

# MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

## Establishment and Management of Faculty Centres

### 1. Introduction

From 2009 Macquarie University will recognise three types of Centre:

1. National Research Centres (including ARC Research Networks) – whose core funding is provided from external sources. These Centres are set up by way of their own contractual arrangements with their respective sponsors, and have a lifetime specified by those contracts. Examples are ARC Centres of Excellence, CRCs, Centres funded under National Infrastructure Initiatives and Centres funded by Industry. Within the University, the Centre can be a sub-unit (or “node”) of a multi-institution Centre, for which another university is lead institution.
2. Macquarie University Research Centres (a Scheme introduced in 2005) – either New (with core funding provide by University) – or Mature (with core funding provided from external sources). It is no coincidence that many of the areas that the University has selected for its Concentration of Research Excellence (“CORE”) recruitment strategy are based on National Research Centres or MQRCs. Those CORE areas without such Centre status are encouraged to apply for that status.
3. Faculty Centres – see below.

A list of all current Centres can be found at:

[http://www.research.mq.edu.au/structure\\_staff/research\\_centres](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/structure_staff/research_centres)

### ***This document***

The remainder of this paper deals with the establishment, management, performance, review and disestablishment of Faculty Centres. The document:

- Specifies a standard procedure for establishing a Faculty Centre, so that the need for, and benefits from, its establishment can be demonstrated in terms of significant teaching, research and/or outreach outcomes. In establishing a Centre, academic staff must be able to demonstrate that the whole of the proposed Centre (in terms of outputs, benefits and economies) is greater than the sum of the parts;
- Sets out guidelines for the effective management of Centres including lines of reporting;
- Sets out guidelines for the establishment and annual review of performance indicators; and
- Specifies procedures for accountability and formal review of Centres to ensure their objectives are being met, and, if necessary, a Centre’s disestablishment.

Faculty Centres are expected to play a vital role in the University’s activities. They should:

- Attract external funding by way of grants, commissioned research and consultancies;
- Generate nationally (and, wherever possible, increasingly internationally) significant quality outputs and outcomes – that is, demonstrating excellence as judged by external peer review);
- Develop new relationships with industry, Commonwealth, State and Local Government agencies, other training providers, research users, international partners and the community generally;
- Provide a quality environment for the training of undergraduate, postgraduate and Higher Degree Research students (the latter particularly where the Centre is a designated research Centre).

A Faculty Centre may be established when its proposed program can demonstrate that it will have a recognisably separate structure within a Faculty or Department. That is to say, it has to add some thing to the existing academic structure rather than duplicate or partition off a special area of interest. For example, Centres may fall across traditional Faculty or Departmental boundaries and may be interdisciplinary - involving members of different Faculties or Departments. In other cases they may have major interactions outside the

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University, where the focus is assisted by having a separate identity or where the grouping is better able to attract outside resources than traditional Faculties or Departments.

However, it should be noted that Centres are not automatically separate budget units of the University unless specifically approved. Allocation of resources from the Faculty Funding Model (for example, from Commonwealth Infrastructure Block Grant allocations, such as IGS and RTS funding) are at the discretion of the Executive Dean. In addition, Centres are not usually treated as separate units for the purposes of student enrolment, whether undergraduate or postgraduate.

### 2. Establishment of Faculty Centres

The process for the establishment of a new Centre is summarised in the following table;

Centre	Application Submitted via	Endorsed by	Approved by	Approval reported to
Faculty	Head(s) of Department	Executive Dean	Provost	Academic Senate

### ***Content of Proposals for Establishment of Faculty Centres***

The proposal must include the following information:

- The mission and objectives of the Centre.
- Justification for the establishment of the Centre in terms of these guidelines, including evidence of need, and quality/excellence track record of the proposed members in terms of relevant grants, awards, and outputs for the past three years.
- A proposed Centre Constitution.
- A Strategic Plan for the first three years of the Centre's operation, including the specification of objectives, strategies and performance indicators by which the Centre's performance can be assessed. Note that the continued existence of the Centre may depend upon it meeting these criteria.
- Details of any funding, including a business plan and full budget with cash flow projections for the first year, and an outline of budgets for the following two years.
- Details of the management of the Centre, including responsibilities of the Director, arrangements for the establishment of an advisory committee and/or management committee and details of the proposed membership of such a committee.
- A list of the initial members of the Centre, including brief (one-page) c.v.'s and details of the time commitments of each member to the activities of the Centre (note that major relevant outputs are also dealt with under the second dot point, above).
- An indication as to whether the proposed Centre will require accommodation, special facilities and/or equipment above and beyond that already readily available from the Faculty/Faculties concerned, and, if so, what steps have been taken to address this matter.

### 3. Centre Objectives and Centre Constitution

A Centre must provide a focus for activities which are consistent with the established Mission of the University (as expressed in its current Strategic Plans), and are in an established or emerging area of research/ teaching/outreach specified by the University. The proposal for the Centre must be able to demonstrate that there is real need for the creation of a formally-named organization to house it – that is there are significant advantages to the University in the “branding” for the group. This is especially so where the activities are interdisciplinary, or where the activities involve interaction with institutions and organisations outside the University.

The objectives of the proposed Centre should be clearly specified in its Constitution and must be in accord with the University's overall Mission and Goals (as expressed in the University's

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Strategic Plans), and must also be demonstrably in accord with the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan(s) of the Faculty/Faculties involved.

More specifically, the following objectives of the Centre must be addressed:

- To focus the activities of its staff and students, and in so doing, use available infrastructure more efficiently;
- To foster collaborative efforts between individuals and research teams within and outside the Centre, and thereby establish and maintain regional, national, and international links with individuals and teams conducting activities in similar, or complementary fields;
- To promote and conduct activities which are demonstrably of the highest quality and excellence (e.g. where the activities involve research, the objectives must explain how they will enhance the University's performance under the ERA or other national assessment process);
- To enhance the Centre's status by way of publications and to otherwise widely disseminate the outputs of the Centre within the confines of University Policies (e.g. the policies on protection of intellectual property and commercialisation);
- To introduce strategies which will lead to high quality outcomes, especially those leading to income from external sources, and to undertake consulting, training and community activities on a sound financial basis to the benefit of the University;
- To engage in training (especially by way of supervision of Higher Degree Research students), research end-user engagement and knowledge transfer, and where appropriate the commercialisation of outputs;
- To provide opportunities for the professional development of staff, particularly new and early career researchers; and
- To provide a structure to facilitate the provision of formal courses and seminars, as appropriate.

#### **4. Performance Indicators**

Each Faculty Centre is expected to identify performance indicators to measure progress of its activities towards its objectives. The indicators will vary according to the nature of the Centre, but will usually address some of the following items:

- International and national collaboration and cooperative arrangements, including visits to overseas institutions, international conferences and exchange agreements;
- Inter-institutional collaboration, and collaboration with industry, government agencies and the community generally;
- External financial support - e.g. award of National Competitive Grants, funding from the public/private sectors, including contracts and/or consultancies;
- Extent of contribution to the public good and/or to industry ("Impact") – e.g. publications, input into the development of social and/or economic policy, press coverage or other media, and participation in public debate;
- Development of academic impact (e.g. publications citations), and patents or other registrable intellectual property with the potential for commercialisation;
- Quality education and training – including training of Higher Degree Research students, HDR completions, workshops and short courses for academic, industrial and the wider communities;
- Peer Recognition - in terms of award of prizes to Centre members, invitations to present keynote addresses at major forums, election to learned societies and academies;
- Marketing of Centre activities - awareness of the Centre's activities among industry and government and the community, media attention, participation in industry forums; and
- Leadership, management and effectiveness - financial management, people and skill development.

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## **5. Management and Accountability**

Each Faculty Centre will have a Director (or Co-Directors), appointed by the Executive Dean of the respective Faculty. The terms and membership of the Centre's Advisory Committee and/or Management Committee will also be approved by the relevant Executive Dean. It would be expected that the respective Executive Dean(s) would be *ex officio* member(s) of such Centre Committees.

### *Centres with External Collaborative Partners*

If a Faculty Centre involves one or more outside bodies, a formal memorandum of understanding should be signed by all participating agencies/institutions. Note that such MoUs must be signed by an officer of the University with formal delegated authority (usually a Deputy-Vice-Chancellor) – other staff may not commit the University.

### *Accountability*

For administrative purposes, Faculty Centres will be accountable to the relevant Executive Dean(s).

### *Financial Support*

Faculty Centres are not supposed to impose any additional financial burden on the Faculty that hosts it, or upon the University. Where ever Faculty Centres have a significant research component, they are expected to attract a significant component of their budget from outside funding. It is expected that a Faculty will take into account the component of the Faculty's budget "earned" by a Centre (for example by way of income from Commonwealth research infrastructure Block Grants), and provide them funding for research infrastructure accordingly.

## **6. Centre Members**

The members of a Centre are:

- University staff with appropriate expertise in the area of interest of the Centre who choose to be involved in the activities of the Centre and whose participation meets these Guidelines and is approved by the Director of the Centre and the respective Executive Dean (or Director of Office, for general staff);
- Research and support staff who are appointed to a position in the Centre;
- Persons from outside the University with appropriate expertise who accept the invitation of the Director of the Centre to become members (this includes Honorary staff approved by the Faculty).

Each Faculty Centre will have a minimum of two full-time University staff members.

## **7. Annual Reports**

Each Faculty Centre should provide an Annual Report to the Executive Dean(s) for each calendar year. This report should include the following:

- a list of Centre members, including any staff specifically appointed to the Centre, and membership of the Centre's Advisory/Management Committee;
- a short account of each member's contribution to Centre activities;
- a summary of projects undertaken by the Centre, outlining the members involved in each project;
- existing and potential internal and external linkages and collaborative arrangements;
- progress against objectives and agreed performance indicators specified in the Centre's Strategic Plan for the past year;
- a list of Centre publications, materials submitted for publication, provisional patents and other forms of commercialisation, and other measures of research output, including evidence of impact (e.g. citations, uptake of research developments by other groups, media reports, etc);

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- a financial summary for the year, including details of external grants and contracts, and projected cash flow and budget for the following year;
- the status of implementation of the *recommendations* in the latest review of the Centre (where appropriate);
- proposed activities for the coming year, and performance indicators for that year, amended as necessary;
- The status of implementation of the recommendations in the latest review of the Centre (where applicable).

#### 8. Reviews

Centres will be reviewed every five years. A Centre will be reviewed to determine whether:

- it has continued to effectively and efficiently pursue its original functions and goals (as measured by its established performance indicators) during the period of review;
- these functions and goals continue to be relevant, and that the Centre has demonstrated a case for its continuation;
- strategic and operational planning is in place for the ensuing period, including succession planning;
- the Centre's activities do not replicate functions that are those of existing Departments in the same or another Faculty;
- academic and financial support for the Centre remains sufficiently strong to justify its continuation, which may involve an audit of its accounts;
- there are appropriate compliance mechanisms whereby any commercial activities and disposition of income from there are carried out. Such commercial activities are to be reported through the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Faculty Centres will be reviewed by a panel established by the respective Executive Dean(s). The terms of reference for each review will include:

- The activities of the Centre since the last review, statement of income and expenditure, the extent to which the goals of the Centre have been achieved, and evaluation of performance based on the agreed indicators.
- The Centre's strategic plan for the next five years, including contributions the Centre expects to make to the University, goals and performance indicators accessible to external review and an indication of the staff involved in the Centre's activities.
- An indicative budget for the Centre for the next five years.
- Recommendations for the future management of the Centre, including nomination of a Director and the membership of the Centre's Management/Advisory Committee.

#### 9. Disestablishment of Faculty Centres

Faculty Centres may be disestablished by an Executive Dean at any time. Using the review processes outlined above, Faculty Centres must justify their continuing existence on a regular basis (every five years). Where a Centre does not meet its declared objectives, or where the continued existence of a Centre no longer has relevance to the University, then it should be disestablished by the respective Executive Dean(s).

#### 10. Publicity and Identification of Faculty Centres

Faculty Centres may develop distinctive letterhead incorporating the title of the Centre only after the Centre has been formally established (and subject to continuing status as a Faculty Centre), but such letterhead must conform to the University's Style Guide and incorporate the University's logo.

PWF  
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