



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

GUIDELINES

Establishing and reviewing Research Centres

1. Introduction

Critical to the University's Strategic Plan and central to its operation, growth in research capacity and performance will position the University well to fulfil its mission to support transformational change in society. A particular emphasis on new forms of research, that are relevant to and focused on the key questions of the day, will continue to enhance the University's reputation for rigour, robustness and independence.

The main justification for the creation of a Research Centre is that of bringing together individuals with complementary interests, sometimes from different Schools, so as to create a focus for joint research, seeking funding, industrial collaboration and research exploitation. There must be proven expertise in the University and a Centre's work should *potentially be of at least national significance with the focus on international recognition*. The designation of a University Research Centre is an institutional acknowledgement of the quality in research programmes and activities within a discipline and it should be demonstrated that the creation of a Centre will add value to the normal research activities of its individual members.

Following this criteria a proforma process has been developed to ensure that Centres:

- *Recognise, support and develop areas of research excellence;*
- *Strengthen bids for external research funding and demonstrate a proven and on-going record of successful bidding;*
- *Secure financial sustainability by contributing to/growing annual research income;*
- *Support the implementation of research delivery as set out by the Strategic Plan, and in line with University research ambitions;*
- *Encourage collaborative/cross-disciplinary/interdisciplinary research;*
- *Support emerging and individual researchers, as well as research students;*
- *Provide a coherent picture of research excellence to the wider external research community; and*
- *Strengthen the links between research and teaching activities.*

It is expected that most Centres would be firmly based in a single host School, however, should this not be the case this should not in any way deter the cross/interdisciplinary or collaborative ambitions of a Centre.

2. Establishment

All Centres must be formally approved before they can represent themselves as such, both internally and in correspondence with any external bodies. It is proposed that to be so designated this grouping should:

- *Show clear evidence of a strategy for the development and management of the Centre which recognises its distinction from a Research Group;*
- *Have a definable champion/leader to act a Centre Director, who should be a full time member of academic staff;*
- *Present a well-structured and up-to-date website which showcases the work of the Centre (in line with agreed corporate guidelines);*
- *Bring together a critical mass of scholars, usually from different disciplines for collaborative work in a clearly defined area over an extended period of time, beyond the life of one specific project;*
- *Maintain high levels of research and other activity;*

- *Provide an institutional platform from which to successfully apply for grant support for projects, generating a level of external research income which contributes to College income targets.*
- *Develop post-graduate research opportunities and establish groups of postdoctoral activity;*
- *Provide a means for collaboration with external partners at other universities and with community and private sector researchers;*
- *Sponsor and organise lectures, conferences, colloquia and workshops; and*
- *Demonstrate quality engagement with research students, relevant to the work of the Centre.*

3. Application

Individuals wishing to bring forward a proposal to be considered for Centre status should complete the proforma application and submit this to the College Director of Research for its initial consideration and approval through the agreed *designated College body*. This body isn't defined by these guidelines as it is recognised that the Executive/Committee structure may vary across Colleges.

This primary College approval indicates that the proposal is consistent with the aims and objectives which the College wishes to promote and confirms that any resourcing requirements identified/requested have been considered, where appropriate, and are approved.

Once through this initial process, the College Director of Research is then responsible for submitting the approved proforma to the Research & Enterprise Committee for its consideration and, if appropriate, confirmation and recommendation to establish.

4. Review & Reporting

Reviews will take place every three years to assess the impact and effectiveness of a Centre – with the overriding remit of the process being to foster a vibrant and on-going programme of cross/interdisciplinary and collaborative research. This process is designed to explore a Centre's contribution, identify its strengths and weaknesses, and where relevant promote constructive change. The review process presents an opportunity for a Centre to reflect on its activities over the last three years and formulate a plan for the next three-year period.

Reviews will follow a similar process to that of Centre set-up, whereby a Review Proforma is completed and submitted to the *agreed designated College body* for initial review and any specific recommendations relating to the continuity of the Centre. The spirit of the review should be formative and constructive, with the *designated College body* presenting an explicit recommendation regarding renewal.

This proforma will then be subject to review by the next sitting Research & Enterprise Committee and approval sought for its continuation. Subject to the views of the Committee, the Chair will have the authority to approve or reject the application for Centre renewal.

A central register will be held which will generate a rolling programme of review schedules. Should a Centre not have submitted its review documentation within a two-month timeframe beyond its scheduled review date, this will be taken as an indication that there is no desire to seek renewal and in such circumstances closure of the Centre will be recommended to the Chair of Research & Enterprise Committee by *the agreed designated College body*.

Related documents:

Annex A – Research Centre application proforma

Annex B – Research Centre review proforma