

University Research Institutes and Centres Policy

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OVERVIEW

Future Making – Strategic Plan 2024-25 provides a vision for the University to be known as a social, cultural and academic thought leader and catalyst for innovation and knowledge creation. It acknowledges that focused research expertise at scale can deliver outcomes that make a significant, positive difference to the world.

University Research Institutes and Centres are expected to advance University of Adelaide (**University**) strategic research priorities and interests through collaborative research excellence, critical mass and leadership. Research Institutes and Centres provide an important mechanism to enable multi-disciplinary activity, stimulate engagement with external partners and attract external funding. They work collaboratively with the University's Faculties and Schools.

SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This Policy sets out the Principles for initiating, managing and evaluating University Research Institutes and Centres.

It does not apply to Faculty research groups, programs, networks, clusters or initiatives that exist within the University. Nor does it apply to externally-funded centres, e.g. ARC Centres of Excellence, ARC Industrial Transformation Research Hubs and Training Centres, NHMRC Centres of Research Excellence and Cooperative Research Centres.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles

1. University Research Institutes and Centres form an integral part of the University and are established in areas of strategic priority that benefit industry and society more broadly. They are expected to evolve over time to remain relevant and be demonstrably adding value to the University.
2. University Research Institutes and Centres engage collaboratively with the University's Faculties and Schools to deliver integrated multidisciplinary research and research training for the whole University.
3. The establishment, management and evaluation of all University Research Institutes and Centres will be conducted in accordance with the University of Adelaide Research Institutes and Centres Procedures.
4. The establishment and designation of a University Research Institute or Centre will be approved by the Vice-Chancellor and President [VC&P] or Provost on the recommendation of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) [DVC&VP(R)].

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5. On occasion, the University will need to respond rapidly to opportunities to develop strategic research initiatives outside of this Policy. The VC&P or Provost, in consultation with the DVC&VP(R) and relevant Executive Deans, may authorise as an exception the establishment of University Research Institutes and Centres, and the parameters under which they will exist.
 6. If use of the words 'Australian' or 'National' in the title is desired, specific approval by the DVC&VP(R) is required, and will only be granted where the University Research Institute or Centre has a national dimension (e.g. has nodes across the country, serves as a national focal point, or is unique and prominent in Australia).
 7. University Research Institutes and Centres will have clear statements of "Vision", "Mission" and "Purpose" that lead to clearly-defined "Deliverables" and "Impacts". They will have defined key performance indicators e.g. revenue generation, research outputs, researcher development, national and international partnerships and defined pathways to research impact, and will be strategically reviewed periodically within a three to five year framework to assess their performance and evolution (potential for expansion, adaptation or disestablishment).
 8. The VC&P or Provost, on advice from the DVC&VP(R), reserves the right to disestablish any University Research Institute or Centre at any time.
 9. Changes to a University Research Institute or Centre that materially affect any matter addressed in the establishment proposal, must be approved by the DVC&VP(R) before being implemented. Significant changes may require a new proposal for the approval of the VC&P or Provost.
 10. All funds received, equipment purchased and income accrued by a University Research Institute or Centre are the property of the University, unless determined otherwise in a legally binding agreement.
 11. A University Research Institute or Centre may collaborate or share resources with another university, research institution or other external body, provided the arrangements are specified in a legally binding agreement negotiated between the parties that has been approved in accordance with the [Contracts and Agreements Policy](#).
 12. All University Research Institutes and Centres must abide with the University [Brand Policy](#).

University Research Institutes

13. Oversight of a University Research Institute is the responsibility of the DVC&VP(R), assisted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Excellence) [PVC(RE)].
14. A University Research Institute will have an initial term of up to five years but will be considered for renewal by the VC&P or Provost, on the recommendation of the DVC&VP(R). The request to renew a University Research Institute's term will require a formal review of the Institute's performance against agreed key performance indicators (as per Principle 7). This review must occur early in the final year of the initial establishment term. More than one renewal of a University Research Institute's term will be considered.
15. A University Research Institute will have an Executive Director, appointed by the DVC&VP(R) on recommendation from the PVC(RE). The Executive Director will report to either the DVC&VP(R) or the PVC(RE).
16. A University Research Institute will have an Advisory Board, the members of which will be appointed by the DVC&VP(R). Activities of the Board may include strategic priority setting, reviewing the financial and operational performance of the Institute, and advising the Institute Executive Director.
17. A University Research Institute will submit an annual report against agreed key performance indicators. The report must be approved by the PVC(RE).

18. If a University Research Institute is not approved for renewal by the VC&P or Provost, on advice from the DVC&VP(R), it will be disestablished (as per Principle 8).

University Research Centres

19. University Research Centres will generally be established within a Faculty, and their management will be the responsibility of the relevant Executive Dean. In circumstances agreed by the DVC&VP(R), a University Research Centre may be hosted within a University Research Institute.
20. A University Research Centre does not constitute a formal academic organisational unit for the purposes of revenue distribution, managing academic entitlements, managing infrastructure or enrolling students.
21. A University Research Centre will have an initial term of three to five years but will be considered for renewal by the VC&P or Provost, on the recommendation of the DVC&VP(R). The request to renew a University Research Centre's term will require a formal review of the Centre's performance against agreed key performance indicators (as per Principle 7). This review must occur early in the final year of the initial establishment period. More than one renewal of a University Research Centre's term will be considered.
22. A University Research Centre will have a Director with leadership and management responsibility for that Centre. The Director will be appointed by the relevant Executive Dean and will report to a Head of School. In circumstances agreed by the DVC&VP(R), a University Research Centre Director may report to a University Research Institute Executive Director.
23. A University Research Centre will submit an annual report against agreed key performance indicators. The report must be approved by the relevant Faculty Executive Dean. Where the University Research Centre is hosted by a University Research Institute, the annual report must be approved by the PVC(RE).
24. If a University Research Institute is not approved for renewal by the VC&P or Provost, on advice from the DVC&VP(R), it will be disestablished (as per Principle 8).

Faculty Research Units and Groups

This Policy does not prevent the establishment of a Faculty Research Unit or Research Group to foster emerging research strengths, and allow the strategic pursuit of University research goals. Such Units and Groups are the responsibility of the Executive Dean of the relevant Faculty, and are subject to any conditions imposed by the Executive Dean in consultation with the DVC&VP(R).

AUTHORITIES

Key	Authority Category	Authority	Delegation Holder	Limits
Research	Organisational Structure	Approve the establishment, renewal and disestablishment of a University Research Institute or Research Centre.	VC&P, Provost	On recommendation of the DVC&VP(R). Council approval is required for a major strategic initiative or a significant commercial activity or an incorporated joint venture.
Research	Organisational Structure	Approve the initiation of a review of any University Research Institute or Research Centre. Approve the allocation of central funding to Research Institutes and Centres as appropriate.	DVC&VP(R)	Significant changes may require a new proposal for the approval of the VC&P, Provost.

Key	Authority Category	Authority	Delegation Holder	Limits
		Approve changes to a University Research Institute or Research Centre that will materially affect any matter addressed in the establishment proposal.		
Research	Organisational Structure	Approve the establishment, renewal and disestablishment of a Faculty Research Unit or Group.	Executive Deans	
Research	Organisational Structure	Appointment of a University Research Institute Executive Director	DVC&VP(R)	
Research	Organisational Structure	Appointment of a University Research Centre Director	Executive Deans, Research Institute Executive Director	In consultation with the DVC&VP(R).

Authorities for the day-to-day administrative support of University Research Institutes are in accordance with the University's Delegations of Authority for Executive Deans, Institute Executive Directors and the DVC&VP(R).

Authorities for the day-to-day administrative support of University Research Centres are in accordance with the University's Delegations of Authority for Divisional Heads, Executive Deans, Institute Executive Directors and Heads of School. Please refer to the Delegations database.

Details on the instigation, management and evaluation of University Research Centres and Research Institutes are provided in the Procedures.

DEFINITIONS

A University Research Institute directly addresses the strategic priorities of the University and is a prominent, large-scale, multi-disciplinary research structure that:

- i. Operates with breadth and scale of vision across Faculties and Schools;
- ii. Aligns to the State (South Australia)'s and Nation's socioeconomic priorities, accelerating and producing impactful research outcomes of global and national benefit;
- iii. Focuses on approaches that are pivotal to advancing research including critical technologies, foundational tools or methodologies;
- iv. Engages directly with industry and external stakeholders to develop new technologies, products, and processes, and/or transfer of knowledge from research into practice; and
- v. Is Nation leading and internationally significant.

A University Research Centre addresses strategic priorities of the University and:

- i. Has a clear vision and mission that aligns with and/or supports a University Foci and Magnets for Excellence (FAME) Strategy;
- ii. Builds solution-focused teams in targeted research disciplines to accelerate research excellence;
- iii. Enables collaboration between disciplines;
- iv. Engages with internal and external stakeholders;
- v. Has an established national and international reputation for research excellence; and
- vi. Does not replicate or overlap significantly with an existing research structure at the University.

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Policy Custodian	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research)
Responsible policy officer	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Excellence)
Endorsed by	Academic Board on 2 October 2024
Approved by	Vice-Chancellor and President on 4 October 2024
Related Documents and Policies	Contracts and Agreements Policy
Related Legislation	n/a
Superseded Policies	Research Centres and Research Institutes Framework
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Contact for queries about the Policy	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Excellence)