

Centres for Research and Research Training Policy (MPF1020)

1. Objective

The objective of this policy is to set out principles for the establishment, reporting, review and disestablishment of centres for research and research training.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to the following types of centres for research and research training:

- (a) University Research Centres; and
- (b) Collaborative Centres

(collectively **Research Centres**).

2.2. This policy does not apply to:

- (a) centres for which the primary purpose is not research and/or research training; and
- (b) Melbourne Interdisciplinary Research Institutes which are established under [Council Regulation](#).

3. Authority

This policy is made under the *University of Melbourne Act 2009* (Vic) and the Vice-Chancellor Regulation and supports compliance with the 'Guidelines concerning activities in accordance with Part 6 Division 6 of the *University of Melbourne Act 2009*.

4. Policy

4.1. Research Centres are established to address specific research aims which are aligned with University and/or academic division strategies to enhance research outcomes and visibility and would not ordinarily be achieved within existing University organisational structures.

5. Procedural principles

Establishing or Joining a Research Centre

5.1. The Vice-Chancellor approves the establishment of a University Research Centre on advice from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Dean(s) of the relevant academic division(s). The Vice-Chancellor must report the establishment of a University Research Centre to University Executive.

5.2. In approving the establishment of a University Research Centre, the Vice-Chancellor must be satisfied that the benefits to the University outweigh the cost, taking into account with reference to its business plan whether the University Research Centre:

- (a) has the potential to be of demonstrable benefit to the University, and aligns with University and/or academic division strategy as appropriate;
- (b) will achieve academic purposes and objectives which cannot be reasonably achieved within existing University organisational structure(s);

- (c) has the support of relevant academic divisions and the proponents have consulted across discipline areas;
- (d) can demonstrate financial viability for its initial operational term, normally at least five years;
- (e) has an appropriate governance model consistent with the purpose; and
- (f) has appropriate staffing and administrative arrangements in place.

5.3. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) approves any arrangement between the University and one or more external parties which relates to the establishment or joining of a Collaborative Centre, being satisfied that the benefits to the University outweigh the risks and taking into account the principles set out in section 5.2(a)-(f). All external agreements and funding applications must be prepared:

- (a) with support from the Dean of the academic division which is administering or participating in the activities of the Collaborative Centre;
- (b) in consultation with Research Innovation and Commercialisation and, in the case of external agreements, with Legal and Risk; and
- (c) in the case of a Collaborative Centre involving one or more international parties, in consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) must report any arrangement involving the University establishing or joining a Collaborative Centre to University Executive.

5.4. Research Centres must be named in accordance with the [University Naming Policy](#).

5.5. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) approves requests for changes to the names of Research Centres and reports any changes to University Executive.

Governance

5.6. All Research Centres must have a suitable organisational structure overseen by a head, normally a Centre Director.

- (a) The organisational structure and scope of a Collaborative Centre is as detailed in the establishing agreement.
- (b) The organisational structure and scope of a University Research Centre is detailed in the University Research Centre's business plan.

5.7. University staff deployed to a Research Centre will hold a primary or joint appointment in the academic division of the University that hosts the Research Centre and assume responsibilities consistent with membership of the relevant academic division, including compliance with all University policies and processes.

5.8. Researchers named as participants in Collaborative Centres where the University is not the administering party must:

- (a) obtain approval by the Dean of their academic division (or delegate);

- (b) engage Research Innovation and Commercialisation and Legal and Risk as appropriate;
- (c) consult with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) as appropriate; and
- (d) identify a University contact for the activities of the Centre.

5.9. Where the head of a Collaborative Research Centre is not a member of the University, a University staff member will be designated head of the University activity.

5.10. The head of a Research Centre, or the designated head of the University activity of a Collaborative Research Centre (as the case may be), reports to the Dean(s) of the relevant host academic division(s), (or to the Dean's nominated appropriately qualified senior member of staff who has strategic and operational oversight of the Centre), including in relation to the administration and compliance of the University activity.

5.11. The Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) may approve Modification to the arrangements around the operation and management structure of a Research Centre provided:

- (a) the modification is requested by the relevant Dean(s); and
- (b) the decision is sent for noting at the next meeting of University Executive.

Reporting and Review

5.12. The Dean of the relevant academic division(s) is/are responsible for meeting reporting requirements of a Research Centre.

5.13. The Dean(s) responsible for the reporting requirements of a Research Centre are to be kept informed of the centre's research activities and operations on a regular basis, but at least biannually, including receipt of relevant management documentation including, but not limited to, minutes of meetings, financial statements and annual reports from the head of the Research Centre.

5.14. The Executive Director, Research Innovation and Commercialisation is responsible for establishing processes to enable adequate reporting and review on the activities of University Research Centres.

5.15. Subject to section 5.16, the Dean(s) responsible for a Research Centre must review the centre against its business plan every five years, usually in the fourth year of its term, in accordance with the following requirements:

- (a) The review must be conducted by a review panel which:
 - (i) is chaired by a person who is independent of the Research Centre; and
 - (ii) includes at least one member who is both external to the University and independent of the Research Centre.
- (b) The Dean(s) must approve the review terms of reference and review panel selection.
- (c) If a change in review date is required, the Dean must submit a request to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), for approval and subsequent forwarding of the approval to University Executive for noting. Any request for changes of review dates to another calendar year must be endorsed by University Executive.

5.16. A Research Centre which is established under a funding agreement or other external arrangement will be reviewed in accordance with the requirements of that arrangement (external review). A review of the University's contribution to the Research Centre will not ordinarily be required provided the Dean of the relevant academic division(s) is/are satisfied that:

- (a) the outcomes of the external review are acceptable; and
- (b) the Research Centre is operating in a satisfactory manner.

Disestablishment

5.17. Research Centres established as a condition or signing of a funding agreement will be disestablished at the end of the funding period, except in the following circumstances:

- (a) if a Collaborative Centre has extended its funding arrangements through new competitive applications, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) may approve continuation of that Collaborative Centre;
- (b) if a Collaborative Centre is unable to renew their competitive funding arrangement, it may apply to the Vice-Chancellor for continuation as a University Research Centre. Collaborative Centres seeking to continue as a University Research Centre with a name that identifies the original funding scheme must obtain approval of the relevant funding scheme to continue with the same name; or remove the component that identifies the funding scheme, as appropriate.

5.18. Notwithstanding section 5.17, the Vice-Chancellor may disestablish a Research Centre at any time on the recommendation of the host Dean and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). The Vice-Chancellor must report the disestablishment to the University Executive.

5.19. In determining whether to approve the continuation or disestablishment of a Research Centre under this policy, the Vice-Chancellor takes into account the advice of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), and relevant Dean(s) of academic divisions.

General

5.20. Records relating to centres for research and research training must be maintained in accordance with the [Records Management Policy](#).

6. Roles and responsibilities

Centres for Research & Research Training (Centres)

<i>Role/Decision/Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Conditions and limitations</i>
Approval for the establishment of a University Research Centre	VC, on the recommendation of the DVC(R) and Dean(s) of host academic division(s).	The VC may delegate the responsibility for approval to University Executive. The VC must notify University Executive. The VC must notify University Executive.
Establishment of, or the University's entry into, a Collaborative Centre	<i>DVC(R)</i>	With approval from Dean of relevant academic division(s) and in consultation with RIC and Legal and Risk. DVC(R) must consult with the DVC(I) in the case of a Collaborative Centre involving one

		or more international partners DVC(R) must notify University Executive.
Research Centre complies with all relevant policies and reporting requirements	<i>Dean(s) of relevant academic division(s).</i>	
Strategic review of a University Research Centre	<i>RIC to advise head of the University Research Centre and the Dean of the host academic division 6 months prior to review date.</i>	
Continuation of a University Research Centre following review	<i>VC, on the recommendation of the DVC(R)</i>	
Disestablishment of a University Research Centre	<i>VC, on the recommendation of the DVC(R).</i>	The VC may delegate the responsibility for approval to University Executive. The VC must report to University Executive.
Automatic disestablishment of a competitively funded Collaborative Centre	<i>RIC to advise DVC(R).</i>	The disestablishment of a competitively funded Collaborative Centre at the end of the agreement period does not require additional VC approval. DVC(R) must notify University Executive.
Changes to a Research Centre's composition, management structure or status	<i>VC or DVC(R)</i>	

7. Definitions

"Collaborative Centre" means a multi-party entity in which the University participates through agreement with one or more external parties (including international parties) for the purpose of conducting an agreed program of research. For the purposes of this policy, a Collaborative Centre includes:

- (a) an incorporated centre (such as a Cooperative Research Centre), in which case it is also subject to the [Commercial Activities Policy](#) as a "controlled non-commercial activity";
- (b) an unincorporated centre;
- (c) centres funded through a competitive, peer reviewed grant or tender process that mandates the formation of a specific research entity (these entities may use the titles "institutes", "centres" or "hubs" as detailed by the agreement);
- (d) centres administered by the University; or

(e) centres administered by another party, with the University as a participant or host of a specific activity of the centre.

"Melbourne Interdisciplinary Research Institutes" are institutes established under the Council Regulation, on advice by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

"modification to the arrangements around the operation and management structure of a Research Centre" includes a change to the Centre Director, a change to the University composition, or a change of status of a Research Centre.

"University Research Centre" means a centre for which the University has sole responsibility, although it may engage in external collaboration and/or have external activities. A University Research Centre is established independently of any agreement with external parties through a determination of the Vice-Chancellor.

POLICY APPROVER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

POLICY STEWARD

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Collaboration & Partnerships)

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed by 12 November 2022.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	DVCR	1 March 2011	1 March 2011	
2	DVCR	12 Nov 2017	16 Nov 2017	New version arising from the Policy Consolidation Project.
3	Policy Officer	16 Nov 2017	16 Nov 2017	Minor error corrections including to the title