

**POLICY ON INSTITUTES, CENTRES AND UNITS
(RESEARCH POLICY IV)
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A: POLICY STATEMENT

1. Purpose statement

The purpose of this sub-policy is to provide for the establishment of formal organisational structures to facilitate co-operative research, and to advance research endeavours in the interests of both the University and individual researchers. The sub-policy also seeks to regulate the establishment, conduct and review of such structures.

The objective of creating such research entities is to improve the quality, quantity and visibility of the University's research output, and to provide a better research environment for the participating researchers. They are intended to:

- Enhance the standing of the University as a pre-eminent research institution.
- Benefit from the National Science, Technology and Innovation strategies, and the requirements of national and international research funding organisations, by building up significant bodies of expertise at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Increase the level of interaction between researchers, research entities and the Research Office.
- Develop policies and procedures in line with the research ethos of the University, and provide efficient and effective management of research.

2. Introduction and background

The establishment of formal organisational structures may offer advantages to both the University and researchers in the facilitation of co-operative research. These structures have the potential to promote the University's research activities, enhance the University's research reputation and standing as well as provide an improved environment for the conduct of research.

However, while the use of such structures is desirable, principles and guidelines dealing with the form of the structures, as well as their establishment, conduct, review and termination are necessary to ensure that principles of good governance are adhered to.

3. Definition of terms

This sub-policy makes reference to "Research Institutes", "Research Centres", "Research Units" and "Research Groups", which are comprehensively defined in Policy section 5.4.

4. Scope

This sub-policy applies to all staff, students and affiliates of the University engaged in research at or in collaboration with the University.

This sub-policy provides guidelines/direction on the University's position in respect of the establishment, conduct, review and termination of formal organisational structures established to further the conduct of collaborative research, both within and external to the University.

5. The Policy

5.1. Principles Underlying the Policy

5.1.1. To meet its research goals the University has established formal organisational structures to facilitate collaborative and cooperative research.

5.1.2. Such structures will be classified as Research Institutes, Research Centres or Research Units and may only be established within the context of this policy.

5.1.3. No other structure may be styled a Research Institute, Centre or Unit of the University unless it has been properly constituted according to this policy.

5.2. Types of research entities

Each research entity shall be classified as one of the following types:

5.2.1. Research Institute (Financially and Legally Independent)

5.2.1.1. A Research Institute is an entity with a separate legal persona, associated with the University by formal agreement.

5.2.1.2. The agreement may include contracts for the University to provide management and financial services.

5.2.1.3. Staff of the University may participate in the activities of the Institute, and Staff of the Institute may hold honorary positions in the University and may co-supervise research students.

5.2.1.4. The ultimate test of what constitutes an Institute is that it is a legally independent body with its own Board of Control or equivalent governing body.

5.2.2. Research Centre (Financially self-sufficient, but not legally independent)

5.2.2.1. A Research Centre is a formal research entity within the University, structured to facilitate cooperative research between a number of researchers.

5.2.2.2. While it may utilise University resources, it is responsible for generating its own research funding from external sources.

5.2.2.3. It may be interdisciplinary, in which case its membership consists of a number of researchers representing several disciplines, or it may be located within a single School in order to facilitate cooperative research within the School or within a single discipline.

5.2.3. Research Unit (Neither financially nor legally independent)

5.2.3.1. A Research Unit is a formal research entity set up to support the work of an individual research leader and his/her collaborators.

5.2.3.2. It forms part of the School and College to which the research leader belongs.

5.2.3.3. Its research activities will be supported from funds brought in by the research leader or collaborators, but it is neither financially nor legally independent.

5.2.3.4. Some members of the Unit may be employed from the funds brought in to support the Unit.

5.2.3.5. Its existence will be tied to the tenure of the research leader at the university and it will cease to exist on his/her resignation or retirement (unless continued by an honorary appointment.)

5.2.4. Research Group

5.2.4.1. A Research Group is an informal grouping of researchers, set up by them to facilitate their research.

5.2.4.2. The term may be applied to a grouping such as a researcher and his/her research students.

5.2.4.3. It does not require formal approval and does not have any formal status within the University.

5.3. Naming of Entities

5.3.1. Research Institute

5.3.1.1. The name of a Research Institute will have one of the forms

- Institute for ..., University of KwaZulu-Natal
- ... Research Institute, University of KwaZulu-Natal
- Any other title with the sub-title: A Research Institute affiliated to the University of KwaZulu-Natal

5.3.2. Research Centres

5.3.2.1. The name of a Research Centre shall be of the form "Centre for ..., University of KwaZulu-Natal" or "... Research Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal".

5.3.3. Research Units

5.3.3.1. The name of a Research Unit shall be of the form "... Research Unit, School of ...". Use of the University logo and any other logo must comply with UKZN's Corporate Identity Manual guidelines.

5.4. All entities shall be subject to periodic reviews/evaluation, at least once every five years.

B. PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Structures and Lines of Responsibility

1.1. Research Institute

1.1.1. Each Research Institute is a financially and legally independent body with its own governance and management structures.

1.1.2. Its relationship with the University is specified in a Memorandum of Agreement between the two parties.

1.1.3. The University would normally expect to be represented on the Board of Trustees (or its equivalent).

1.2. Research Centre

1.2.1. A Research Centre may operate within a School, under the control of a College, or across Colleges.

1.2.2. The members of the Centre may be members of the academic staff, members appointed to posts dedicated to the Centre, or Honorary Researchers of the University.

1.2.3. The Centre will have a Director, who will normally be a member of the academic staff.

1.2.4. The Centre will have a continuity of existence beyond the terms of service of individuals but will be subject to regular review (normally every five years).

1.2.5. Even if a Centre works across disciplines, Schools or Colleges it is necessary for a primary College to be nominated. The home College of the director is normally regarded as the primary College in such cases.

1.2.6. The Centre will have an Advisory Board. The Chair of the Advisory Board will be nominated by the DVC (Research), and will normally be a senior academic in a related field.

1.2.7. The name of the Research Centre may appear as part of the University letterhead.

1.3. Research Unit

1.3.1. The Director of the Unit will be responsible to the Dean and Head of School, or to the DVC and Head of College, if the Dean and Head of School is Head of the Unit.

1.3.2. Review of the Unit normally forms part of the review of the School to which its Director belongs.

1.3.3. The name of the Research Unit may appear, together with the name of the School, as part of the University letterhead.

1.4. Research Group

1.4.1. The members of a Research Group are responsible to their respective Deans and Heads of School.

1.4.2. The Group has no formal status within the University.

1.4.3. The name of the Group shall not be included on the University letterhead. The letterhead of the School in which it is located will be used.

2. Establishment of New Research Centres or Units

2.1. The prospective Head of the proposed Centre or Unit will, through the Board(s) of the appropriate Schools and Colleges, submit to the University Research Strategy Group for evaluation a completed application Form (available from the Research Office) embodying:

- A Constitution;
- A statement of objectives, goals and expected outputs;
- Confirmation of approval by the relevant College Academic Affairs Board(s); and
- The name and a short curriculum vitae of the proposed Director, and each of the members of the research team, together with their agreement to participate.

2.2. The DVC (Research), in consultation with the University Research Strategy Group, will appoint not more than three external reviewers to review the application on the following criteria:

- Potential contribution to research and development;
- Impact on the academic activities of related Schools and Colleges;
- Research track records of the Principal Investigator and the research team; and
- Alignment of the goals of the proposed Centre or Unit with the University's Vision and Mission.

2.3. If the result of the review process is favourable, the DVC (Research) will recommend the establishment of the Research Centre/Unit to the College Academic Affairs Boards, Senate and Council.

2.4. If the review is not favourable, the reviewers' reports and reasons for rejection will be shared with the applicant. Generally, re-submissions addressing the comments will be encouraged.

2.5. If an application has been reviewed and rejected three times by the DVC (Research), in consultation with the University Research Strategy Group, the DVC (Research) may decide, at his/her discretion, not to accept it for further review.

3. Establishment of Institutes

3.1. No absolute rules can be laid down for the establishment of Institutes as individual cases may need to be treated on their merits. Several different scenarios can be envisaged:

- A motivation to establish such an Institute may come from some constituent part of the University;
- An established external research organisation might negotiate with the University to become a University Institute;
- An external funding agency may negotiate to set up an Institute. This would normally arise as a consequence of a large research proposal by members of the University, or as a consequence of a successful tender by the University to supply a required research service; and

- The activities and reputation of an existing Centre may grow to the extent that it is desirable to give it a separate legal status.

3.2. When the university and an existing external Institute propose to establish links, the proposal should be submitted to all relevant Schools and Colleges for agreement in principle.

3.2.1. The negotiations shall be carried out through the University Research Office.

3.2.2. In considering the desirability of such links, the University shall consider:

- Potential contribution to research and development;
- The compatibility of the goals of the proposed Institute with the University's Vision and Mission;
- A research ethics policy for the Institute that is consistent with the University's policy; and
- The desirability of separate legal status.

3.3. Possible legal structures are that the Institute may be set up as a non-profit company or, if appropriate, as a Trust.

3.3.1. The relationship between the University and the Institute will be defined by contract which will be for a given period, normally five years, and renewable subject to review.

3.3.2. Such a contract should regulate at least the following:

- Involvement of University staff and students in the Institute;
- Involvement of Institute staff in the University;
- Access by members of the Institute to the University's libraries, computer networks, and general facilities;
- Access by University staff and students to facilities of the Institute;
- The extent of the University's legal liability for the Institute's staff and activities;
- The extent of the Institute's legal liability for the University's staff and students working on Institute matters;
- Ownership of data and intellectual property;
- Definition of ethical standards;
- Provision of University services such as financial management, human resources facilities, and office space;
- The role of the University in the governance of the Institute and representation of the Institute on appropriate governing bodies of the University;
- Any provision of research funding by the University to the Institute;
- The recovery of overhead costs from the Institute to the University;
- Reporting requirements including statutory requirements from either the Institute or the University;
- The use of the University's logo and letterhead on Institute publications and stationery (The letterhead of the Institute normally shall explicitly include the name of the University, in the style "*Name of Institute, University of KwaZulu-Natal*" or in the style "*Name of Institute – A Research Institute affiliated to the University of KwaZulu-Natal*"); and
- The use of the University's name for the purpose of fundraising.

4. Review and Disestablishment of Centres and Units

4.1. All Centres will be reviewed every five years.

4.2. Units will be reviewed as part of the review of the School to which the Director belongs.

4.2.1. If this review is delayed beyond a five year period of existence of the Unit, a separate review may be instituted.

4.3. The criteria shall be:

- Whether the research outputs (in terms of publications and postgraduate students) over the period of the review satisfies the expectations of the University as defined at the time the entity was established or at the time of the last previous review; and
- The potential for continuation of output at a satisfactory level.

4.4. The review process will require that:

- The DVC (Research), in consultation with the University Research Strategy Group shall appoint the majority of the members of a Review Committee.
- Quality Promotions and Assurance (QPA) shall run and oversee the review process in terms of their usual processes.

4.5. The QPA must submit a final report to the DVC (Research), who will in consultation with the University Research Strategy Group recommend to the relevant College Academic Affairs Board whether the Centre or Unit should be retained or disestablished. The relevant College Academic Affairs Board will make recommendations to Senate/Council.

5. Review of Relationship with Institutes

5.1. The University will review its relationship with each Institute every five years, or at the end of any other period that may be specified in the contract or Memorandum of Agreement.

5.2. The Institute will, at the same time, evaluate its own attitude to the relationship.

5.3. The University's criteria for continuation of the relationship shall be:

- The continued benefit to the University of the relationship;
- Confidence that the University is adding value to the work of the Institute;
- The nature of the research contribution over the period of review; and
- The continued compatibility of the goals of the existing or proposed Institute with the University's Vision and Mission.

5.4. The University review shall be carried out by a committee recommended by the DVC (Research) in consultation with the University Research Strategy Group which will appoint the majority of the members of the Review Panel.

5.5. The Institute's review shall be according to its own procedures.

5.6. If desired by both parties, a joint review committee may be set up to review the mutual benefits of the association.

5.7. The association will be renewed if both parties are agreed on its benefits.

6. Reporting requirements

6.1. All Institutes, Centres and Units will provide brief annual reports on the following for inclusion in the annual University Research Report:

- Any major new research achievements; and
- A list of publications and successful supervision of postgraduate students in the appropriate form for submission to the Department of Higher Education and Training

6.1. In addition Institutes must provide their annual audited financial statements and reports on compliance with good governance to the University.

6.3. Centres and Units are subject to normal University financial controls and governance policies.

7. Approval of establishment or continuation after review of Institutes, Centres and Units

7.1. Approval of the establishment or continuation of any formal research entity must be recommended by the relevant Colleges and University Research Office in consultation with the University Research Strategy Group.

7.2. The recommendation must be approved by Senate and Council.

8. Regulation

8.1. The University Research Office is authorised to set up and maintain guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.