

## UTS Research Strengths Statement

### Abstract

The UTS Research Strengths Statement sets out the requirements for the establishment, operations, performance and review of UTS Research Strengths. The requirements of this Statement must be addressed in conjunction with the requirements of the Centres Vice-Chancellor’s Directive.

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| Approved by            | Vice-Chancellor   |            |
|                        | Latest amendment: Director, Governance Support Unit<br>(see change history for details) |            |
| Implementation Officer | Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)   |            |
| Relevant to            | All staff and all students  |            |
| Related documents      | <a href="#">Centres Vice-Chancellor’s Directive</a>                                     |            |
| Legislation            |   |            |
| File number            | UR12/942  |            |
| Superseded documents   | UTS Research Strengths Policy   |            |

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### 1. Context

This Statement supports the Centres Vice-Chancellor’s Directive, which sets out the approval requirements, functions and activities of a UTS Centre, as well as the roles

and responsibilities in relation to the operation, review and disestablishment of a Centre. This Statement replaces and updates much of the information previously provided in the 2009 UTS Research Strengths Policy.

## **2. Definition/scope of a Research Strength**

A UTS Research Strength is a research-focused UTS Centre operating within or between faculties in an area of recognised/identified excellence. UTS Research Strengths provide leadership in research performance (scale and quality) through the facilitation and support of research, development and related activities in specific disciplines.

UTS Research Strengths, individually and collectively, are a critical component of the UTS Research Strategy and are responsible for raising the profile, capability and performance of UTS research and facilitating the delivery of the impact from the outcome of UTS research to realise the UTS mission, vision and goals, and Research aims.

It is important to note that UTS Centres are able to conduct research without the need to be designated a Research Strength. To be designated a UTS Research Strength, a research grouping must demonstrate that it has, or has the capacity to develop, the following characteristics.

### **Research program:**

- a clear identity that marks internal cohesion around a research focus in an area of comparative advantage for UTS and a corresponding attractive external 'signature' (advantageous positioning in relation to the external environment, opportunities and constraints)
- a compelling strategy with clear goals, objectives and income potential
- a clear articulation as to the manner in which the research outcomes of the centre will have impact for Australian society, environment, industry
- evidence of being nationally and internationally competitive
- strategic 'fit' with the University's Strategic Plan and Research aims, and
- a coherent, sustainable program of research, addressing significant research problems and/or major issues of importance to the local, national or global community.

### **Researchers:**

- a sufficiently sized team of researchers to provide critical mass as appropriate to the discipline
- high level of productivity/activity of the researchers involved
- achievements of the researchers in relation to discipline-appropriate indicators of quality and peer esteem
- achievements against relevant indicators of impact, at the level of the research group and/or individual researchers, and
- a researcher development program, including mentoring and succession planning.

**Organisational framework:**

- an organisational framework which is self-sustaining in terms of leadership, management and governance and, as appropriate, funding, and
- the option for an external advisory board should this be required in the centre strategy.

**External engagement:**

- research links with external researchers and/or end users, which could include industry partnerships and/or Australian or international research links, and
- as appropriate, the ability to generate significant levels of external research income to increase research capacity at UTS, and
- reputation and influence (peer esteem and standing; leadership in research; influential relationships with government, industry, business and community; international standing and links).

**Faculty support and cross-faculty links:**

- the endorsement of supporting faculty(ies), and
- cross-faculty links that support research and external engagement.

**3. Establishing a Research Strength**

As stated in the Centres Vice-Chancellor's Directive and supporting Guidelines, a Research Strength must be established through the Centre Approval Process, in collaboration with the relevant dean(s), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Provost. The Centre proposal should also be considered by the UTS Research and Research Training Committee (RRTC) for advice to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). The Vice-Chancellor has the authority to approve the establishment of a Centre.

The Centre Approval Process involves the preparation of a constitution and a three-year strategic plan. A proposal to establish a UTS Research Strength should demonstrate how it contributes to the UTS vision and associated Research aims.

**4. Membership of a Research Strength**

A UTS Research Strength is made up of members from within and outside the relevant faculty and may also include members external to UTS (where approved by the Responsible Dean). Members may either be Core or Associate. Members do not report to the Research Strength Director unless directly employed by a Research Strength; however a Director has the right to review membership based on research activity and contribution to the Research Strength.

Directors must work with the supervisors of Core and Associate members to ensure that the expectations and performance requirements of members are reflected in and considered in the members' annual work plans.

**Core membership**

Core membership implies that the researcher is integral to the research program of the Research Strength. The performance of Core members will be used to analyse the performance of the Research Strength; consequently students and support staff

should not be listed as Core members. Core membership is not related to the source of funds for that position.

When a researcher is integral to the research program of more than one Research Strength, he or she may be considered as a Core member of more than one Research Strength and his or her performance statistics will be fractionalised between the relevant Strengths.

### **Associate membership**

An Associate member of a Research Strength is someone who may be involved in components of the Strength's activities, such as an individual project, co-authoring papers or shared supervision of higher degree by research (HDR) students, but whose research is not integral to the delivery of the Research Strength's strategic plan. Associate members do not contribute to Strength performance analysis unless the Strength has developed a specific KPI around Associate member contribution, or has negotiated targets with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) around contribution by Core and Associate members.

## **5. Funding**

Base funding for UTS Research Strengths is provided through the Central Research Budget (CRB) and is augmented by additional faculty funding and external research funding. Funding in the Strength's first year will be negotiated with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) as part of the establishment proposal, based on the provision of a draft three-year strategic plan and budget.

Future funding from the CRB will be based on demonstrated performance against selected targets and strategic direction, as follows:

- (a) overall performance and strategic importance — involving a discussion between Research Strength Director, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Associate Dean (Research), and
- (b) a performance index based on the selected and agreed metrics.

Data on performance metrics (eg publications, revenue, grants and HDR students) will be sourced where available from UTS Business Intelligence Portal (UTS:BI) and/or other enterprise systems, and will be based on Core membership of the Research Strength, unless otherwise agreed with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). Research Strengths should capture data for all agreed metrics for comparison.

It is the responsibility of Research Strength Directors to encourage their members to review and update their research outputs in ResearchMaster regularly, and ensure that information displayed through the UTS web portals is correct (where verified by the Research and Innovation Office).

### **Allowable expenditure**

The CRB funding is provided to assist UTS Research Strengths to increase their ability to attract external, competitive, performance-based research funds. These funds may be used for the following:

- academic and/or research salaries (eg research assistants)
- administrative salaries and other operational costs
- establishing and running External Advisory Committees or Boards

- marketing, including web development and maintenance
- laboratory costs and technical support
- infrastructure including access costs, equipment and software
- travel for conferences and research collaborations
- support for applying for external grants
- direct research support
- publications costs
- running and/or participating in research seminars, conferences, workshops
- visiting academics and researchers
- support and development activities for Early Career Researchers
- PhD stipends, scholarships and top-ups
- other HDR support, including travel and conference costs
- support for Honours students' research projects
- other activities directed towards the achievement of the centre strategy as agreed with the Associate Dean (Research) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

## **6. Performance**

A UTS Research Strength must set performance metrics and targets which demonstrate the achievement of the strategy of the centre and will form the basis for its performance review and CRB funding. Performance metrics must, at a minimum, align with the UTS Key Performance Indicators for Research as well as faculty metrics and goals. These include publications, external research income and HDR supervision.

Research Strengths are also required to set specific and contextual metrics that are relevant to the Strength's strategic direction. A small number of metrics may be selected by the Director and agreed with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Associate Dean (Research) for performance review.

Performance of the Research Strength against its targets will be reviewed annually: first by the relevant Associate Dean (Research) and then discussed with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), at which time future targets will be negotiated. An annual report should be prepared by the Research Strength Director outlining its performance against metrics and the strategic plan, noting any changes that are required to the strategic plan or future targets. The summary of the Research Strength annual reports will be tabled at the RRTC.

Annual reviews will be conducted in accordance with the terms set out in the Centres Vice-Chancellor's Directive and Centres Guidelines.

### **Performance assessment cycle**

For Research Strengths established on or after 1 January 2012, the performance and review cycle will be based around the date of Centre establishment/approval for the first year moving to the standard. For Research Strengths that existed prior to this date, the performance and review cycle will be as follows:

- End of March — membership for the purposes of performance analysis will be sampled for the year for each Strength. This process will not impede personnel changes being dynamically reflected on the research website.

- End of July — annual reports and/or revisions to strategy to be submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), including targets for current year plus three (eg 2014).
- November — performance based-allocations will be calculated.

Incorporated into the performance cycle will be assessment of proposals for new Research Strengths and the disestablishment of existing Research Strengths. The process for this will involve the relevant Associate Dean (Research), RRTC and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

## 7. Disestablishing a Research Strength

Disestablishment of a Research Strength may occur from time to time for the following reasons:

- departure from UTS of key academics
- a change of research strategy at the UTS or faculty level
- where a Research Strength has not met its targets, goals or objectives for a period of three consecutive years.

The Vice-Chancellor has the authority to disestablish Centres. Following a performance review (as outlined in section 6), a recommendation for the disestablishment of a Research Strength may be made to the Vice-Chancellor by the Provost or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), with the advice of the relevant Dean, Associate Dean (Research) and the RRTC.

## 8. Version control and change history

| Effective date | Version | Approved by (date)                                   | Amendment  |
|----------------|---------|--|--|
| 27/06/2012     | 1       | Vice-Chancellor (27/06/2012)                         | Original Statement   |
| 11/02/2015     | 1.1     | Director, Governance Support Unit (GSU) (11/12/2014) | Changes (approved under Delegation 3.17) to implement 2014 Senior Executive restructure. |