

RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND CENTRES POLICY AND PROCEDURE



CONTENTS

1	PURPOSE.....	1
2	SCOPE.....	1
3	POLICY STATEMENT	1
4	PROCEDURE	2
	Establish.....	2
	Management	4
	Support.....	4
	Performance.....	5
	Review.....	5
	Disestablishment.....	5
	Legal status	5
5	RESPONSIBILITIES	5
	Compliance, monitoring and review.....	5
	Reporting.....	6
	Records management.....	6
6	DEFINITIONS	6
	Terms and definitions.....	6
7	RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS.....	6
8	FEEDBACK.....	6
9	APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS.....	6
10	APPENDIX – MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES.....	7

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure outlines how CQUniversity will establish, operate and manage research institutes and centres to support achievement of the University strategic plan goals..

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to CQUniversity research institutes and centres.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 The University aims to be a key part of Australia’s national research and innovation system, contributing to its communities through the production and application of research knowledge and the training of a skilled research workforce.
- 3.2 Research institutes and centres will be concentrations of high quality research activity which champion research and provide high visibility for the University in its regions, nationally and internationally.
- 3.3 The University recognises research concentrations at two levels:
- research institutes - have the critical mass to address large scale multi-disciplinary research questions, or
 - research centres - a cohort of researchers working in a clearly defined and focused field of enquiry.

3.4 Research institutes and centres:

- provide a mechanism to produce the scale and environment to enable researchers to make national or international contributions to their research fields
- support the development aspirations of early and mid-career researchers
- support high quality research training of research higher degree (RHD) candidates
- contribute to the development of a strong research culture within their nominated research focus areas,
- showcase areas of University research strength and critical mass to an internal and external stakeholder audience, and
- enhance research led teaching for a more enriched student experience.

3.5 Research institutes and centres will:

- promote and conduct research in a designated priority area, contributing to the development of relevant specialised expertise and quality outputs of national and international impact
- provide a vehicle for internal and external research-based interaction and external partnerships
- enhance capacity and success in attracting external research funds, the communication of research outcomes, professional relationships, research personnel and RHD candidates
- provide focus for intellectual/scholarly/research activities in a coordinated approach
- engage with relevant School and College leadership structures to identify strategies and actions to:
 - enhance research-led teaching
 - maximise research outputs and outcomes of mutual benefit
 - support individual research staff to achieve their performance/workload targets
- establish a critical mass of experienced researchers to provide guidance and leadership to newer researchers, including RHD candidates
- demonstrate research cohesion, management and leadership underpinned by strong and effective governance processes, and
- demonstrate that it is successful in achieving a high rate of return on the University's investment in terms of, but not limited to, external income, research higher degree completions, external research partnerships and high-quality research publications; the latter usually benchmarked by citation, impact factor, peer review and other bibliometric indicators of quality and impact.

3.6 Not all research employees or research activity in the University will align with a research institute or centre. Other research groups and individual researchers will continue to make important and valuable contributions to the University's research.

4 PROCEDURE

Establish

4.1 A University research institute or centre will have the scale and capacity to bring expertise to bear on major research questions of strategic importance to the University and its stakeholders.

Criteria for establishment

4.2 Research institutes and centres must:

- have a Director who is a research leader in their field of expertise and who is able to provide leadership to the group of multidisciplinary researchers who are members of the institute or centre
- have a clearly identified collection of researchers, often from multiple Schools
- have a three-year plan with clearly defined objectives that support the University's research and research education strategies as well as the goals and performance targets of the University's [Strategic Plan](#), and

- continue over a sustained period, reflecting a balance between high quality research (as recognised by Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) or other ranking mechanisms) and research of relevance to its communities (as recognised by an Engagement and Impact Assessment (EIA)), noting that this balance may vary from time to time and between organisations.

Membership

- 4.3 Research institutes and centres will have three categories of membership; full members, associate members and affiliate members. These categories are defined in the [Appendix](#).
- 4.4 Members will be appointed by the institute or centre's Management Committee. The Management Committee will periodically review activity/performance of members. Membership of a research institute or centre may be terminated by the Management Committee where a member has failed to maintain a meaningful contribution to research institute or centre performance criteria.
- 4.5 Full members will have generated research outputs in alignment with the University's [Academic Profiles Procedure](#) over the previous three-year period which would be recognised as ERA eligible outputs in the Field of Research (FOR) focus areas designated by the research institute or centre.
- 4.6 Early Career Researchers (ECR) are encouraged to become members of research institutes or centres.
- 4.7 Full members must make a substantial time commitment to the activity of the research organisation, each with a nominal minimum 20 per cent time commitment (i.e. 0.2FTE) to support the unit's research programs.
- 4.8 A research institute will normally comprise at least six full-time equivalent (FTE) research active employees and a research centre will normally comprise at least three FTE research active employees.

Application for establishment

- 4.9 Proposals for research institutes and centres status may be submitted where there is evidence of growing synergies between groupings of researchers who have the vision, capacity, performance and passion to address focused large scale, multidisciplinary questions of regional, national and/or international significance.
- 4.10 Applications will be made on a prescribed template available from the Research Division. Proposals must include a business case, a three-year strategic plan and key performance indicators against which the research institute or centre performance will be measured. The following threshold levels of research activity will be demonstrated as a minimum benchmark level of performance:

Research performance threshold	Research institute	Research centre
Research active employees	6 FTE	3 FTE
Research income (CAT 1, 2, 3, 4)	\$800,000 per annum	\$400,000 per annum
ERA	ERA ranking of 3 or above in at least one 2-digit and one 4-digit FOR	ERA ranking of 3 or above in at least one 4-digit FOR
Engagement and Impact	Submission of a minimum of one eligible case study to EIA.	

- 4.11 A business case may be made to the Vice-President (Research) under exceptional circumstances where the above metrics of the proposed research grouping do not meet the benchmark for establishment.
- 4.12 Proposals must have the support of the Vice-President (Research) prior to submission for approval. Establishment of a research institute or centre will be approved by the Research Committee and the decision reported to Academic Board and Council for noting.
- 4.13 Approval for the establishment of new research institutes or centres will be subject to the availability of funding.

Management

- 4.14 Research institutes and centres will reside within the Research Division, being an operational unit within the Division structure, operational and strategic plans. Each research institute or centre will have a Director who will report to the Vice-President (Research).

Director

- 4.15 The Director of a research institute or centre will have a distinguished track record in research and have responsibility for the management, development and leadership of the research institute or centre. This includes identifying and establishing research opportunities and funding sources for the research institute or centre, and the development of members.
- 4.16 The Director of a research centre will be a 0.5FTE appointment. The Director of a research institute will be a 1.0FTE appointment. Each Director will be appointed for a term of three years.

Management committee

- 4.17 Each research institute or centre will have a management committee. This committee will operate under terms of reference established by that committee.
- 4.18 Membership of the committee will comprise at least the Director of the research institute or centre and the Vice- President (Research) (or nominee). Members of the Management Committee must be approved by Vice-President (Research).
- 4.19 This committee will appoint or terminate members of the research centre or research institute.

Steering committee

- 4.20 Each research institute will have, in addition to the management committee, a steering committee. The steering committee will operate under terms of reference established by that committee.
- 4.21 Membership of the committee will include internal and external representatives.
- 4.22 The steering committee shall provide strategic advice to the research institute through the management committee. Members must be approved by Vice-President (Research).

Support

- 4.23 Schools may provide support into a research institute or centre's research programs and through access to infrastructure, materials or administrative support to members.
- 4.24 Research institutes and centres will also be supported by the professional service divisions of the University through access to information technology infrastructure, finance, marketing and relevant corporate systems.
- 4.25 The Research Division will provide administrative support to the operational activities of research institutes and centres.
- 4.26 An annual University funding allocation to each centre or institute will be determined by the Vice-President (Research). The annual funding must be expended within the calendar year of allocation.
- 4.27 Each Director must submit to the Vice-President (Research):
- a proposed budget for approval prior to the release of the funding allocation at the beginning of each calendar year, and
 - an acquittal of the budget through their annual report, and at the end of each calendar year.

Performance

- 4.28 To retain institute or centre status, research institutes and centres will attain a threshold level of research activity, in accordance with the expectations described in section 4.9. In particular, a threshold level of activity contributing to research block grant funding, as determined by the Vice-President (Research), will be generated by research institutes and centres, as well as other types of performance measures.

Review

- 4.29 In the third year of funding, research institutes and centres will submit a review report to the Research Committee for consideration of a further three-year term as a research institute or centre. A template will be provided by the Research Division for the triennial review report.
- 4.30 The Research Committee will consider and provide a decision, with regards to the research institute or centre's:
- overall performance
 - its proposed future directions
 - its performance against key performance indicators
 - its alignment with the University's Strategic Plan, and
 - its financial sustainability.
- 4.31 The Vice-President (Research) may request a review of a research institute or centre outside the normal three-year cycle.

Disestablishment

- 4.32 The Research Committee has the authority to disestablish a research institute or centre. The disestablishment of a research institute or centre may occur as an outcome of the three-year review, or may be initiated by the Vice-Chancellor and President or Vice-President (Research) under circumstances such as:
- unsatisfactory performance
 - membership falling below minimum threshold levels
 - financial non-viability
 - lack of alignment with the University's Strategic Plan, or
 - other circumstances that the Vice-President (Research) deems important to the viability of the institute or centre.

Legal status

- 4.33 Research institutes and centres are not legal entities. Any research agreements with external organisations or entities must be approved and executed on behalf of the University by the Vice-Chancellor and President, Vice-President (Research), or person with delegated authority.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 5.1 The Vice-President (Research) is responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing this policy and procedure.
- 5.2 The Vice-President (Research) and research institute and centre directors are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and procedure.

Reporting

- 5.3 Each research institute and centre will submit an annual report. The Research Division will provide audited research performance data for the previous calendar year and an annual report template, for each research institute and centre, in July of each year. The Director will prepare a written report reviewing the past year's performance, including an updated three-year strategic research plan. The annual report of each research institute and centre will be noted by the Research Committee.
- 5.4 The Vice-President (Research) will conduct an annual performance review and planning interview with each Director. The annual performance review and planning interview will take place in February after each calendar year of designation.

Records management

- 5.5 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 5.6 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the Records and Privacy Team (email records@cqu.edu.au).

6 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

Terms and definitions

Early Career Researcher (ECR): an academic employee within five years of completion of their research higher degree ([Australian Qualifications Framework](#) Level 10 or equivalent).

7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Nil.

8 FEEDBACK

- 8.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to policy@cqu.edu.au.

9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Council
Delegated Approval Authority	N/A
Advisory Committee	Academic Board
Required Consultation	Research Committee
Administrator	Vice-President (Research)
Next Review Date	28/04/2024

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	Research Management Committee 1995
Amendment Authority and Date	Research Board 7/04/1998; Academic Board 6/05/1998; Council 20/04/1998; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) 26/11/2004; Director, Office of Research 1/12/2006; Academic Board 26/08/2009; Council 14/07/2014; Academic Board 28/03/2018; Council 28/04/2021.
Notes	This document was formerly known as Guidelines for the Designation, Support and Review of Research Institutes and Centres (26/08/2009) and the Research Institutes and Centres Principles (14/07/2014).

10 APPENDIX – MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

- 10.1 Research institutes and centres are flagships of the University's research profile and require the scale and capacity to deliver outcomes to research questions of regional, national and international significance. This requires a dedicated and productive membership supported by clear leadership and governance structures and a solid funding base.
- 9.2 Membership categories are defined recognising that there will be some academic employees who wish to align fully with the mission and goals of research institutes and centres and commit their research time in commensurate fashion (full members). There will be other academic employees who choose to align with a research institute or centre for specific projects or for career development reasons but who are not in a position to commit the majority of their research time to the research concentration (associate members). There will also be others, including non-University employees, who are affiliated with the research institute or centre including persons from other universities or organisations and retired employees (affiliate members). The research performance of the institute or centre will be determined by the aggregation of the performance of all members that affiliate their research outputs to the research institute or centre. Criteria for these three categories are given below:

Full members

- 10.3 These are academic employees who make a minimum time commitment of 0.2FTE and who make an active contribution to achievement of research performance key performance indicators for the centre or institute. The Director, in consultation with the Vice-President (Research) (or nominee), has the authority to reduce the time commitment or performance criteria for employees who they believe will make a significant contribution to the research activity of the institute or centre but whose past performance or current circumstances have prevented such attainment of commitments, e.g. through significant administrative roles.

Associate members

- 10.4 These are academic or non-academic employees or RHD candidates who contribute less than the minimum time commitment or whose research performance does not meet the requirements for full membership, but who contribute to one or more of the research institute or centre's activities.

Affiliate members

- 10.5 Affiliate members are those who make a significant contribution to the activity of research institutes or centres, but who are not employed by the University. Their contribution could be recognised by research institutes and centres in a number of ways, for example adjunct appointments, and for a variety of purposes, including publicity, branding, and research engagement.