

Research Centres Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) This Policy describes the framework for the proposal of new Research Centres and the management, reporting, renewal and disestablishment of existing Research Centres.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to:

- a. all campuses
- b. all Schools and Departments
- c. all existing and new Research Centres

(3) This Policy does not apply to external or joint research ventures for which the underlying governance and management arrangements are determined via bespoke contractual arrangements, such as:

- a. Research Centres co-operated with another party and established as a separate entity;
- b. external legal entities affiliated with the University;
- c. Centres funded by external granting bodies such as the ARC and NHMRC.

(4) 'Research Centres' for the purposes of these procedures includes Centres whose main purpose is research.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(5) Research Centres play a key role in supporting the University's strategic research goals, including through the development of a strong research culture, by undertaking impactful research which is engaged with industry and broader communities, attracting research income, driving growth in research outputs and supervising undergraduate (Hons) and Higher Degree by Research Students.

(6) The establishment of a Research Centre will be considered when the proposed research activities represent academic endeavour at a high level and the formation of the Centre will enhance the national and international reputation of the University over and above what would be achieved in the normal course of conduct of research by research groups or teams.

(7) The Academic Board will approve the establishment, renewal and disestablishment of all Research Centres following recommendation by the Research Strategy Committee and endorsement of the Research and Graduate Studies Committee.

(8) Research Centres will normally be associated with a School and governance structures must reflect this. The primary reporting line from the Centre Director is normally to the Dean.

(9) Annual reporting is a mandatory requirement of all Research Centres established under this Policy and Procedure.

(10) Research Centres will adhere to all University policies related to their activities, including policies governing research ethics and integrity, intellectual property, graduate research, research data management, research integrity, research contracts and consulting.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Establishment

(11) Proposals to establish a Research Centre will be completed by the proposed Research Centre Director in consultation with, and submitted by, the Dean and Provost. Proposers will consult key stakeholders and secure the endorsement of the School prior to submitting the proposal for review.

(12) Research Centres will be established for a maximum period of five (5) years with the possibility to seek renewal for a further period in accordance with the process outlined in 'Part F - Renewal' of this policy.

(13) All proposals must be submitted for review as follows:

- a. the Research Strategy Committee for consideration and recommendation;
- b. the Research and Graduate Studies Committee for endorsement;
- c. the Academic Board for approval.

(14) Proposals to establish Research Centres will be made using the Proposal to establish a Research Centre template and should outline:

- a. the purpose, value and future goals of the Research Centre, along with its alignment to the University's strategic research goals;
- b. the proposed term for which the Research Centre will operate;
- c. membership of the Research Centre and plans for development of its members;
- d. measures through which performance of the Research Centre for the proposed term will be monitored;
- e. the extent to which the Research Centre will be, or will work towards, financially self-sustainability;
- f. benchmarking against similar external Research Centres and other entities.

(15) The date of establishment of the Research Centre will be the date of approval by the Academic Board.

Part B - Naming

(16) All Research Centres must have "Research" and "Centre" in their title.

(17) The use of the name "Research Centre" in relation to University academic activities is only permitted for Organisational units that have been formally approved as a Research Centre under this Policy.

(18) Existing Research Centres will be given a period of time to satisfy the relevant criteria or to change their name. For these Centres, the word "research" can be included in the Centre's name or as a tag, e.g. "A Research Centre of La Trobe University".

(19) The use of the word "Institute", "Australia" or "National" are only to be used upon approval by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement) with criteria for scale.

(20) Changes to the name of a Research Centre as a result of a change in focus of Centre activities may be recommended to the Research and Graduate Studies Committee for endorsement and the Academic Board for approval.

Part C - Membership

(21) A member of a Research Centre is an individual who actively participates in and contributes to the Research Centre's research program and objectives. Active contribution includes but is not limited to participation in research projects, the development and submission of proposals for research funding and production of research outputs.

(22) Research Centre Directors determine membership of their Research Centre. There is no expectation that La Trobe staff who work in the same disciplinary field(s) will automatically become a member of a Research Centre.

(23) Research Centre membership comprises of Core Members and Affiliate Members.

(24) Core Members include:

- a. Continuing and fixed-term academic and professional staff employed specifically by the Research Centre;
- b. Continuing and fixed-term academic and professional staff employed by La Trobe;
- c. Graduate research candidates admitted to a higher degree by research at La Trobe.

(25) Affiliate Members include:

- a. La Trobe staff and graduate research candidates who elect to be affiliated members only;
- b. Casual, honorary or adjunct La Trobe staff;
- c. Students enrolled in a coursework degree who are undertaking research activities in the Research Centre;
- d. National or international research collaborators based at external higher education providers or research organisations;
- e. External stakeholders from relevant industry and community groups, such as government, for profit and not-for-profit organisations.

(26) Staff fully funded by a Research Centre (i.e. 1 FTE) can only be a Core Member of this Research Centre and an Affiliate Member of other Research Centres. Staff employed in fixed-term and continuing roles by multiple Research Centres can be Core Members of these Research Centres and Affiliate Members of other Research Centres.

(27) Unless employed specifically by a Research Centre (24a & 26), individuals may be a Core Member of a Research Centre that does not sit within their academic school.

(28) Membership will be monitored and maintained annually by the Research Centre Director who will be kept informed by staff of their membership of other Research Centres.

(29) For T&R staff, membership of a Research Centre does not qualify for workload assignments in the Academic Workload Planning System except for Research Centre Directors, Co-Directors and Deputy-Directors.

Part D - Governance and Management of the Research Centre

(30) Research Centres are required to develop a five (5) year strategic plan to be endorsed by their Advisory Committee and an annual operational plan to be approved by their Management Committee and Dean for existing Research Centres that sit within the School.

Research Centre Advisory Committee

(31) Research Centres must establish an Advisory Committee (or when relevant, an Advisory and Scientific Committee).

(32) An Advisory Committee will normally consist of the Centre Director, one other member of the Centre, the Dean or

School nominee, plus at least 3 external expertise-based members, one of whom will be Chair.

(33) Advisory Committees are expected to meet at least twice a year (in person, or by teleconference) and be reviewed every 3 years.

(34) The Advisory Committee's role is to:

- a. facilitate industry, government and non-profit sector engagement and partnerships;
- b. facilitate the provision of independent input and guidance on the external environment; and
- c. endorse and regularly review progress in the implementation of the Research Centre's five-year strategic plan

Research Centre Management Committee

(35) Research Centres must have a Research Centre Management Committee comprising of the Centre Director (Chair), the Centre Manager (if applicable) or other Senior Professional staff, the Dean or School's Director of Research, the School Senior Manager and, if desired, one other staff member from the Research Centre. Management Committees are expected to meet quarterly (in person, or by teleconference).

Relationships with Schools

(36) Research Centres contribute in identifiable and measurable ways to School seminar programs and the research culture of the host school. When located at a regional campus, Research Centres also contribute to the research culture of the host campus.

(37) Research Centres will have representation at School Research Committees and be included in the School business planning process.

(38) The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability) is the first point of contact for Research Centre Directors and Deans for advice outside of the School environment.

Part E - Annual Reporting

(39) All Research Centres are required to submit a short annual report, following a reporting template, for the purposes of monitoring performance against agreed performance goals.

(40) Annual reports will include research projects, income, publications, and other outcomes of the Research Centre to which Core Members have made a contribution, for example as an investigator or co-author.

(41) Annual reports will be submitted by 1 July each year to the Research Strategy Committee for consideration, following endorsement by the Dean.

(42) In addition, Research Centres may prepare and publish more extensive annual reports for the purposes of external promotion and engagement.

(43) At the request of the Research Strategy Committee, the Provost or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement), a more substantial review of the performance and operations may be undertaken at any time. Any substantial recommendations to alter a Research Centre may be referred for the committee's endorsement/approval. If the recommendation is to close a Research Centre, the process outlined in 'Part G - Disestablishment' of this Policy is to be followed.

Part F - Renewal

(44) A Research Centre may seek renewal towards the end of its term. Proposals to renew a Research Centre will be

completed by the Research Centre Director in consultation with, and submitted by, the Dean. Proposers will consult key stakeholders prior to submitting the proposal for review.

(45) Research Centre may seek renewal for a further period of up to five (5) years.

(46) All proposals for renewal must be submitted for review as follows:

- a. the Research Strategy Committee for consideration and recommendation;
- b. the Research and Graduate Studies Committee for endorsement;
- c. the Academic Board for approval.

(47) Externally funded centres (such as ARC or NHMRC Centres) that seek to continue beyond the term of external funding as a La Trobe Research Centre will undergo the same process of renewal.

(48) Proposals to renew a Research Centre will include:

- a. report of performance against original performance measures and return on investment;
- b. reflection on the continued purpose, value and future of the Research Centre, and its alignment to the University's strategic research goals;
- c. the impact of the research undertaken by the Research Centre;
- d. consideration of any feedback received from stakeholders and changes to the operation of the Research Centre;
- e. intended performance goals for the proposed next term;
- f. ongoing membership of the Research Centre and achievements in research development of its members;
- g. plans for achieving financial self-sustainability if not already achieved and expectations for ongoing funding contributions from School or Department.

(49) Proposals for renewal of a Research Centre should be prepared in a timely manner so that the outcome of the proposal can be advised at least four to six months prior to the original cessation date.

Part G - Disestablishment

(50) The disestablishment of a Research Centre will be considered if:

- a. the Research Centre does not seek renewal;
- b. a proposal to renew the Research Centre is not approved;
- c. a review of a Research Centre recommends that it ceases operation.
- d. A recommendation to disestablish a Research Centre is made by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement).

(51) A recommendation to disestablish a Research Centre must be submitted for review as follows:

- a. the Research Strategy Committee for recommendation;
- b. the Research and Graduate Studies Committee for endorsement;
- c. the Academic Board for approval.

(52) The decision to disestablish a Research Centre will require a clear plan for the orderly winding down of the Research Centre operations including:

- a. management of Centre Staff within the School;
- b. communication with the Advisory Committee, funding agencies, and internal University stakeholders;

- c. provisions for adequate storage and treatment of data associated with research projects; and
- d. removal of Research Centre websites (or parts of) where appropriate.

Part H - Director

(53) Research Centre Directors normally have appointments within a specific School.

(54) The Research Centre Director normally reports to the Dean, including for the purpose of Career Success, Academic Workload Planning System allocations (when applicable) and Centre operations. If located on a regional campus, the Research Centre Director maintains an ongoing relationship with the Head of the Campus.

(55) Professional development for Research Centre Directors is provided by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability) and the Research Education & Development (RED) Team covering leadership, partnership development, tender bidding, culture development and financial management.

(56) Regular Research Centre Director Forums will be hosted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability) with key guest speakers to inform professional development programs and provide regular opportunities to share good practice.

Part I - Funding and Support

Administrative Support

(57) Schools may provide appropriately skilled and experienced administrative staff familiar with Research Centres who support one or more centres. Professional staff employed by the School report to the School Senior Manager.

(58) Schools also provide support in terms of office space and other infrastructure. On a regional campus, office space and infrastructure may need to be negotiated with the Head of Campus.

Additional Funding

(59) Large Research Centres with substantial research funding will be eligible to apply for additional support to cater for the complexity associated with large numbers of contracts and diverse revenue streams. Eligible Research Centres may be provided with support for management on a case-by-case basis. The consideration of support will be based upon a detailed justification of the requirement to manage complexity, opportunities for the Centre to attract new or significant revenue streams, and the Centre's goals and performance. Research Centres will not automatically attract funding from the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement) and should not factor the availability of such funding into Centre planning.

(60) Resources required to support the Centre will be discussed as part of the annual budget process via agreement between the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Industry Engagement), the Provost, the Dean and the Research Centre Director.

(61) Government funding which is derived as a result of Research Centre activities, including block grant funding under schemes such as RSP and RTP, will not be distributed automatically to the Research Centre but allocated in part to Schools for the purpose of supporting research and research training activities.

Part J - Graduate Research Training

(62) Graduate research candidates are enrolled in Schools and are under the responsibility of the Schools including through the assessment of applications for candidature and scholarships and the allocation of graduate research scholarships within the School.

(63) Eligible and qualified Research Centre members will provide graduate research supervision and may work with the School Director of Graduate Research, for example, in the role of Graduate Research Coordinator. Such activities will be allocated workload in the Academic Workload Planning System.

(64) Research Centres and Schools are expected to provide a high quality HDR training environment for graduate researchers who will also be encouraged to participate in both Research Centre and School activities.

Section 5 - Definitions

(65) Nil.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	4th May 2020
Review Date	4th May 2023
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	15th April 2020
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
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