



GUIDELINES

Establishing and reviewing Research Groups

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 Group is that of drawing on the strengths of a collaborative team to produce results that go beyond what one individual working alone could achieve. There is additional advantage to be gained in giving recognition to Groups which does not entail any special commitment of resources beyond those already available and provides a mechanism through which formal endorsement of a collaborative endeavour can be given.

To meet these criteria, a proforma process has been developed to ensure that Groups undertake *some or all* of the following activities:

- *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;*
- *Support the implementation of research delivery as set out by the Strategic Plan and in line with University research ambitions;*
- *Encourage collaborative 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.*

2. Establishment

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

- *Propose a statement of the aims and activities for the Group;*
- *Indicate membership;*
- *Present a well-structured and up-to-date website/blog to showcase the Group's work (in line with corporate guidelines);*
- *Cultivate and encourage research-based engagement, impact and knowledge exchange activities;*
- *Strengthen the University's community of research postgraduate students; and*
- *Convene workshops and seminars.*

3. Application

Individuals wishing to bring forward a proposal to be considered for Group status should complete the proforma application and submit this to the relevant College Director of Research for College approval *through the designated College body* which will hold responsibility for granting Research Group status, to consider the proposal and if appropriate confirm its establishment. This body isn't defined by these guidelines as it is recognised that the Executive/Committee structure may vary across Colleges.

Approval of the Group by *the agreed designated College body* indicates that the proposal is consistent with the aims and objectives which the *School/College* wishes to promote.

4. Review & Reporting

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

Reviews will follow a similar process to that of Group set-up, whereby a Review Proforma is completed and submitted to *the agreed designated College body* for review and to identify any specific recommendations or conditions relating to the continuity of the Group. Subject to the views of *the designated College body* the Chair will have the authority to approve or reject the application for renewal – where the spirit of the review should be formative and constructive, and remain in line with the required criteria for the operation of a Research Group.

A central register will be held which will generate a rolling programme of review schedules. Should a Group 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 disbandment of the Group will be recommended by the College Director of Research to the Chair of *the agreed designated College body*.

Related documents:

Annex A – Research Group application proforma

Annex B – Research Group review proforma