



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH & INNOVATION CENTRES & GROUPS

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Purpose

- 1 This document sets out a University Policy in respect of Research & Innovation Centres and Research & Innovation Groups.
- 2 Current Centres, Institutes etc. will need to be re-proposed in relation to the new policy.
- 3 Centres & Groups will need to be able to demonstrate significant and sustainable contribution to the research and enterprise aims of the University strategy.

Context

- 4 The University Strategy places an emphasis on the further development of our research and enterprise activity. As this work is grown and extended during the 5-year strategy period it will benefit from careful coordination at University level given that this time frame coincides with preparation for the next REF and is also the period during which the University plans to submit its bid to secure research degree awarding powers.
- 5 This policy is based on wide-ranging discussion during the development of the new University strategy and represents part of a wider shift to make research and enterprise activities that are managed at University level.
- 6 The work of Centres and Groups is rooted in our staff expertise and these new groupings will also help us to highlight distinctive areas of practice which enrich our taught degree programmes and CPD offer. Centres and Groups will have dedicated web pages to help promote their activity.
- 7 It should be noted that the fact that these Centres and Groups encompass research and innovation work makes them open to those colleagues in professional service departments engaged in these activities. It should be note that the expectation is that all members, including external members, are actively contributing on an annual basis.
- 8 Centres and Groups will create enhanced environments to support PGR students.
- 9 These Centres and Groups are the tip of the University's research and innovation "iceberg" – they represent those areas of our activity where this work is currently most highly developed. Other groupings of researchers who are working to develop our capacity in their fields are working within Department and Faculty clusters and the support and coordination of these emergent groupings is part of the work of Faculty Heads of Research. The University admits PGR candidates in fields of inquiry where it has expertise and where there is a suitable and supportive research and innovation environment.

Definitions

- 10 Research & Innovation Centres are established groupings of researchers and innovators, whose interdisciplinary membership spans several fields of inquiry.

- 11 University Centres will comprise at least seven permanent members of University staff whose work as a whole group includes outputs of equivalent quality and impact to 3* or better in REF 2014. They will be able to demonstrate active links with international research and innovation networks that are leading to regular collaborative research and innovation activity with partners in the UK and beyond. They will have a cohort of PGR students (minimum 5?) and links to feeder PGT programmes and other innovation pipelines connected to their activity. Experienced members will act as mentors and contribute to research and enterprise development work to support ECR researchers'/ innovators engagement with the work of the Centre. University Centres will support staff returning to one or more UOAs in REF.
- 12 A University Centre will generate income to a minimum of £140,000 per year or £420,000 over a three-year period – this income should be returnable in HEBCI. Note that these are minimums and part of the business planning for these centres will include confirmation of benchmarked income targets.
- 13 University centres will agree three-year growth plans in-line with University strategy at their initial inception. They will report financial performance against agreed target to each Research & Enterprise Committee and provide a concise annual report to the Committee. Centres will be reviewed and reconfirmed or disestablished in light of performance on a three-year basis – the University Research & Enterprise Committee can close any group that fails to meet its agreed targets.
- 14 Research & Innovation Groups are smaller established groupings of researchers and innovators. Typically, these groups will have a single subject basis.
- 15 Groups will comprise at least four permanent members of University staff whose work as a group includes outputs of equivalent quality and impact to 3* or better in REF 2014. They will be able to demonstrate links with national and regional research and innovation networks and ongoing collaborative research and/or innovation activity with partners in the region and wider UK. They will have a growing number of PGR students and feeder PGT or other innovation pipeline connected to their activity. Experienced members will act as mentors and contribute to research and enterprise development work to support ECR members' engagement with the work of the Group. Groups will support staff returning to one or more UOAs in REF.
- 16 A Group will generate income to a minimum of £80,000 per year or £240,000 over a three-year period – this income should be returnable in HEBCI. Note that these are minimums and part of the business planning for these groups will include confirmation of benchmarked income targets.
- 17 Groups will agree three-year growth plans at their initial inception in line with University strategy. They will report financial performance against agreed target to the University Research & Enterprise Committee and provide a concise annual report to the Committee. Groups will be reviewed and reconfirmed or disestablished in light of performance on a three-year basis – the University Research & Enterprise Committee can close any Group that fails to meet its agreed targets.
- 18 Each Research & Innovation Centre or Group is led by a named academic with a strong track record in research and/or innovation. Centres and Groups are overseen at University level and their designated lead will set on the University Research & Enterprise Committee. Larger Centres may have distributed leadership for key

aspects of their activity with named staff coordinating work in that area. Centres will require regular governance meetings.

- 19 The RED team works closely with Centres and Groups, supporting their planned activity.
- 20 The activity of a Centre or Group is delivered by staff who are based in one or more Departments. Income will be attributed to these cost centres.
- 21 The current Faculty Head of Research role has a responsibility to coordinate all aspects of research activity within their Faculty. These roles will continue to offer support and work that develops the wider research culture, recognising that not all staff will be members of these University recognised groupings but will be working with colleagues at Department level. There is a particular focus for the Head of Research on supporting these developing research and innovation clusters.
- 22 Research Centres and Groups will:
 - Coordinate and support individual and collaborative research and innovation activity across a defined area of focus;
 - Support and encourage the dissemination of high quality research outputs and outcomes in appropriate outlets including open access journals where relevant;
 - Supervise and manage cohorts of postgraduate research students, including through external supervision and examination in the UK and (in time) abroad;
 - Supervise and manage Knowledge Transfer Partnerships;
 - Support the development of early career researchers and early career innovators and post-doctoral researchers in collaboration with the Research & Enterprise Development Unit;
 - Develop and implement mechanisms to maximise the impact of research and innovation activity in line with anticipated research assessment requirements in collaboration with the Research & Enterprise Development Unit;
 - Attract external funding for research, knowledge exchange and related projects with support from the Research & Enterprise Development Unit;
 - Actively collaborate with researchers and research users outside Higher Education and beyond the UK and deliver tangible outputs from such collaboration; such collaborations need to be aligned with the University strategy of collaborative provision;
 - Promote members' research activity, outputs and outcomes through active participation in relevant external events and media engagement and through a dedicated Centre or Group website.
- 23 Research Groups that exceed agreed targets after their initial two years and can demonstrate that this situation will continue may apply to the Research & Enterprise committee for recognition as a University Centre provided they meet all required criteria i.e. income alone is not sufficient. They will need to develop a revised business plan in order to be considered as a Centre.

Procedure for establishing Research Centres and Groups

- 24 A proposal document for the establishment of a University Research Centre or Group should be discussed with the PVC in the first instance. Proposals should be discussed at an early stage with the Faculty Heads of Research. The proposer will work with the RED team and Finance to draw up the business case for the Centre or Group and this must be agreed by both Faculty FMTs prior to submission to the University Research & Enterprise Committee for its approval. FMTs should consider whether the proposed activity is consistent with the Faculty's long term strategy and goals for research / enterprise.
- 25 The Research & Enterprise Committee will consider whether the proposal fully meets the definition and may seek external input to assist in confirming the quality of outputs and whether the proposed activity is consistent with the University's core strategy and objectives for research / enterprise.
- 26 The proposal document should:
 - Establish the rationale for and aims of Centre/ Group and specify the thematic and/or methodological focus of planned research & enterprise activity. Highlight those UOAs to which the work of the centres could be returned
 - Propose a membership on which the Centre will be founded and identify the designated Centre Leader. Where external members are proposed they must be appointed following the University's agreed process. External membership is not funded other than as part of the externally funded activity of the centre.
 - Provide evidence that the proposed activity will meet the definition of a Centre, referring to the track record of members and any existing shared research and enterprise activity such as publication or PGR supervision; tenders awarded etc.
 - Outline planned outputs and impacts over the three-year period.
 - Identify how the Centre or Group proposes to secure external funding, referring to the track record of members as relevant. A three-year business plan showing start-up costs and projected income growth will need to be developed with the Research & Enterprise Development Unit prior to submission to the Research & Enterprise Committee. Note that all costs associated with the Centre must be met from its income though Faculty support can be allocated to help pump prime during the initial phase of operation.

Disestablishment of Research Centres and Groups

- 27 Centres and Groups may be disestablished at any time at the request of the Dean of Faculty and ratified by the PVC Research & Enterprise where any of the following circumstances arise:
 - The configuration of Research Centres and Groups no longer aligns with the research emphasis of the Faculty in which they are based.
 - Work in a particular area of focus has been discontinued.
 - The research / enterprise activity of members no longer meets the definition of a Research Centre or Group.

- 28 With the approval of the PVC and a Dean, a Centre flagged for disestablishment may apply to the Research & Enterprise Committee for reclassification as a Group provided it meets all requirements.

Reporting requirements

- 29 All Centres & Groups should provide reports quarterly on financial performance against targets to each Research and Enterprise Committee and the relevant Faculty AFMT.
- 30 Annual reports from Centres and Groups should be submitted to the last Research and Enterprise Committee of each academic year.
- 31 Each Centre or Group should report on the following information:
- Aims and focus;
 - Current membership including PGR students and external affiliated researchers;
 - Summary of main activity, outputs and outcomes in the reporting period, with reference to previously agreed milestones and success measures;
 - Income attributable to the Centre or Group in the reporting period. Note that income must not be counted twice where individuals belong to more than one Research Centre or Group;
 - Details of external funding bids and their outcomes, if known;
 - Operational plan, including milestones, income targets and success measures for the next reporting period.
- 32 Reports should not normally exceed 4 pages of A4. Additional detail of research outputs, impact and development activities may be provided in succinct appendices.