RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND CENTRES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

CONTENTS

1 PURPOSE

1.1 CQUniversity 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.

1.2 Research institutes and centres will be concentrations of high research performance and provide high visibility for the University in its regions, nationally and internationally.

1.3 CQUniversity recognises research concentrations at two levels:

- research institutes - have the critical mass to address large scale multi-disciplinary research questions, or

- research centres - comprise a smaller cohort of researchers working in a clearly defined and focused field of enquiry.

2 SCOPE

2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all CQUniversity employees.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 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 development aspirations of early and mid-career researchers

- support high quality research training of higher degree by research students, and

- contribute to the development of a strong research culture both within the research concentration and within host Schools.

3.2 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 standing

- 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 students

- provide focus for intellectual/scholarly/research activities in a coordinated approach

- provide a platform for co-operation and integration of its research members and activities with the University's learning and teaching, executive, schools and divisions, strategic plan and policies

- establish a critical mass of advanced researchers to provide guidance and leadership to newer researchers, including postgraduate research students

- 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 and high quality research publications; the latter usually benchmarked by citation, impact factor, peer review and other bibliometric indicators of quality and impact.

3.3 Not all research employees or research activity in the University will reside in a research institute or centre. Research groups and individual researchers will continue to make important and valuable contributions to the University's research.

Establishing a CQUniversity research institute or centre

Purpose

3.4 A CQUniversity 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 regions.

Criteria for establishment

3.5 CQUniversity research institutes and centres are expected to:

- 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 within the unit

- 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 ERA or other national 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 institutes and centres.

Membership

3.6 CQUniversity research institutes and centres will have three categories of membership; full members, associate members and affiliate members. These categories are defined in Appendix A.

3.7 Full members will have generated research outputs in alignment with the University's Academic Profiles over the previous three year period which would be recognised as Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) eligible outputs.

3.8 Early Career Researchers (ECR) are encouraged to become members of research institutes and centres. In recognition of their ECR status, the criteria for full membership will be made relevant to opportunity.

3.9 Full members will be expected to make a substantial time commitment to the activity of the research institute or centre, each with a normally minimum 40% (institutes) or 20% (centres) time commitment to support the unit's research programs.

3.10 A research institute will normally comprise at least eight full-time equivalent (FTE) research active staff and a research centre would normally comprise at least three FTE research active staff.

Application for establishment

3.11 Proposals for research institute or centre 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 focussed large scale, multidisciplinary questions of regional, national and/or international significance.

3.12 Proposals must have the support of the relevant Dean of School and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) prior to submission to the Research Committee for discussion. Establishment of a research institute or centre will be considered by the Research Committee and recommended to Academic Board. Academic Board will consider the proposal for establishment and the decision reported to Council for noting.

3.13 Applications will be made on a prescribed template available from the Research Division. Proposals must include a three year business case, a strategic plan and key performance indicators. 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 staff	8 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 Field of Research	ERA ranking of 3 or above in at least one 2-digit Field of Research
Engagement and Impact	Submission of a minimum of one eligible case study to EIA.	

3.14 A case may be made for the establishment of an institute or centre to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) under exceptional circumstances where the metrics of the proposed research grouping do not meet the benchmark for establishment.

3.15 Approval for the establishment of new research institutes or centres will be subject to the availability of funding.

4 PROCEDURE

Management

4.1 Research institutes and centres will reside within a School, being an operational unit within the School structure, operational and strategic plans. Each research institute or centre will have a Director who will report to the Dean of School.

Director

4.2   The Director will be responsible for the management and leadership of the research institute or centre. The Director of the 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 research staff.

Management committee

4.3   Each research institute or centre will have a Management Committee. The Management Committee will operate under Terms of Reference established by that Committee. Membership of the Committee will comprise at least the Director of the research institute or centre and the Dean of School or nominee, in which the research institute or centre resides. Membership of the Management Committee must be approved by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Steering committee

4.4   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. Membership of the Committee will include internal and external representatives. The Steering Committee shall provide strategic advice to the research institute through the Management Committee. Membership of the steering Committee must be approved by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Funding of institutes and centres

4.5   The host School research budget will provide support for its research institutes and centres. Schools may also provide support through provision of salaried staff into the research institute or centre's research programs and through access to infrastructure, materials or administrative support.

4.6   Research institutes and centres will also be supported by the professional service divisions of the University through access to IT infrastructure, finance, marketing and relevant corporate systems.

4.7   Funding provided for research institutes and centres will comprise two elements:

- a baseline component in recognition of establishment operational costs, and

- a performance component recognising the research performance of research institute or centre members and contribution to the University's research block grant income.

4.8   The total budget available for allocation to each School and in each of these elements will be determined annually by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). Each Director will submit a budget to the Dean of School for endorsement, and to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) for final approval, as part of the annual performance review and planning interviews.

Performance

4.9   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 3.13. In particular, a threshold level of activity contributing to Research Block Grant funding, as determined by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), will be generated by research institutes and centres, as well as other types of performance measures such as ERA-eligible outputs, and case studies demonstrating impact and engagement.

Reporting and review

Reporting

4.10   Each research institute or 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 or 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 or centre will be considered by Research Committee in October.

4.11 The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) and the relevant Dean of School will conduct an annual performance review and planning interview with each Director to determine annual funding. The annual performance review and planning interview will take place in February after each calendar year of designation.

Review

4.12 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. The Research Committee will consider and provide a recommendation to Academic Board, with regards to the research institute or centre's:

- overall performance;
- its proposed future directions
- its performance against KPIs
- its alignment with the University's strategic plan, and
- its financial sustainability.

4.13 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) may request a review of a research institute or centre outside the normal three year cycle.

Disestablishment of a CQUniversity research institute or centre

4.14 Academic Board 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 Deputy Vice-Chancellor (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 Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) deems important to the viability of the institute or centre.

Legal status

4.15 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, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), or person with delegated authority.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

5.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) is responsible for the implementation of this policy and procedure.

5.2 Compliance with this policy and procedure will be the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Deans of School, and research institute or centre Directors.

Reporting

5.3 No additional reporting is required.

Records management

5.4   Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy and procedure in a recognised University recordkeeping system.

6   DEFINITIONS

6.1   Terms not defined in this document may be in the University glossary.

Terms and definitions

Early Career Researcher (ECR): academic staff within five years of completion of their research higher degree (Australian Qualifications Framework Level 10 or equivalent)

7   FEEDBACK

7.1   University staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@cqu.edu.au.

8   APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Council
Advisory Committee to Approval Authority	Academic Board and Research Committee
Administrator	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
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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).

APPENDIX A – MEMBERSHIP

Membership categories for research institutes and centres

Research institutes and centres are flagships of CQUniversity'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. Membership categories are defined recognising that there will be some 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 others 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-CQUniversity employed staff, who are affiliated with the research concentration including persons from other universities or organisations and retired staff (Affiliate members). The research performance of the institute or centre will be determined by the aggregation of the performance of full and associate members that affiliate their research outputs to the CQUniversity institute or centre. Criteria for these three categories are given below:

Full members

These are academic employees who make a minimum time commitment of 0.4FTE to the research institute or 0.2FTE for a research centre and who meet the performance criteria of five ERA eligible outputs over the previous three year period. (For ECRs this requirement is three ERA eligible outputs over the previous three year period.) The Director, in consultation with the relevant Dean of School 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

These are employees or research higher degree students 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 concentration's activities.

Affiliate members

These are employees who make a significant contribution to the activity of CQUniversity research institutes or centres but who are not employed by CQUniversity. Their contribution could be recognised by CQUniversity 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.