

Policy Title: Research Centres and Institutes

Policy Owner: Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)

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1. INTENT

To outline the framework and structure associated with the establishment, governance and management of University-designated Research Centres and Institutes which support the University's research aims and objectives in key areas of research priority.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

All staff, postgraduate students and affiliated researchers of Edith Cowan University.

This policy does not apply to externally-funded and/or affiliated research centres, such as Cooperative Research Centres and Centres of Excellence.

3. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
"ECR"	an early career researcher, being a researcher who is undertaking research, normally within five years of completing their doctoral qualification.
"HDR"	Higher Degree by Research.
"Research"	original investigations, experimental developments and creative work undertaken on a systematic basis to generate/create knowledge and understanding.
"Research Centre"	University-approved entities that bring together researchers who undertake quality research that has national significance.

TERM	DEFINITION
"Research Institute"	University-approved entities that bring together researchers to undertake quality research of national and international significance.

4. POLICY CONTENT

4.1 ECU Research Centres and Institutes are designed to achieve the following aims, in alignment with the University's Research and Research Training Functional Plan:

- develop focussed areas of excellence in research and scholarship;
- support the development and maintenance of a high quality research environment which fosters collaborative research, internally and externally;
- undertake outcomes-focussed research in key areas of research priority;
- support innovation and engagement that will underpin future economic, environmental and social impact in the communities in which we operate;
- promote a strong research culture and research training environment by mentoring and encouraging the involvement of HDR students and ECRs;
- enhance opportunities to gain substantial external funding for research; and
- ensure research at ECU is valued by clients and communities through the delivery of research outputs and impact characterised by excellence.

4.2 Nomenclature

- 4.2.1 The terms "Research Centre" and "Research Institute" are reserved for use by University-approved entities that have been established in accordance with this policy.
- 4.2.2 University-designated Centres and Institutes are managed by a Director or Co-Directors.
- 4.2.3 Other research groupings within the University are not permitted to be called an ECU Research Centre or Institute.¹
- 4.2.4 Researchers managing other research groupings may not be called a Director but may have a title such as "Convenor" or other title relevant to the discipline such as Group or Laboratory Head.
- 4.2.5 Modifying the name of a Research Centre or Institute requires the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).
- 4.2.6 The Office of Research and Innovation will maintain the official register of approved University Research Centres and Institutes.

4.3 Establishment and Redesignation

¹ Groupings which have historically used "Centre" in their name and pre-date the establishment of this policy are expected to apply for formal recognition as an approved "Research Centre" within a reasonable period of time (as agreed) or otherwise be renamed in order to comply with this policy. This also extends to the use of the title "Director" as outlined in clause 4.2.4.

- 4.3.1 The establishment, structure, objectives, performance and monitoring of research groupings, other than Research Centres and Institutes, is the responsibility of the relevant School, with successful outcomes being typically a foundation for the subsequent establishment of a Centre.
- 4.3.2 An application to either establish a new Research Centre or Institute, or redesignate a Research Centre as an Institute, may be made at any time to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) following endorsement by the relevant Dean(s).
- 4.3.3 Establishment of a new Research Centre or Institute will be considered in accordance with the aims set out in this policy (see Section 4.1 and the definitions of a Research Centre and Research Institute in Section 3).
- 4.3.4 Establishment and redesignation of a Research Centre or Institute will be approved by the Vice-Chancellor following endorsement by the University's Research and Higher Degrees Committee and subsequent recommendation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

4.4 Resourcing

- 4.4.1 It is expected that Schools will provide funding to support the Research Centres that they host. Each School will negotiate a funding allocation per annum to support each Research Centre.
- 4.4.2 The University will provide performance-based untied funding support annually to affiliated Research Institutes as negotiated with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).
- 4.4.3 Institutional support is not guaranteed beyond the first five years of funding nor during any period of agreed extension. Funding and ongoing institutional support will be subject to satisfactory research performance as reported in the required annual reports and assessed in five-yearly reviews (see Section 4.6).
- 4.4.4 The financial management of a University Research Centre or Institute is vested in the Director in accordance with relevant University policies and regulatory/legislative requirements.

4.5 Governance

- 4.5.1 Each Research Centre and Institute will convene a Management Committee, Chaired by the Director, to provide strong operational governance.
- 4.5.2 Each Research Centre will ensure strategic oversight through the constitution of an Advisory Board/Committee, including external representation appointed by the relevant Dean(s) on the recommendation of the Director, to assist in the planning and monitoring of the Centre's activities. The Advisory Board/Committee is expected to meet at least annually.
- 4.5.3 Each Research Institute will ensure strategic oversight through the constitution of an Advisory Board/Committee, including external representation appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the

recommendation of the Director, to assist in the planning and monitoring of the Institute's activities. The Advisory Board/Committee is expected to meet at least annually.

- 4.5.4 Deans are expected to regularly monitor the structure, objectives and performance of their associated Research Centres and other research groupings (see Sections 4.6.1 and 4.6.2).

4.6 Planning, Reporting and Review

- 4.6.1 Each Research Centre and Institute will establish annual performance objectives in alignment with the University's strategic priorities and the relevant School(s) plans.
- 4.6.2 Research Centres are expected to produce an annual report of performance against planned objectives for review by the relevant Dean(s).
- 4.6.3 Research Institutes are expected to produce an annual report of performance against planned objectives for review by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).
- 4.6.4 Research Centres and Institutes will be externally reviewed every five years. However, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), in consultation with the relevant Dean(s), may initiate a review at any time.
- 4.6.5 Reviews are managed by the University's Planning, Quality and Equity Service Centre, in alignment with the ECU Excellence Framework Policy and Research Centre Review Guidelines, and in consultation with ORI.
- 4.6.6 The outcomes of all Research Centre and Institute reviews will be reported to the University's Research and Higher Degrees Committee and Quality, Audit and Risk Committee.

4.7 Disestablishment

- 4.7.1 The University reserves the right to close a Research Centre or Institute at any time. Such a recommendation would normally arise from a five-yearly or annual review, but may be made at any time to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) following endorsement by the relevant Dean(s).
- 4.7.2 Disestablishment of a Research Centre or Institute will be approved by the Vice-Chancellor following endorsement by the University's Research and Higher Degrees Committee and subsequent recommendation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In relation to this policy, the following positions are responsible for the following:

Policy Owner

The Policy Owner, being the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), has overall responsibility for the content of this policy and its operation in ECU.

All staff, postgraduate students and affiliated researchers of Edith Cowan University.

All staff, postgraduate students and affiliated researchers of Edith Cowan University are required to comply with the content of this policy and to seek guidance in the event of uncertainty as to its application.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

6.1 Other documents which are relevant to the operation of this policy are as follows:

- [Research and Research Training Functional Plan](#)
- [ECU Excellence Framework Policy](#)
- Research Centre Reviews Guidelines

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

Policy Owner	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
All Enquiries Contact:	Director, Office of Research and Innovation
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8. APPROVAL HISTORY

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