

USC University Research Centres and Research Institutes - Academic Policy

1. Purpose of policy

1.1 This policy is intended to provide the framework for establishing and operating USC University Research Centres ('Centres') and USC Research Institutes ('Institutes'), with the goal of producing research of international repute in a strong and supportive research environment.

2. Policy scope and application

2.1 This policy applies to all staff, higher degree by research (HDR) candidates and members of university decision-making or advisory bodies.

2.2 This policy applies only to Centres and Institutes that have been established under the auspices of this framework.

2.3 This policy does not extend to School-based research centres, units or groups that may be established to foster emerging research strengths and to meet strategic goals of a School or Schools. Such units or groups must be approved, funded and managed by the relevant Area Heads and must not use the terms 'centre' or 'institute' in their name unless prescribed by an alternative authority such as an external funding body, or as a consequence of a strategic initiative of the University and approved by the Vice-Chancellor and President.

3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's glossary of terms for policies and procedures.

USC University Research Centre is an established and focused cohort of researchers recognised as having a significant national impact and international relevance. Research centres have a prime focus to conduct research of strategic importance to the university in terms of national/international standing and peer esteem, commercial research and research training, as well as engage in consulting and extension activities.

USC University Research Institute is a large research concentration of excellence established through formal agreement(s) with other external organisations or entities, and may have additional governance requirements and operational characteristics associated with the external partners. This large body of researchers is funded predominantly by significant external funding.

4. Policy statement

4.1 The University is committed to supporting internationally competitive research. Research groupings in the form of Centres or Institutes demonstrate critical mass, academic excellence and end-user engagement, together with research translation in designated areas of research strength. With a view to continuing growth and the investment of the university's finite resources, the University will target its investment into designated areas of research strength.

5. Principles

5.1 Purpose of USC University Research Centres and USC University Research Institutes

5.1.1 Centres and Institutes enable the University to:

- (a) foster research strengths to progress towards achieving institutional goals in relation to international rankings;
- (b) facilitate the strategic utilisation of infrastructure and resources;
- (c) build research capacity while demonstrating a return on the university's investment;
- (d) attract private and public-sector funding;

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Academic Board

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Office of Research

FIRST APPROVED

7 February 2012

LAST AMENDED

4 September 2024

REVIEW DATE

31 October 2024

STATUS

Active

- (e) market research capabilities through cohesive, formally recognised branding;
- (f) enrich HDR training; and
- (g) provide a stimulating and supportive research environment for early career researchers.

5.2 Performance criteria

5.2.1 Centres and Institutes shall be based on the coordinated and cooperative efforts of multiple researchers working in an allied field of investigation, and will be underpinned by individual and collective performance excellence sustained at a national and international level. Consideration will be given to discipline specific measures of research excellence in addition to prevailing sector measures of research quality, such as research impact, research income, publications and HDR completions.

5.2.2 The ability to meet and maintain specified performance criteria in relation to size, research productivity and alignment with fields of research (FoRs) designated by the University as strategically important will be required for approval to establish a Centre or Institute and to be eligible for discretionary funding from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

5.2.3 Centres and Institutes must develop a research program that includes key performance indicators that incorporate a growth profile and annual performance targets.

5.2.4 Regarding specific discipline benchmarks and with the guidance of external expert assessment, the criteria and performance indicators may be applied flexibly by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) to facilitate strategic research performance outcomes.

5.2.5 The outputs of Centre and Institute members are used in evaluating the ability to meet performance criteria of a proposed or continuing Centre or Institute. Consideration may be given to adjunct staff who contribute to publications via by-line and University based research income.

5.2.6 Where researchers are members of two Centres or Institutes, their publications output and research income will be allocated to both, while avoiding any duplication.

5.3 Establishment of a USC University Research Centre or USC University Research Institute

5.3.1 The overall number of Centres or Institutes within any category is based on the strategic needs of the University, the funding available and the quality of proposals submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

5.3.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) is authorised to approve the creation of a Centre or Institute as per the specified criteria as set out in the USC University Research Centres and Research Institutes – Procedures.

5.3.3 The name of each centre and institute will be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

5.4. USC University Research Centre and USC Research Institute membership

5.4.1 Each Centre or Institute must have a Director who is appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

5.4.2 The Director is accountable for the management of the Centre or Institute to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

5.4.3 The Director is appointed for a period of three years plus an optional two years subject to evidence of satisfactory performance provided as part of the three-year review.

5.4.4 The responsibilities of Directors include strategic research leadership, development, promotion, support for collaboration, engagement and operational management.

5.4.5 Centre or Institute Directors must ensure that the Centre or Institute builds capacity for and displays evidence of quality research.

5.4.6 A research institute's leadership team must be supported by an advisory board with external representation.

5.5. Annual reporting

5.6.1 Centre and Institute Directors must provide the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) with an annual report which will then be provided to the Research Committee and Academic Board.

5.6. Review

5.6.1 Centres and Institutes are not permanently funded by the University and are subject to review.

5.6.2 A review panel may be convened by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) at any time in accordance with the Quality and Standards Framework and the TEQSA Higher Education standards for research.

5.6.3 Where the outcome of a review finds that a Centre or Institute is no longer functioning adequately, a recommendation for possible disestablishment may be made through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

5.8. Disestablishment

5.8.1 All Centres and Institutes are required to articulate arrangements for disestablishment in their initial business plans. This may include arrangements for the transfer of any residual staff, assets and/or commitments.

5.8.2 Centres and Institutes may propose that they be disestablished at any time to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

6. Authorities/Responsibilities

6. The following authorities/responsibilities are delegated under this policy:

ACTIVITY	UNIVERSITY OFFICER/COMMITTEE
Approve the creation of a University Research Centre or Research Institute if it meets the specified criteria.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Approve the name of a University Research Centre or Research Institute.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Responsible for and approve appointments (including the Director) and financial agreements related to a University Research Centre or University Research Institute personnel.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Approve the disestablishment of a University Research Centre or Research Institute.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Accountable for the management of the University Research Centre or Research Institute to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).	Director of USC University Research Centre or Research Institute
Responsible for strategic research leadership, development, promotion, support for collaboration, engagement and operational management of a University Research Centre or Research Institute.	Director of USC University Research Centre or Research Institute
Provide an annual report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).	Director of USC University Research Centre or Research Institute

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Compliance Management Framework - Governing Policy
- Responsible Research Conduct - Academic Policy
- University Consultancy Work - Operational Policy
- USC University Research Centres and Research Institutes - Academic Policy

LINKED DOCUMENTS

- USC University Research Centres and Research Institutes - Procedures

SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS

- Research Concentrations - Procedures