authority that any budget holder of a research project has in a manner consistent with UQ policy.
g. Strategic Funding
   The allocation of University operating funds to support the activity of a Research Academic Unit must come through the strategic funding mechanism into a project under a Supervisory Unit. Where strategic funding is granted, academic staff affiliated with a Research Academic Unit receive strategic funding associated with the academic activity of that Research Academic Unit as budget holders of the project containing the strategic funds.
h. Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Students
   Research Academic Units are ineligible to enrol HDR students.
i. Teaching
   Research Academic Units are ineligible to own courses or programs.
j. Host Supervisory Unit
   Research Academic Units have a host Faculty or Institute agreed at establishment.

Categorisation of Research Academic Units

(5) Research Academic Units are broadly divided into two types:

a. Research Centres
   i. Research Centres typically involve a focus of expertise resulting in a coordinated research program, usually conducted by researchers from across multiple Supervisory Units.
   ii. Research Centres do not require dedicated funding to be established.
   iii. Research Centres may have external funding specifically designated for the establishment of a Research Centre, such as an Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence.
   iv. Research Centres may be Affiliate Research Centres, recognising a joint mission with one or more external organisations through a formal relationship (e.g. hospitals, research organisations, industry, government, philanthropic organisations), that are established through an affiliate agreement that may not necessarily involve direct funding of research activity.
b. Research Networks
   i. Research Networks are formed by a coalition of many independent research groups who represent a strong underlying capability at UQ that is obscured by the University's Supervisory Unit structure.
   ii. Unlike Research Centres, all members of a Research Network would not typically share a focused research program, but instead represent a large-scale capability that could be deployed in various combinations.
   iii. Research Networks are expected to target larger-scale external funding opportunities not accessible by individual groups, which require the co-ordinated high profile of a Research Network.
   iv. Research Networks are expected to develop a coordinated strategy to foster strong partnerships with other universities, government, industry or publicly funded research organisations and have a demonstrable focus on research directed towards societal benefit and impact.

Operational Parameters of Research Academic Units

(6) Research Centres

a. Scale

Must not be restricted to a single academic research group. Typically, 5 or more independent research groups are involved, each led by researchers at level B-E on contracts >3 years. Research Centres defined by an external agreement do not need to meet this requirement.

b. Establishment
In the absence of an external agreement, established by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (DVCRI) via expression of interest form with a recommendation from the host Supervisory Unit.

c. Governance
Host Supervisory Unit is a Faculty/Institute agreed at establishment.

d. Academic Lead
Director determined by the Executive Dean/Institute Director, or as specified by the external agreement. The Director manages affiliations of other UQ staff to the Centre.

e. Web Presence
Web presence hosted within the existing faculty/institute web domain in compliance with the Digital Presence Procedure. Exceptions will be approved by DVCRI.

f. Lifespan
Lifespan of 5 years in the first instance, or as specified by external agreement.

g. Reporting
At the discretion of the host, or if required by the external agreement.

h. Renewal
Host Supervisory Unit may require a review of the Centre activity. In the absence of an external agreement, application for continuation of the centre, after any review, is made via expression of interest to the DVCRI.

i. Closure
Closure may occur at any time following a recommendation to close by the Host Supervisory Unit being accepted by DVCRI, or after 5 years in the absence of a request for renewal. Research centres with external agreements will close at the end of that agreement, if a renewal has not been requested and approved.

(7) Research Networks

a. Scale
Typically involve researchers from across 2 or more Faculties and/or Institutes and would typically comprise >30 UQ individual academics and/or >20 academic groups, each led by researchers at level B-E on contracts >3 years.

b. Establishment
Established by DVCRI via an expression of interest form.

c. Governance
A cross-Supervisory Unit steering group established with DVCRI approval.

d. Academic Lead
Convenor approved by DVCRI upon application, who manages affiliations of other UQ staff to the Network.

e. Web Presence
Web presence developed and maintained by the DVCRI portfolio in compliance with the Digital Presence Procedure.

f. Lifespan
Lifespan of 5 years in the first instance.

g. Reporting
To be supplied to DVCRI on template provided.

h. Renewal
Made via expression of interest to the DVCRI.

i. Closure

Closure may occur at any time by DVCRI, or after 5 years in the absence of a request for renewal.

Section 3 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

(8) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (DVCRI) is responsible for:

a. approving the establishment and closure of Research Centres, and Research Networks.
b. approving the names of all Research Centres and Networks (in line with Brand Policy and Procedure).
c. suppling and maintaining a web presence for Research Networks (in accordance with the Digital Presence Procedure).
d. overseeing the Transition Period activities.

Executive Dean or Institute Director

(9) The Executive Dean or Institute Director is responsible for:

a. making a recommendation for establishment or closure of a Research Centre or Research Network to the DVCRI.
b. suppling and maintaining a web presence for Research Centres where appropriate (in accordance with the Digital Presence Procedure).

Section 4 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

Governance

(10) Research Centres and Research Networks are required to have a clear governance structure and reporting line within the University, as agreed upon at the time of establishment that enable monitoring of performance against approved Key Performance Indicators.

Review and Assurance

(11) Research Centres and Research Networks are subject to a regular cycle of review as outlined in the Policy.

Section 5 - Recording and Reporting

Recording

(12) Research Centres and Research Networks must be listed in the organisational unit database and the organisational units web presence, where appropriate.

Reports

(13) Research Centres and Research Networks must provide regular reports to their Host Supervisory Unit as outlined in the Policy.

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Section 6 - Nomenclature

(14) The use of the following titles are reserved for Research Academic Units that are approved under this Policy and in line with the Brand Policy and Procedure.

a. Research Centres
    i. Research Centre in [insert name]
    ii. Centre for [insert name]
b. Research Networks
    i. Research Network in [insert name]
    ii. [insert name] Research Network
    iii. UQ [insert name]

(15) All approved Research Centres will be called Research Centres in all corporate systems.

(16) Research Centres with an external contract that requires an alternate naming convention (e.g. Hub, Alliance, Group, etc.) may use the agreed nomenclature on websites, etc. but will still be classified as a Research Centre in all corporate systems.

(17) Exceptions to this requirement are detailed under Transitional Arrangements or at DVCRI discretion.

Section 7 - Transitional Arrangements

(18) An implementation plan will be approved by the Vice-Chancellor to transition all Extant Centres to Research Centres and Research Networks under this Policy.

Section 8 - Appendix

Definitions

Term	Definition
Affiliation	Recognition of a joint mission with one or more external organisations through a formal relationship [e.g. hospitals, research organisations, industry, government, philanthropic organisations], that are established through an affiliate agreement that may not directly fund research activity.
External Affiliate Agreement	Formally describes the relationship between The University of Queensland and an independent legal entity as it pertains to the pursuit of research, educational or other activities undertaken for mutual benefit.
Affiliate Researcher	A UQ academic who is approved by the Director of a Research Centre or Convenor of a Research Network to join the academic centre.
Budget Holder	Role in the UniFi financial system normally allocated to the Chief Investigator for a research project. The budget holder is accountable for the management of the project expenditure and must ensure that funds are spent in accordance with funding conditions.
Expression of Interest	The document that justifies the establishment of a Centre or a Research Network.
Externally Funded Research Centres	Often known as nodes of centres. Externally supported by a time-limited, single, large external grant and managed according to rules of that scheme [e.g. NHMRC Centres of Research Excellence, ARC Centres of Excellence, Cooperative Research Centres, Industrial Transformation Research Centres/Hubs or other external funder], or a single large multi-year research contract from a government or industry partner, requiring establishment of a Centre.

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Term	Definition
Finance Division	Is a segment created in the University finance system (UniFi) [representing Faculties, Schools and Institutes] directly funded under the UQ budget model eligible for direct secondary returns from HERDC.
Financial Delegation	Ability to exercise a delegated financial authority to incur expenses or make payments on behalf of the University. Standard financial delegations of authority are based on the approved Authorisation Bands of Positions endorsed by the Senate.
Host Supervisory Unit	Is the Faculty/Institute of the nominated Director of a Centre, responsible for the making recommendations regarding Centres and Networks, facilitating the web presence of Centres.
Research Centres	Involve a focus of expertise resulting in a co-ordinated research program, usually conducted across multiple Supervisory Units.
Research Networks	Coalition of independent research groups with shared mission who represent a strong underlying capability at UQ that is obscured by the University's supervisory unit structure. Research Networks would not typically share a focussed research program but represent a large-scale capability that could synergise and be deployed in various combinations as opportunities present.
Register	An official record of the established Institutes, Centres and Research Networks.
Strategic Funding	Funding provided by the host and/or other UQ units to support the performance of a research academic unit.
Transition Period	01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

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