

Research Collectives Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy outlines the value, standards, expectations, and governance of research collectives within Macquarie University's research architecture. It establishes common principles and practices in the establishment and management of research collectives and describes their oversight by Macquarie University (the University).

Background

(2) The Policy should be read in conjunction with the [Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and the [Research Quality Assurance Policy](#).

Scope

(3) This Policy applies to the following Active Research Collectives:

- a. International, National and State Research Centres and Networks;
- b. University Research Institutes;
- c. University Research Centres;
- d. Faculty Research Centres;
- e. "Hybrid" University or Faculty Centres; and
- f. University Research Initiatives.

(4) This Policy applies to any defined Active Research Collective listed in clause 3:

- a. irrespective of the source of funding or support; and
- b. with research as a significant part of its mission and that is or aspires to be recognised and/or funded as leads or nodes of International, National or State Centres or Networks, or as University entities or faculty entities.

(5) While International, National and State Research Centres and Networks typically are governed externally, Macquarie University governs our involvement with these collectives, for example as lead institution, node, a collaborating collective, or a partner.

(6) University Research Institutes, and Hybrid University or Faculty Centres may be subject to separate or additional, external or internal governance. In these circumstances, University governance processes will be aligned and not duplicated.

(7) The Policy does not apply to local networks, groups, teams and other collectives within departments or disciplines.

Section 2 - Policy

(8) Research collectives, especially those that coordinate research expertise at scale, are important to the success of the University's strategic objectives and the research strategy. Research collectives will work with departments/schools, disciplines and faculties to achieve their goals.

(9) University research collectives share the following characteristics:

- a. comprise a group of researchers (not an individual) with a shared vision;
- b. have collective strength;
- c. may focus on a single discipline or be interdisciplinary;
- d. undertake a joint approach to solving complex disciplinary/cross-disciplinary problems; and
- e. result in emergent outcomes that could not be accomplished in the absence of the collective.

(10) While some collectives may emerge and develop from faculty to University centres over time, this is not an automatic nor expected pathway.

(11) Research collectives are chosen based on specific characteristics including scale, excellence, competitive advantage and opportunity relative to the kind of collective and its aspiration.

(12) There is no specific maximum number of research collectives of any kind. A growing number of well-led and well-governed, high-performing research collectives is an indication of the success of the University's research strategy and culture.

(13) While some research collectives may be created, recognised and funded under formal international, national, University or faculty schemes (e.g., an Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence, the Macquarie University Research Centres scheme), there is also opportunity for the creation of strategically valuable research collectives outside these schemes at the discretion of the approval delegate.

(14) The University will not duplicate funding or support for the same, significantly overlapping, or superseded research collectives. This applies to:

- a. faculty collectives that overlap significantly in mission and/or membership with University collectives (i.e., where a significant portion of the members of a faculty collective are subsumed within the University collective);
- b. faculty or University collectives that overlap with other hybrid collectives, initiatives or structures (i.e., which involve the same staff and similar goals); and
- c. faculty or University collectives that overlap with national or state collectives (including where a faculty or University collective has evolved into a national or state collective, or where a national or state collective ends and transitions back to a faculty or University collective), and any other overlaps that arise.

(15) A research collective makes explicit what the organisational structure of departments/schools and disciplines cannot. Creating, naming, and supporting distinctive collectives elevates these areas within and across disciplinary activity in ways that departments/schools or faculties may not, and is of value to the research, researchers, and the University.

(16) Multiple, nested University or faculty collectives or entities will not be approved as they have the potential to generate confusion and disperse limited resources. This does not rule out appropriate intersections and collaborations between existing and potential research collectives.

Roles and Responsibilities

(17) The establishment and disestablishment of University and Faculty Research Centres/Institutes will be approved by the Vice-Chancellor in accordance with the [Delegations of Authority Register](#). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will approve University Research Initiatives, with Executive Dean involvement as appropriate.

(18) Officers responsible for overseeing the management (and support) of research collectives are as follows:

- a. the management of National and State Research Centres/Networks is oversighted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), with the relevant Executive Dean/s involvement as appropriate;
- b. the Vice-Chancellor oversights University Research Institutes under the management of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Medicine and Health) and/or the relevant Executive Dean;
- c. University Research Centres are oversighted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research Performance and Development;
- d. the relevant Executive Dean will oversight the management of the Faculty Research Centre, via the Deputy Dean, Research and Innovation; and
- e. the management of Hybrid University or Faculty Centres is oversighted jointly by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the relevant Executive Dean (or their authorised officers). The joint management group of Hybrid University or Faculty Centres will agree to the naming, branding, funding, management and reporting arrangements of the Centre as part of the establishment procedure.

(19) The management of University Research Initiatives is oversighted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research Performance and Development with Executive Dean involvement as appropriate according to terms of management and reporting developed specifically for the University Initiative.

(20) While research collectives may be the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or the relevant Executive Dean, Heads of Departments/Deans should have line of sight and a formal or informal approval role in the involvement of their staff in research collectives.

(21) Research networks, groups, teams and other local collectives are managed by Heads of Departments/Deans and local leaders as appropriate and are otherwise outside the scope of this Policy.

(22) In general, all University staff associated with national, University or faculty collectives will sit within the line management of their department /school and faculty. This is to support research collectives in drawing on the strengths of their disciplines as well as departments/schools benefiting from the research and research training excellence of the centres they support.

(23) By default, international, national, state, University or faculty collectives do not exist as distinct Organisational or Business Units. They are virtual entities across departments /schools and/or faculties. University Research Institutes, such as the Australian Institute of Health Innovation within the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences which operate as a department, are an exception to this.

(24) Rare cases of existing research collectives and members with arrangements that were established prior to the date of this Policy will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Management of such exceptions may include a transition plan to bring all research collectives into line with this Policy.

Establishment and Management

(25) Collective leadership (sole or joint) and/or membership are important and valued research and leadership activities and will be fairly recognised within the line management of departments/schools and faculties. Heads of Departments/Schools and Executive Deans will have line of sight and an appropriate approval role in the involvement of their staff in research collectives.

(26) When establishing and managing a research collective, the following components must be considered:

- a. entry criteria for different kinds of collectives, especially scale and distinctiveness from business-as-usual units as well as defining characteristics of ambition, emergence and culture;
- b. the selection process;

- c. naming and branding;
- d. cash and in-kind support;
- e. reporting on key performance indicators (KPIs); and
- f. affiliations and by-lines (refer [Research Authorship Policy](#) and Affiliations Guidelines).

(27) Specific naming and branding will only be available to research collectives that have been selected for the categories listed in clause 3.

Review/Evaluation

(28) The review, extension and/or disestablishment of a research collective requires consultation with and approval by the relevant delegate (see clause 17).

(29) Conditions that may lead to disestablishment of a research collective include:

- a. unsatisfactory progress made toward key performance indicators (KPIs);
- b. insufficient or ineffective leadership (i.e. significant leadership 'gap' due to departures of key personnel etc);
- c. the focus and goals of the Collective no longer represent strategic value;
- d. absence of appropriate governance mechanisms and structures;
- e. unsatisfactory/irresponsible management of Collective budget and other funding;
- f. a decision made by the Collective or by the relevant management authority, in consultation with the Collective and Executive Dean (or delegate), to wind up the Collective during or at the end of the funding term; or
- g. other reasons determined by the relevant management authority, in consultation with Collective and Executive Dean (or delegate).

(30) The procedure for disestablishment of a research collective will include a winding up of collective support (cash and in-kind) over a period agreed at the time of review. Following this timeframe, the collective will no longer be recognised as an Active Research Collective.

Section 3 - Procedures

(31) Refer to the [Research Collectives Procedure](#).

Section 4 - Guidelines

(32) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(33) The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Active Research Collective is one that has received support (cash or in-kind) for the Collective (as opposed to for individuals within the Collective) in the past 2 years and meets the following conditions:
 - i. active governance;
 - ii. active membership at all levels (i.e. not just the leadership);
 - iii. active engagement with community (inside or outside the University);
 - iv. generating research activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts;
 - v. active reporting; and

- vi. has the approval of the relevant authority.
- b. Faculty Research Centres are within discipline or interdisciplinary, range in scale, and are focused in areas of faculty strengths. Faculty Research Centres are hosted by faculties and may be virtual or co-located Centres, where line management of personnel is as is departments. Faculty Research Centres are characterised by a distinctive vision and strategic value; a strong team at scale; a clear and ambitious plan for success; and an attractive and nurturing environment for excellent research students and early career researchers.
- c. Hybrid University or Faculty Centres are University or Faculty level Collectives with a combined focus of research, education, health and/or community engagement in areas of University strategic priorities and strengths. Hybrid University or Faculty Centres are created, funded and/or managed outside the remit of the schemes that name and fund University and Faculty Research Centres.
- d. International, National and State Research Centres and Networks are characterised as extremely large-scale national or state- based enterprises where funding is typically fixed term and provided via significant external funding with University co-funding according to the formula approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). National and State Research Centres/Networks may include:
 - i. Cooperative Research Centres (CRC);
 - ii. [Australian Research Council \(ARC\)](#) Centres of Excellence (CoE);
 - iii. ARC Industrial Transformation Training Centres (ITTC);
 - iv. ARC Industrial Transformation Research Hubs (ITRH);
 - v. NHMRC Centres of Research Excellence (CRE); and
 - vi. others as appropriate.
- e. Organisational Unit or Business Unit refers to the management structure of the University (or its Controlled Entities). For the University, the highest level Organisational or Business Units are the Faculties and Portfolios that are led by members of the Executive Group, as well as the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, and related central functions. The Organisational or Business Unit reflects management accountability and is the sub-level at which University budgets (both income and expenditure, including salaries) are set and managed.
- f. University Research Centres are large-scale, interdisciplinary, and problem-focused research collectives in area/s of Macquarie University strengths. University Research Centres are funded by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) funding and in-kind contributions, Faculty funding and in-kind contributions where available, and external contributions where available. University Research Centres are hosted by faculties and are typically virtual Centres (some co-location may be possible) where line management of personnel is as is within Departments.
 - i. University Research Centres (Strength at Scale) are characterised by research excellence at scale within disciplines or across disciplines in area/s of competitive advantage. These Centres represent significant external opportunities and promote the University's strengths.
 - ii. University Research Centres (Consilience) are characterised by the above and, in addition, are problem focused and externally oriented (especially to non-category 1 space) and bring multiple Collectives together with aspiration for consilience.
- g. University Research Initiatives are time-limited project or outcome focused collectives. University Research Initiatives range in scale, have agile strengths and can be intradisciplinary or interdisciplinary. They are created, funded and/or managed outside the remit of the schemes that name and fund University and Faculty Research Centres to generate distinctive pan-University research programs that are internationally recognised and enhance the University's reputation and renown.
- h. University Research Institutes: Where, on rare occasions, University Research Institutes are established, these are typically physically co-located, represent extremely large-scale collectives in areas of major University strengths and have significant brand value.

Status and Details

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