ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF CENTRES

PREAMBLE

To extend knowledge, stimulate learning and promote understanding for the benefit of the community, Murdoch University encourages the establishment and development of Research, Professional and Teaching Centres. In order to enhance its reputation for research output and research training and build strategic relationships with other academic institutions, government and the private sector, the University recognises that Centres in areas of existing and potential research strength must be identified, fostered and encouraged to work co-operatively.

The principles outlined in this policy apply to all Centres established within the University or in which the University participates. The policy provides for consistency of application and accountability towards the effective and efficient management of Centres at Murdoch University.

PRINCIPLES / OBJECTIVES

To provide a policy for the establishment and management of Centres at Murdoch University.

INTRODUCTION

1. Murdoch University encourages the establishment and development of Research, Professional and Teaching Centres. In order to enhance its reputation for research output and research training and build strategic relationships with other academic institutions, government and the private sector, the University recognises that Centres in areas of existing and potential research strength must be identified, fostered and encouraged to work co-operatively.

The principles outlined in this policy apply to all Centres established within the University or in which the University participates, including major centres established with significant external funding such as Co-operative Research Centres, State Government Centres of Excellence, ARC Special Research Centres and ARC Key Centres of Teaching and Research. It is recognised that the establishment of such Centres is subject to criteria specified by the funding agencies, and that any conflict may need to be resolved outside this policy.

In considering proposals to establish Centres, the University will take into account Clauses 4 to 11 of this policy, as well as the following:

- the University’s strategic plans, and in particular the Operational Research Management Plan;
- the implications of any requirements prescribed by the funding body, in relation to the University’s policies and procedures;
- the possible need for matching or supporting funds from the University’s Research Applications Fund, or from other central funds.
CLASSIFICATION OF CENTRES

2. A Centre shall be defined as an administrative entity within the University which has responsibility for undertaking or facilitating research, consultancy, professional and/or teaching in a specified area or for other activities as envisaged in Clause 9 of this policy, and which may have responsibility for generating income. A Centre may be established in association with another university or other institution. Subject to satisfactory reporting as outlined in Clause 17 of this policy, Centres will be established for a fixed term of five years, except where there is agreement from the Vice-Chancellor that the centre will be established for a different period of time.

3. Centres may be classified as either University, Inter-divisional, Divisional or School Centres. University Centres are those established as a result of a successful application to an external funding agency (eg Co-operative Research Centres, Centres of Excellence etc); a formal agreement to collaborate with other institutions, or include substantial external participation and support. Centres which are largely internal to the university, for all they may be successful in attracting external grants and consultancies may be classified as either Inter-divisional, Divisional or School Centres. Centres will be classified as Inter-Divisional Centres if, in accordance with Clause 4 of this policy, it can be demonstrated that they are interdisciplinary and collaborative across Divisions. Centres that are predominantly located within one Division but across Schools will be classified as Divisional Centres and those that operate primarily from within one School will be classified as School Centres.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTRES

4. Centres may be established under the following circumstances:

4.1 University Centres will usually be established as a result of Murdoch's participation in a successful application to a Commonwealth or State Government agency, or as a result of an agreement between the University and industry, or the University and other institutions. With respect to such centres, a Memorandum of Understanding or some such contract will detail the nature of the university's involvement, as allowed by Clause 5 of this policy. In accordance with Legal Policy LP2/2004, all staff must obtain a legal sign-off for all agreements or MOUs relating to a centre.

A proposal for the University to participate in an external application to establish a centre shall be undertaken only with the approval of the Vice Chancellor on the advice of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research). In agreeing to become a party to such proposals, the following shall be considered:

- A demonstrated synergy between Murdoch’s research interests and strengths and the proposal.
- The expected return to the university in relation to expected investment and any leveraging contribution.
- The likelihood of the application being successful.
- The nature of the University's involvement in the prospective centre (eg as host, as a node of a CRC).
- That any major operational issues have been resolved.
- A satisfactory management and review process.

The PVC(R) must seek the agreement of the relevant Executive Deans before advising the Vice Chancellor to sign-off on any such application.

Centres which are established as a result of such arrangements may, when the funding ceases, reapply for re-classification as an Inter-divisional or Divisional Centre.
Establishment and Management of Centres Policy

4.2 Inter-divisional Centres may be established if it can be clearly demonstrated that they are:

- Collaborative between Divisions within Murdoch;
- Interdisciplinary; and
- Value-adding, in that they contribute to the University in a manner not feasible within current organisational structures and research arrangements.

4.3 Divisional Centres may be established if it can be demonstrated that they will:

- Benefit the research, teaching or professional activities of a group of staff within one Division that is working in a field of common interest;
- Assist in the development of an emergent area of research, teaching or professional strength;
- Provide clear advantages in attracting support from external agencies, or
- Enhance the teaching-research nexus.

4.4 School Centres may be established if it can be demonstrated that they will:

- Benefit the research, teaching or professional activities of a group of staff within one School that is working in a field of common interest;
- Assist in the development of an emergent area of research, teaching or professional strength;
- Provide clear advantages in attracting support from external agencies, or
- Enhance the teaching-research nexus.

5. This policy shall apply to all Centres established within the University except that in the light of funding or other arrangements with external agencies, the Senate, on the advice of the Vice Chancellor and on such terms and conditions as the Senate considers appropriate, may establish Centres which do not conform to the policy in all respects.

6. All Centres shall be based within one or more Divisions of the University for administrative purposes. Schools are within Divisions for administrative purposes, and therefore School centers will report, through their school, to the respective Division. Where proposed Centres (University or Inter-divisional) involve more than one Division, a Memorandum of Understanding is to be signed by the Executive Deans of all the Divisions participating in establishment of the Centre. For the case where such Centres are primarily involved in research, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) will be responsible for negotiating with Executive Deans the Memorandum of Understanding. Where such Centres are intended to conduct professional and teaching activities, the President of Academic Council will be responsible for negotiating Memoranda of Understanding with the Executive Deans of participating Divisions. The Memorandum of Understanding will endorse the Executive Dean of each Division involved will sign a note confirming acceptance of the proposed institutional location, management, funding and reporting arrangements for the Centre and arrangements for calculating and allocating income generated by the Centre’s research or other activities. **Comment:** Please note that it is a legal nonsense to talk of an MOU between Divisions. At best, there can be a notation or file note signed by the Executive Deans confirming acceptance of the relevant conditions that will apply.

7. All members of Centres shall be members of the staff of Divisions of this University or other institutions participating in the Centre, or adjunct appointments to the Centre, unless the Vice Chancellor decides otherwise.

8. A proposal for an Inter-divisional or Divisional Centre whose primary purpose is research shall be submitted initially to the Boards of the Divisions, via their Research Committee, in which the
Centre is intended to be based. A proposal for a School Centre should be submitted to the School Committee, endorsed by the Head of School, then forwarded to the Board of the Division. If endorsed by the Boards, on the recommendation of their Research Committee, the proposal shall be forwarded to CCARS for assessment against this policy and, if approved, referral to the Research and Development Board, in the case of Research Centres, or in other cases, Academic Council, which may recommend to the Vice Chancellor that the Centre be established.

9. Where the Vice Chancellor has agreed to the establishment of a Centre whose primary purpose is to conduct research, or when an application to an external funding agency has been successful, the Research and Development Board shall ask Academic Council to formally note the establishment of the Centre (and by virtue of its resolution to notify Senate).

10. A proposal for a Centre whose primary purpose is teaching, consultancy, professional development, or other activities which may provide a service to the community (including but not primarily research), or a combination of these, shall be submitted to the Academic Council by the Board of the Division in which the Centre is intended to be based. A proposal for a School Centre whose primary purpose is teaching, consultancy, professional development, or other activities which may provide a service to the community (including but not primarily research), or a combination of these, shall be submitted to the School Committee for approval before submission to the Board of the Division in which the School Centre is intended to be based. The Council may recommend to the Vice Chancellor that the Centre be established and that it be classified as a ‘Professional Centre’.

11. All submissions shall contain a plan, including the following information:

11.1 Centre’s goals and objectives

Operational targets for years one, two and five of its operation

Performance indicators for future reporting and evaluation

Description of how the Centre relates to the University’s Operational Research Management Training plan

Details of how the proposed Centre conforms with Clause 3 of the Policy for the Establishment and Management of Centres.

A Risk Management Plan using the template in Annexure A that contains Risk Consequence and Likelihood tables and an education document on how to apply the risk management methodology. If this plan identifies any Extreme or High residual risks, the submission should not proceed until processes or strategies are put in place to reduce these risks to Moderate or Low levels.

Comment This needs further adjustment as a Centre, the primary purpose of which is to conduct consultancy work will breach the Senate’s Consultancy Policy. There needs to be a process built in for such proposals to be vetted by MurdochLINK in accordance with the Consultancy Policy. – this adjustment is in the below paragraph.

Individual consultancy proposals for Research Centres must comply with the Senate’s consultancy policy and be accordingly vetted and approved by Murdoch Link.

11.2 Key personnel

Names, addresses
Proportion of time committed to the Centre

Roles and responsibilities

Details of how the centre will manage legal and constitutional issues relating to the participation of staff from outside the University

11.3 Infrastructure

Location of the Centre, together with details of how the accommodation needs of the centre will be met, by whom and at whose cost.

Equipment, infrastructure and other requirements, and details of how these will be supplied, by whom and at whose costs

11.4 Organisation

Management structure of the Centre

Roles, responsibilities (including any issues relating to legal liability), composition and period of membership of advisory committees and Boards of management

Details of how the accounting and administrative processes of the Centre will be managed

If it is proposed to have the Centre incorporated, this should first be approved by Senate in accordance with the University’s Policy for the Establishment and Operation of Incorporated Entities.

11.5 A statement on how the proposed Centre might impact on other Schools or Centres in the University

11.6 Resources and income (attach copies of agreements)

Details of resourcing arrangements between the Centre and participating Divisions, Schools, the Research and Development Board and external collaborators

Agreements relating to the sharing or allocation of income from Centre activities

Details of all agreements relating with external agencies, including agreements on intellectual property issues and “in kind” contributions.

Estimated income and expenditure for the first three years of operation, together with documentation of confirmed income.

12. In evaluating proposals to establish a Centre, consideration will be given to whether the proposal adheres to Clauses 4 to 11 of this policy.

13. In cases where the primary purpose of the entity is to conduct research, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) will decide whether a term other than "Centre" be used to describe the entity if this is considered appropriate under the terms of a grant from an external funding agency or following recommendations from external participants. In cases where the primary purpose of the entity is teaching, consultancy, professional development or other activities, Academic Council will decide whether a term other than "Centre" be used to describe the entity if this is considered appropriate under the terms of a grant from an external funding agency or following recommendations from external participants.
14. As soon as practicable after approval has been granted to establish a centre, the secretary of the Research & Development Board or the Academic Council, as the case may be, will provide details of the centre to the General Counsel & University Secretary so that the University’s “Entities Register” can be updated.

MANAGEMENT OF CENTRES

14.15. The Director of each Centre shall be appointed by the Vice Chancellor, on the advice of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) (if a research Centre) or the President of Academic Council (if a professional or teaching Centre) and the Executive Dean(s) of the Division(s) participating in the Centre. The Executive Dean will take advice from the Head of School in the case of a School centre. However, in the case of a University Centre, if there is a contractual agreement with the University which includes a process for appointing the Director, that process shall be followed instead.

Where the Director of a University Centre is not located at Murdoch, the Vice Chancellor with the relevant advice from the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) or the President of Academic Council, will appoint a Murdoch staff member as a Deputy Director.

The Deputy Director of a University Centre, or the Director of an Inter-Divisional, Divisional or School Centre will be:

(a) a member of the full time academic staff of Murdoch University at the level of Senior Lecturer or above;

(b) appointed for a term not exceeding three years and shall be eligible for reappointment;

(c) responsible to the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) in the case of University or Inter-divisional research Centres, Academic Council, in the case of University or Inter-divisional professional and teaching Centres, Executive Deans of the Divisions participating in the Centre in the case of Divisional Centres, and the Head of School in the case of a school Centre, on all matters relating to the Centre.

15.16. Unless otherwise prescribed by contractual or other formal arrangements with another institution to which the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) / President of Academic Council or Vice Chancellor has agreed, each Centre will have an advisory committee and/or a Board of management whose membership, role and responsibility will be approved by the Vice Chancellor. An advisory committee will provide advice to the Centre on how it might best meet its goals and objectives and improve or expand. A Board of management will, in consultation with the Centre Director, develop Centre policies, advise the Director of the Centre on strategies to achieve the Centre’s goals and objectives, and have responsibility for monitoring the progress of the Centre.

Members of advisory committees and Boards of management shall hold office for three years and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

The Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) or nominated delegate and the Director of the Centre will be represented on the advisory committees or Boards of management of all University Research Centres. The President of Academic Council or nominated delegate and the Director of the Centre will be represented on the advisory committees or Boards of management of all University Professional or Teaching Centres. Executive Deans of the participating Divisions or nominated delegate and the Director of the Centre will be represented on the advisory committees or Boards of management of all Divisional Centres. The Head of School shall be on the advisory committees or Boards of Management of a School Centre.
16.17. Management and advisory committees and Boards may co-opt up to three members for a period not exceeding three years. A casual vacancy of more than six months to a position on a Board or an advisory committee may be filled by a new appointment. The person newly appointed shall serve for the balance of the term vacated. Each year of office shall commence on the first day of second semester in any academic year and expire on the day before the commencement of the second semester in the next academic year.

17.18. The Director of a Centre required by an external body to produce an annual report will provide the Division of Research and Development with a copy of that report. In all other cases, the Director of a Centre must submit a draft annual report to the Centre’s advisory committee or Board of management for their consideration and comment. The Director of University Research Centres will present the final version of the Centre’s annual report to the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) and the Research and Development Board, and Directors of University Professional or Teaching Centres will present the Centre’s annual report to the President of Academic Council. Directors of Divisional Centres will submit the Centre’s annual report to the Executive Deans and Research Committees of the participating Divisions. Directors of School Centres shall submit the report to the School Committee and Head of School. The report must chart the progress of the Centre against the objectives, targets and performance indicators and compliance with both the funding agreement, risk management measures and relevant legislative requirements specified in the proposal to establish the Centre in accordance with Clause 11. The Report, once finalized, shall be placed on the Centre’s website.

187.1 In addition, in the fourth year of the Centre’s operation, or earlier with the approval of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) or President of Academic Council, as appropriate, the Director of the Centre must include in the annual report a statement indicating either:

(a) That the Centre will be discontinued at the end of its fifth year of operation.

(b) A statement of intent to submit a proposal for continuation of the Centre.

Where a Centre has been established as a result of a successful application to an external funding agency or through agreement with external partners, and the reporting and review cycle differs from that set out here, the report on continuation/ discontinuation can be made in association with the external agency's review process or the Memorandum of Understanding, with the written approval of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) or President of Academic Council as appropriate.

187.2 In the event that a Centre is to be discontinued, in the final year of its operation the Centre must provide a report containing the following information:

a. A summary of the Centre’s key achievements
b. A statement of any impediments that were encountered
c. A statement indicating how all assets of the Centre will be disposed of at termination of the Centre, including how income from assets such as intellectual property will be disposed of, and what arrangements will be made for the redeployment of Centre staff
d. disclosure of any existing liabilities, contracts, entitlements or any other matters that should be disclosed, at termination of the Centre.

The Centre will be discontinued at the end of its approved period of operation and the Executive Deans of participating Divisions, Director of the Centre, external participants and members of management and advisory Boards and committees will be notified.
Review of Centres

18. If a Centre wishes to continue operating beyond the fixed term of five years, in the final year of that term, or earlier with the approval of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) or President of Academic Council, as appropriate, it must submit a proposal to continue for a further five years. The proposal must comply with the requirements of Clause 11 of this Policy. The Centre must also undergo a formal review. Criteria for continuation shall include an assessment of the Centre’s performance over the past four years against the goals, objectives, targets and indicators specified in the proposal to establish the Centre, and an evaluation of the Centre’s new proposal for continuation against the principles and criteria outlined in this Policy for the Establishment and Management of Centres.

School Centres shall be reviewed in conjunction with their School review.

19. All Centres must review their risk management plan in consultation with the Director, Office of Internal Audit and Risk Management on an annual basis. If this annual review identifies any Extreme or High residual risks, processes or strategies are to be put in place to reduce these risks to Moderate or Low levels in a timely manner.

20. When a Centre indicates that it wishes to undergo a review to continue operation for a further five years, the Research and Development Board or Academic Council, as appropriate, shall appoint a review committee, except in the case of School Centres who shall be reviewed in conjunction with their school review. The review committee will comprise three people who are independent of the management and activities of the Centre. The Chair of the review committee will be an external person who has knowledge of the fields in which the Centre has operated. All major external participants in the Centre must be consulted on the timing and aims of the review, and consulted during the review process.

In the case of Research Centres, the Research and Development Board may exercise discretion on the level of peer evaluation involved to take account of the size and nature of the Research Centre. As an alternative to the review process set out in this Policy, the Board may authorise a review by its Committee for the Review of Centres and Areas of Research Strength (CRCARS) or by an Expert Visitor to the University. The procedures for the review of Research Centres are expanded upon in the Protocol for the Review of Research Centres (2002) approved by the Research and Development Board (Res: RDB 59/02).

The costs of the review of a Centre normally will be borne by the Centre. However, a case may be made by University Centres to apply to the Research and Development Board, Divisional Centres may apply to their Division, and School Centres may apply to their School for assistance in funding their review.

21. The review committee will assess the activities of the Centre and proposal to continue the Centre for a further five years in light of the criteria outlined in the Policy for the Establishment and Management of Centres. It will provide a report that includes an executive summary of no more than two pages, and assessments of the Centre’s past performance and its proposal to continue. The report will recommend that the Centre either continue or be disestablished. In cases where the review committee recommends that the Centre continue, it should provide recommendations on how the Centre might modify its activities and its proposal to best achieve its objectives.

The review committee shall seek the views of the Director of the Centre on its preliminary report. The Director of the Centre will be required to write a reply to the review committee’s report, responding to its recommendations. In cases where the review committee recommends that the Centre modify its activities and its proposal, the Director of the Centre should indicate which of the recommendations made by the review committee will be incorporated into the proposal to continue the Centre for a further five years, and how this will be achieved.