

GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH CENTRES

Introduction

Four types of research grouping are formally recognised by the University, they are: Research Groups or Networks, Research Centres, Regional Research Centres and University Research Centres.

Research Groups are intended to provide a focus for a collection of academics, normally based within a single department, in an emerging or established area of expertise. Research Networks are areas of thematic concentration for a collection of academics distributed across more than one department in an emerging or established area of expertise. The scope of activity shall be open to allow for the variation in the nature of these Research Groups. Research Groups & Networks are managed by Schools.

Use of the term “Centre” will mean a group of academic and research staff drawn from one or more Departments, or Schools and shall have the implication of being a “Research Centre”. There are three kinds of Centre: University Research Centre, Research Centre and Regional Research Centre. A University Research Centre is distinguished from a Research Centre and a Regional Research Centre by greater scale according to three main characteristics: (i) size, (ii) disciplinary inclusiveness and (iii) income generation.

A Centre requires commitment by its members to develop a programme in a focused but broader fashion than a single research or consulting project. A Centre will have a formal management and reporting structure, a number of staff (critical mass), income streams from research grant income and preferably also a group of research students whose work is part of the centre. Centres will usually have research as their main focus, but they may also have attached Boards of Study to oversee taught programmes at either or both postgraduate and undergraduate level.

Centres are particularly intended to facilitate and promote interdisciplinary activity in the University. Centres should provide staff members with the means of achieving visibility and raising the profile of their work. Centre status should not be taken to imply permanency to a structure in the same way as Departmental or School status. A key criterion for the success of Centres is that they can provide a flexible structure that facilitates an appropriate level of interaction with a range of stakeholders. Centres are not intended to detract from the work of individual researchers or small groups such as Research Groups or Networks.

Centres will normally be funded by the Schools involved and any start-up and maintenance costs for new centres will have to be approved by relevant Heads of School **before** submission of this form.

Research Centre

A Research Centre means a group of staff in an established area of academic strength having a broader focus than Research Groups/Networks, generally interdisciplinary in nature, recognised nationally and internationally in the discipline(s), and established to take advantage of external opportunities.

The scope of activity for a Research Centre should include but not be limited to these characteristics:

- The Centre will bring together a critical mass of scholars, usually from two or more departments either within a single school or across two or more schools for collaborative work in a clearly defined area over an extended period of time beyond

the life of one specific project. One school should clearly be the major driver, prepared to manage the centre.

- The Centre may employ a small core of dedicated support staff in its own right, including a part-time or full-time Director, drawn from existing University members of staff.
- The Director of the Centre shall report to the Head of School in which the Centre is based.
- The School's contribution to the centre is typically a combination of financial and in-kind support (typically the provision of infrastructure).
- External research staff affiliated with the Research Centre are generally employed on an in-kind basis (as associate appointments) rather than on the basis of payment for services, and may co-supervise postgraduate research students (but must then agree to report through the normal channels as though they were an employed academic member of staff).
- The Centre will sustain internationally excellent research activity in terms of originality, significance, rigour and impact.
- The Centre will provide an institutional platform from which to successfully apply for grant support for projects, develop postgraduate research opportunities and establish groups of postdoctoral activity.
- The Centre will provide a means for collaboration with external partners at other universities and with community and private sector researchers.
- The Centre will sponsor and organise lectures, conferences, colloquia and workshops.
- The Centre will attract academic visitors, those on research leave from elsewhere and other scholars, researchers and academic visitors.
- The Centre will be involved in the public dissemination of research, thereby supporting University work with business, government and the community.
- The Centre will be able to attract research grants that are significant with respect to national norms for the thematic focus of the Centre.

A Research Centre may also be involved in other appropriate activities, such as working with professionals and commercial or governmental organisations to improve professional practice and publishing reports, proceedings or monographs.

Regional Research Centre

Regional Research Centres fulfil three main functions. They are interdisciplinary groupings undertaking regionally-based research that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour and that has very considerable impacts. They host research-led undergraduate and postgraduate teaching programmes, which enable our students to develop regional expertise; and they facilitate the University's international strategy of engagement with the regions themselves, through international student recruitment, researcher and student exchanges, institutional partnerships, and research collaboration.

In addition to the characteristics of a Research Centre above, the scope of activity for a Regional Research Centre should include, but not be limited to, most of the following characteristics:

- The Regional Research Centre will address significant international challenges and problems focused on a particular global region.
- The Regional Research Centre will encompass multiple disciplines and facilitate interdisciplinary work.

- The Regional Research Centre will have national and international collaborations and attract international students and researchers in high volume from the region in question.
- The Regional Research Centre will provide a coordinated University wide focus for external and/or internal stakeholders associated with the region.
- The Regional Research Centre will deliver outstanding impact and public communication of Sussex research focused on the region.
- The Regional Research Centre will have extensive links with external research, business and government groups, which will provide a means for collaboration with external partners at other HEI's and with community and private sector researchers.
- The Regional Research Centre will have sustainable and diverse income streams.

University Research Centre

A University Research Centre is a larger scale interdisciplinary grouping of academics undertaking research that is publicly recognised as world leading in an established area of expertise. Generally, a University Research Centre will have a larger membership, be more inclusive of departments and schools, and generate higher levels of income than Research Centres and Regional Research Centres.

In addition to the characteristics of a Research centre above, the scope of activity for a University Research Centre should include, but not be limited to, most of the following characteristics:

- The University Research Centre will address significant international challenges and problems.
- The University Research Centre will redefine the parameters of one or more disciplines.
- The University Research Centre will have national and international collaborations and attract international students and researchers in high volume.
- The University Research Centre will provide a coordinated University wide focus for external and/or internal stakeholders.
- The University Research Centre will deliver outstanding impact and public communication of Sussex research.
- The University Research Centre will have extensive links with external research, business and government groups, which will provide a means for collaboration with external partners at other HEI's and with community and private sector researchers.
- The University Research Centre will have sustainable and diverse income streams, with revenue that is substantial with respect to national norms for its thematic focus.
- The University Centre will be led by a Director of prominent international standing (who is normally recruited internally but may be recruited from external to the University as appropriate) and will have a recognised core of dedicated support staff.
- The University Research Centre may have recognised space, equipment and facilities.
- Resourcing arrangements are likely to be variable and depend on the exact structure of the University Research Centre and its external linkages. However a significant contribution will be expected from relevant Schools, typically a combination of financial and in-kind support, and including the provision of infrastructure.

Submitting a proposal for new research groupings

Research Groups / Networks

A proposal to establish a Research Group/Network shall be submitted to the Head of School in which it will be based, who shall establish a group to review the proposal. It is recommended that this group comprise of three senior academics, at least one of whom be based outside the Department in which the Research Group/Network will be housed. This Research Group/Network will provide to the Head of School a report with recommendations. Once a Group/Network is formally established, a summary report should be made available to the next available Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee for information.

Research Centres

A proposal to establish a Research Centre shall be submitted in writing to the Director of Interdisciplinary Research using the Proposal for the Creation of a New Research Centre form in Appendix 1. The Director of Interdisciplinary Research shall then establish a group to review the proposal. Such group shall normally comprise of the Head of School in which the Centre will be based and two Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange, one of whom shall be from within the School in which the proposed Centre will be housed. The other will have no anticipated links with the proposed Centre. A report with the recommendations (Appendix 2) from this group shall be presented to the Chair of Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. This report shall then be taken to the next available Committee scheduled for Committee approval. Following recommendation by this Committee for approval it shall then be reported to Senate. No Research Centre shall be allowed to call or otherwise advertise itself as such, until Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee approval is given. A Centre duly endorsed by Research and Knowledge Exchange shall be entitled to use the term Centre in its title.

Any amendment to the focus of the Research Centre or otherwise significant change in function or purpose shall likewise require Research and Knowledge Exchange approval, having undergone an appropriate approvals process. A change in name shall require the approval of Research and Knowledge Exchange.

Regional Research Centres

A proposal to establish a Regional Research Centre shall follow the same procedure as that described above for Research Centres.

University Research Centres

A proposal to establish a University Research Centre shall be submitted in writing to the Director of Interdisciplinary Research using the proposal for the creation of a new Research Centre form in Appendix 1. The Director of Interdisciplinary Research shall then establish a group to review the proposal. Such group shall normally comprise of the Head of School in which the Centre will be based and three Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange, one of whom shall be from within the School in which the proposed Centre will be housed. The other two will have no anticipated links with the proposed Centre. A written report from this group shall be presented to the Chair of Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee with their recommendations on it. This report shall then be taken to the next available Committee scheduled for Committee approval. Following recommendation by this Committee for approval it shall then be reported up to Senate for final approval. No University Research Centre shall be allowed to call or otherwise advertise itself as such, until Senate approval is given. A Centre duly endorsed by Senate shall be entitled to use the term Sussex Centre in its title, and shall be recommended to do so, to distinguish it from Research Centres.

Any amendment to the focus of the University Research Centre or otherwise significant change in function or purpose shall likewise require Senate approval, having undergone an

appropriate approvals process through the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. A major change in name shall require the approval of Senate. A minor change of name shall only require the approval of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and can be done through Chair's action, reported to the next available meeting of said Committee.

Review

Reviews of Research Groups/Networks are the responsibility of Heads of School. Reviews of Centres will normally take place every three years to assess the effectiveness of a Research Centre, Regional Research Centre and/or a University Research Centre. The review process is designed to explore the contribution of a Centre to the University, identify strengths and weaknesses, and promote constructive change. The review process presents an opportunity for a Research Centre, Regional Research Centre and/or a University Research Centre to reflect on its activities over the last three years and formulate a plan for the next period of time.

Reviews are overseen by the Director of Interdisciplinary Research who will establish a group to review the case and report to Research Committee. Meetings may be organised with the Centre Director and other key staff involved in its operation. Where appropriate, the review group can seek external advice. The spirit of the review should be formative and constructive, but the report of the review group must present an explicit recommendation regarding renewal. A review may recommend (i) full renewal of Centre status for a specified period of time (usually a further three years); (ii) conditional renewal of Centre status; (iii) the orderly winding down and closure of a Centre. When a Centre does not submit documentation for review in a timely manner, this will be taken as an indication that there is no desire to seek renewal. In such circumstances, Centre closure will be recommended to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

The review process is designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of particular Centres. Issues such as the precise timing of a review, membership of the review group and the involvement (if considered necessary) of any external advisers will be undertaken in consultation with Centre members. It may be important, for example, for Centre to indicate the field(s) of expertise they see as most useful in reviewers. The overriding remit of the review process should be to foster a vibrant, on-going programme of collaborative research, as a clear expression of Sussex's tradition of interdisciplinarity.

Closure of Centres and Groups/Networks

A Research Centre or Regional Research Centre which wishes to close should provide a summary for the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee as to why they are being wound up. University Research Centres who wish to close should provide a detailed report for the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee outlining why they are no longer able to operate.

Research Groups/Networks which cease to exist should report to the Head of School in which they are housed, who will then provide a report to the Research Committee outlining the reasons for the closure.

Proposal for the creation of a new Research Centre, Regional Research Centre or University Research Centre

Name of proposed centre:			
Host School:			
Name of proposal author:			
Is the proposal for the establishment of a	Research Centre¹		
	Regional Research Centre		
	University Research Centre		

1. RATIONALE
What is the relationship with the University Strategy?
What need is there for a new Centre?
If applicable, state the rationale for University Research Centre rather than Research Centre or Regional Research Centre status.

2. MEMBERSHIP
Who will be members?²
What categories of membership will there be?
What are the proposed members' records of research activity relevant to the Centre?
What commitments are the members prepared to make to the proposed Centre and how is this involvement linked in to their home department?

3. GOVERNANCE
Outline the management and administrative structure of the Centre.
Outline the governance structures, including Advisory Groups.

4. THREE YEAR PLAN

¹ Tick appropriate Centre type

² Include name of the Director or whether this will be an advertised post.

Provide detailed research plans for the next three years.

What external funding is expected through grants?

What budget (income and expenditure) is planned for the next three years?

*Please note any costs associated with setting up and running the centre must be funded by the Schools involved and agreed **before** this proposal is submitted.*

Outline the Centre's communication plan and strategy for achieving impact (including goals for supporting and enabling impact from its research).

What plans are there for the involvement of graduate students and doctoral researchers, including links with the Sussex Doctoral School?

5. ADMINISTRATION

Outline the source(s) of funding for the administrative operation of the Centre?

Will there be a need for office space and what provisions are being made for this?

6. OTHER DETAILS

Who are the main competitors?

What is the expected external profile of the Centre?

**Review of the proposal to establish a Research Centre, Regional Research Centre or
University Research Centre**

Name of Centre:	
Host School:	
Type of Centre proposed (Research / Regional / University Research):	

1. RATIONALE		
a) Has the proposal adequately addressed how such a Centre will fit with the University Strategy?		
Yes	No	
b) Does the proposal adequately justify why a Centre should be established (in the case of a Research Group wishing to become a Research Centre or a Research Centre wishing to become a University Research Centre)?		
Yes	No	
c) Has the proposal outlined what the benefits to research activity will be by the creation of such a Centre?		
Yes	No	
Additional comments (if needed)		

2. MEMBERSHIP		
a) Does the proposal outline who the proposed members are likely to / will be?		
Yes	No	
b) Does the proposal outline what categories of membership there will be?		
Yes	No	
c) Has the proposal detailed what the proposed members records of research activity <u>relevant to the Centre</u> are?		
Yes	No	
d) Has the proposal indicated what commitment the members will be prepared to make to the proposed Centre?		
Yes	No	
e) Has the proposal indicated how this involvement will be linked to their home department?		
Yes	No	
Additional comments (if needed)		

3. GOVERNANCE		
a) Does the proposal adequately demonstrate how the Centre will be managed and administered?		
Yes	No	
b) Does the proposal outline what the governance structures, including advisory boards / groups will be?		
Yes	No	

c) Does the proposal show what protocols and procedures will be followed?		
Yes	No	
d) Does the proposal adequately show how are all of these are consonant with the collaborative and voluntary nature of the Centre?		
Yes	No	
e) Does the proposal outline how the Centre will organise its financial and administrative areas in ways consonant with University practice?		
Yes	No	
f) Does the proposal demonstrate how the Centre will develop a strategy for achieving impact (including goals for supporting and enabling impact from its research)?		
Yes	No	
Additional comments (if needed)		

4. THREE YEAR PLAN		
a) Does the proposal include a detailed research plan for the next three years, including specific input and output targets?		
Yes	No	
b) Does this plan detail what funding is expected through grants?		
Yes	No	
c) Does the proposal provide information on what the budget (income and expenditure) will be over the next three years?		
Yes	No	

d) Does the proposal outline what sources of funding will provide for the administrative operation of the Centre?		
Yes	No	
e) Does the proposal show what provisions have been made for resources such as office space?		
Yes	No	
f) Does the proposal include plans for the involvement of graduate students and doctoral researchers, including links with the Sussex Doctoral School?		
Yes	No	
g) Does the proposal identify who the main competitors are / may be and what the expected external profile of the Centre will be?		
Yes	No	
Additional comments (if needed)		

5. Type of Centre proposed			
a) Does the proposal meet the minimum guidelines for the establishment of a Research / Regional Centre?			
Yes	No		
b) Does the proposal meet the minimum guidelines for the establishment of a University Centre?			
Yes	No	N/A	
If a University Centre, please supply reasons why:			
Additional comments (if needed)			

Name of Reviewer:	
School:	
Position:	
Date:	

Please return the completed form by **[DATE]** to Debbie Foy-Everett, Research & Enterprise Services, Falmer House, D.Foy-Everett@sussex.ac.uk

On behalf of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, I hereby approve the formation of the above named Research Centre / Regional Research Centre / University Research Centre (delete as applicable) with effect from the date below.

Name: _____

Title: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Date: _____