

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS ON THE PURPOSE, ESTABLISHMENT AND GOVERNANCE OF RESEARCH CENTRES AND GROUPS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In October 2021 the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee approved revised governance principles for all categories of research groupings.
- 1.2 The University now recognises only two categories of research groupings, each with a different level of governance. The first category, Centres of Excellence, will be governed by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and at School level. The second category, Research Centres and Groups, will be governed entirely at School level.
- 1.3 The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to Heads of Schools and Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange on the expectations for the establishment and governance of Research Centres and Groups.
- 1.4 The revised governance aims to ensure consistency of approach and clarity of objectives, and will enable Schools to ensure Centres and Groups are appropriately supported and resourced, and are delivering against any agreed Key Performance Indicators.
- 1.5 A one size fits all approach is not expected. Schools are able to use these guidelines, and the example application and review forms provided in Annex 2 and 3, to shape and contribute towards their own governance process.

2 Key features of a Research Centre and Group

2.1 Definition

- 2.1.1 Research Centre: a group of staff, possibly involving PhD students, working on collaborative, world-leading research, and whose work together provides added value over and above their individual research projects. Research Centres may be in new or emerging areas and are often interdisciplinary in nature, undertaking research that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour and that has considerable impacts. Research Centres will be expected to feature prominently in Research Excellence Framework Environment Statements.
- 2.1.2 Research Group: provides a focus for a collection of staff, possibly involving PhD students working on a particular research topic or theme. They may be working in an emerging or established area of expertise.
- 2.1.3 In general, Centres will have more academic staff members than Groups. However, there is no fixed number distinguishing a Centre and a Group, rather this should be done locally within the 'host School' governance structure of Centres and Groups, and will be dependent on the assessed research standing ('Centres' used for internationally excellent research).
- 2.1.4 Individual research labs, with a single PI, are out of scope of these governance guidelines.

2.2 Purpose and Activities

2.2.1 Research Centres and Groups should be engaged in a broad portfolio of activities, such as the following:

- Supporting the development and implementation of School and University research strategy.
- Promoting collaborative, interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange.
- Generating opportunities for research funding, outputs and impact.
- Undertaking high-quality research activity that will contribute to the Research Excellence Framework, and/or the Knowledge Exchange Framework.
- Supporting research career development and creating a positive and inclusive research environment and culture.
- Contributing to the University's KPTs in research.

Schools should outline their expectations in their School-level guidance.

2.2.3 Research Centres and Groups are expected to maintain an up-to-date website to be featured on relevant School webpages.

2.3 Centre and Group Membership

2.3.1 Research Centre and Group members are Sussex staff and students who contribute to the Centre/Group's activities on a regular basis.

2.3.2 Research Centres and Groups will have a named lead or coordinator, who is a member of University academic staff and at, the School's discretion, may be given the title 'Director' although this is not expected to be a standard title. Some Centres/Groups may be led by several individuals. The School will determine the duration of the nominated lead's term as leader and, once that term ends, will ensure that a transparent and open process of replacement or renewal is undertaken.

2.3.3 Research Centre and Group Leads are responsible for leading the activities listed in 2.2.1.

3. Governance

3.1 School level Governance

3.1.1 A one size fits all governance approach is not appropriate. Governance of Research Centres and Groups will be undertaken locally by the School in which the proposed Lead is based (the Host School), which is responsible for establishing appropriate monitoring and periodic review mechanisms. The School process should be visible and transparent.

3.1.2 Schools are able to develop their own process for assessing applications for Research Centres and Groups, to establish a process to monitor their performance and to close Centres/Groups that are no longer research active or those not meeting expectations.

3.1.3 The Head of School will establish a governance structure with responsibility for conducting periodic reviews of Groups and Centres, which has authority to create, maintain or close individual Centres and Groups. A Head may decide to delegate management responsibility of this to their Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange. Information regarding how

Groups and Centres are managed within each School is expected to be communicated with School staff.

- 3.1.4 The Pro-Vice Chancellor Research & Enterprise and deputies will not be involved in reviews of Research Centres and Groups. However, the PVCRE will be the final arbiter in any conflict in the establishment, continuation or ending of a Group of Centre that cannot be resolved within Schools and reserves the executive right to intervene and direct any process affecting governance.

3.2 Process to establish a new Research Centre or Group

- 3.2.1. Schools are responsible for reviewing requests to establish a new Research Centre or Group and should establish an appropriate and transparent application and review process. Suggested templates are provided in Annex 2 and 3 however their use is not mandatory and Schools are able to create their own documents.
- 3.2.2. If the proposed Centre or Group is cross-School, the Host School should include all relevant Schools in the review process.
- 3.2.3. The naming of a new Centre or Group must not overlap or confuse with names of existing Centres/Groups.
- 3.2.4. The use of an individual person's or benefactor's name in a title is not recommended. However, if there is a strong desire to use such a name then appropriate due diligence must be undertaken by the School. Before such a Centre or Group can be approved, the Host Head of School must discuss the proposed naming with the Director of Estates, who is responsible for the University's Naming Policy for Physical and Virtual entities. Please refer to Annex 4 for more information on the protocol and process for naming physical and virtual entities.
- 3.2.5. When a new Research Centre or Group is approved, the Head of School and/or Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange, in consultation with the Lead/Director, will determine the initial term for the Lead/Director. The Head of School and/or Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange, will establish transparent mechanisms to review and renew the term or appoint a successor.
- 3.2.6. The creation of a new Research Centre or Group will be reported to the next Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee by the relevant Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange.
- 3.2.7. Research Centre and Group information will continue to be recorded in University IT systems to enable up to date membership information and an overview of all groupings to be maintained. The Lead/Director will be expected to establish and maintain the website and database membership record. See Annex 1 for details on the process to create a central database record and website for a newly approved Research Centre or Group.

3.3 Review of Research Centres and Groups

- 3.3.1 The primary purpose of the review is to enable Schools to engage in a formative discussion rather than undertake performance management. They enable Schools to assess their portfolio of research groupings and their contribution to supporting School research strategy. It will also provide an opportunity to identify where greater coordination or development might be proposed. Schools will be able to agree different time-scales of review, e.g. biennial, triennial, quadrennial etc. as appropriate.
- 3.3.2 Schools are able to determine whether Research Groups are better evaluated and supported through academic appraisals rather than a separate review process.
- 3.3.3 Schools will determine the format of the periodic report which should enable the Centre or Group to provide information on the following:
- research projects, public engagement, impact and knowledge exchange, doctoral activity and outputs
 - contribution to School research strategy,
 - external funding and awards,
 - delivery against any planned activities and targets,
 - plans for the next period, linked to School(s) research strategy,
 - membership,
 - summary of expenditure if School funding provided.
- 3.3.4 The periodic review should focus on the achievements of the Centre/Group and not the performance of the Lead/Director. The Director's role will be reviewed by the line manager of their substantive academic post and following the usual academic appraisal process.
- 3.3.5 If the Research Centre or Group has established an External Advisory Board or Steering Group, the School may seek their input into the periodic reviews.
- 3.3.6 Schools will determine potential outcomes of a periodic review which may include the following:
- Confirmation that the Research Centre or Group continues
 - Advance notice of potential closure if no longer research active
 - Closure or renaming of the Research Centre or Group
- 3.3.7 Schools are able to determine the timeframe for undertaking periodic reviews of Research Centres and Groups. Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange should inform the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee of significant review outcomes.
- 3.3.8 The Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange should report the closure or renaming of a Research Centre or Group to the next Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, and should notify ITS and the Digital and Creative Media team so that records and websites can be updated.

4 Funding and Resources of Research Centres and Groups

- 4.1 There is no core University funding for Research Centres and Groups. Any funding arrangements will be determined by the Head of School in which the Centre/Group is based.

4.2 Any requests for financial support for Groups/Centres should be considered at their establishment and during periodic reviews. There is no expectation that any financial support should be given by Schools, and is wholly at the discretion of the Head of School.

Annex 1: Process for creating a central database record and website for a newly approved Research Centre/Group;

Annex 2: Template Application to establish a Research Centre or Group;

Annex 3: Template Review Form for an application to establish a Research Centre or Group;

Annex 4: Naming of Physical/Virtual Entities of the University.

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Annex 1: Process for creating a central database record and website for a newly approved Research Centre/Group.

STEP 1: Adding the Centre/Group to the central database

- Contact ITS to request that the new Centre/Group is added to the central database (yellow screens).
- Log into the [ITS Service Desk](#)
- Select 'Request a Service'
- Select 'Service Requests – Business Systems – For changes relating to Central Database'
- You will need to provide the following information:
 - Name of centre/group
 - Owning school
 - Category type, e.g. Research Centre or Research Group
 - Name of Director
 - Name of person who will be responsible for maintaining Centre/Group membership information on the yellow screens
 - Brief description of the Centre/Group
- ITS will notify you when your Centre/Group has been added to the database.

STEP 2: Creating a website

- All Research Centre and Group webpages must be hosted on the Sussex Server.
- Forward the ITS email confirming that the Centre/Group has been added to the database to the Digital and Creative Media Team at dcm@sussex.ac.uk and ask them to
 - (1) Create a website template, and
 - (2) Add the Centre/Group to the list of all research groupings presented on the external Sussex webpages at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/research/about/groups>
- Please read the [Guidance for setting up a website and hosting options](#)

STEP 3: Maintaining Centre/Group membership information on the Central Database

- You are able to create and maintain a list of members associated with your Centre/Group via the central database should you want to. This is not public information but can be used to run Research Dashboard reports related to applications, awards and publications associated with your Research Group.
- To access the Central Database and add details of Centre/Group members go to: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/services/staffservices/businessapplications>
- Please note that ITS recommend using Internet Explorer to access the central database. For those campus machines which do not have Internet Explorer, Microsoft Edge now has an Internet Explorer compatibility mode which enables access.
- Login to the central database and select 'person-group memberships'.
- Follow the instructions in the attached ITS guide on how members can be added and maintained.

Annex 2: Template Application to establish a Research Centre or Group

PART 1: APPLICATION DETAILS		
Proposal author		
Name of proposed centre/group		
Host School		
Proposed Director		
Proposed Deputy Director / Co-Director		
Principal Departments/Schools involved		
PART 2: PURPOSE		
What is the need for the proposed centre/group and how will it support the School's research strategy?		
PART 3: MEMBERSHIP		
Core Members		
Please list all known Core Members. Core Members are generally University of Sussex staff who will actively contribute to the Centre/Group's activities on a regular basis.		
Name	Position	Department
Associate Members		
Please list any known associate members. Associate members are generally research students, external partners and visiting fellows.		
Name	Position	Department
PART 4: MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE		
Please give details of the planned management structures including external advisory boards if appropriate. Please include details of roles and responsibilities and how regularly they will meet.		

PART 5: THREE YEAR PLAN

Please outline the strategic aims and objectives of the centre/group over the next three years including:

- Overview of planned core activities
- Resource plan - please provide a detailed budget if you are requesting School funds to support the activity
- Future income generation and sustainability plans
- Communications strategy
- Key performance indications

PART 6: LIFETIME & EXIT STRATEGY

What is the anticipated lifetime of the proposed centre/group?

Is the centre/group's aim to fulfil short or long-term needs?

Is the centre/group responding to external factors that may be short-lived?

How and when would the centre/group wind down?

Please submit this form electronically to [School contact details]

Annex 3: Template Review Form for an application to establish a Research Centre or Group

REVIEWER DETAILS	
Reviewer name:	
School:	
Position:	
Date:	

CENTRE DETAILS	
Name of Proposed Research Centre/Group	

PURPOSE	
1. Has the proposal adequately outlined the purpose of the proposed centre and evidenced how it will support School research strategy?	
Yes	Yes – in part
No	
Additional comments:	

MEMBERSHIP	
2. Does the proposal outline who the proposed core members are likely to / will be?	
Yes	Yes – in part
No	
3. Does the proposal outline who the proposed associated members are likely to / will be?	
Yes	Yes – in part
No	
Additional comments:	

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	
4. Does the proposal give clear details of the planned management structure and is it appropriate?	
Yes	Yes – in part
No	
Additional comments:	

THREE YEAR PLAN	
5. Does the proposal include appropriate Key Performance Indicators?	
Yes	Yes – in part
No	
6. Does the proposal adequately outline how the Centre/Group will be resourced in the first three years of operation if School funding has not been requested?	
Yes	Yes – in part
No	
7. Does the proposal adequately address how the Centre will generate income over the first three years of operation in support of its sustainability?	
Yes	Yes – in part
No	
8. Does the proposal adequately outline the Centre’s communication strategy?	

Yes	Yes – in part	No	
Additional comments:			

LIFETIME			
9. Does the proposal adequately and realistically outline the anticipated lifetime of the proposed Centre?			
Yes	Yes – in part	No	
10. Does the proposal address if the Centre’s aim is to fulfil short or long-term needs?			
Yes	Yes – in part	No	
11. Does the proposal address whether it is responding to external factors that may be short-lived?			
Yes	Yes – in part	No	
12. Does the proposal address if and how the research centre will wind down?			
Yes	Yes – in part	No	
Additional comments:			

Please submit this form by [DATE] to [SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS]

Please be advised that an anonymised version of your comments may be shown to applicants.

Annex 4: Naming of Physical/Virtual Entities of the University

1. Background

- 1.1 The current policy for the naming of buildings on campus was approved in 1996. In that policy it was agreed, amongst other things that *“academic and general purpose buildings and any future residential developments will normally be given locally-derived names”* and that, *“in order to achieve some consistency in such generic names the names of Sussex hills will be used for such buildings.”*
- 1.2 Annex A to the extant policy proposed some changes to the building names then being utilised. Over time however it has become increasingly apparent that the policy has not been adhered to and various conventions have been applied resulting in, for example the Jubilee and John Maynard Smith¹ buildings.

2. Purpose of Paper

- 2.1 At the time the policy was approved little consideration was given to the opportunities that naming might create for fundraising and/or recognition. As the University continues to grow its fundraising capabilities, and as donations to the University continue to increase in significance, the practice of recognising donors through naming opportunities will become ever more important.
- 2.2 Alongside this, the University has embarked on the most significant capital investment into its estate/infrastructure since its inception. Now seems a sensible time to review the current policy to ensure that it remains current and fit for purpose.

3. Scope

- 3.1 Within scope of this review are a number of physical/virtual entities that would/could benefit from naming. Whilst not strictly limited to they are currently loosely categorised as physical and virtual.
- 3.2 Physical include:
- Academic buildings/Facilities e.g. Lecture Theatres/Rooms
 - Administrative buildings
 - Roads, footpaths, stairs and cycle ways
 - Social spaces and places of congregation
 - Residential Buildings
 - Car parks
 - Memoria e.g. plaques/statues etc.
- 3.3 Virtual includes for example Research Groupings/collaborations/Research Centres/Public Lectures.

4. The Proposed Key Principles to be applied

- 4.1 In developing a naming policy for the University the following principles are proposed that the policy adopted:

¹ Indeed the current policy explicitly excludes naming sites or buildings after past or present employees of the University, unless it is in relation to a major benefaction.

- Supports/strengthens the Sussex brand and values, recognising the heritage already inherent across the University's campus.
- Enable visitors, staff and students to navigate the campus easily and quickly.
- Allow for both memorial and benefactor recognition.
- Is sufficiently flexible to allow any subsequent change of usage/occupancy, if required.
- Is simple to apply in a consistent and transparent manner.

5. Proposals

Academic Buildings/Facilities/Roads

- 5.1 In the absence of any other factors the default approach proposed would be that:
- New buildings be named after Sussex towns and Villages; and
 - The naming of new roads, footpaths, car parks, stairs and cycle ways reflect the geography of/proximity to other features of the campus or akin to similar features of the surroundings in local or Sussex terms

Exceptions

- 5.2 Benefactor Recognition – benefactor naming recognises substantial financial support by donors to the University in accordance with the University's donations policy. In determining the appropriateness of naming a building after a benefactor the following will need to be considered:
- The net present value of the gift (or any previous gifts) to the University. It is normal within the sector that the naming of a building in recognition of a major benefaction would only be made when 20% or more of the cost of the building/facility has been met by the donor. A degree of flexibility should be applied to the application of this target in the case of philanthropic giving at the Naming Panel's (see section 6) discretion.
 - The appropriateness/value of associating the donor's name with the University (and the function of that building).
 - The donor's other contributions to the University, including volunteering activities, awards and assistance with other projects.
- 5.3 Memorial Recognition – memorial naming recognises individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the University of Sussex or society at large and whose lives and personal qualities are deemed by the University to be deserving of being remembered. The individual being recognised should ideally have a relationship to the facility being named. To maintain the significance of the honour, any memorial naming of a building/facility should remain a rare method of honouring individuals and would only normally be conferred once the individual is deceased.
- 5.4 Commercial naming of buildings – in the case of commercial partnerships and/or agreements it may be appropriate to consider a commercial name for a building/facility. These require a thorough degree of due diligence to avoid any appearance of commercial interest and/or conflict of interest. Regarding quantum the University would normally expect >50% of the cost of the building/facility to be met by the commercial party.
- 5.5 Administrative Buildings – in certain cases it is appropriate that a building be given a functional name e.g. the Library, or the Students Union – this does not mean that the University might not also consider any of 1-3 above in addition to the functional name

(where appropriate).

- 5.6 Residential Buildings – the University currently manages 12 residences on campus, the names for which are generally either locally derived e.g. Lewes Court, Stanmer Court or based on other “new” Universities of the early 1960s e.g. Kent House, Lancaster House, Norwich House, York House. For residential buildings the following is proposed that:
- “New” residences would normally follow the conventions outlined in Section 5.1 above, however noting that where there is significant history inherent in a particular development e.g. East Slope then consideration would be given to those names being retained as/when they might be redeveloped.
 - Those residences named after other Universities be re-named at the appropriate juncture to be consistent with the wider naming policy for the University
 - Where a residence comprises multiple buildings then addresses for those buildings would adopt the following conventions:
[Sussex Town/retained name] House (development reference), **Block A/B/C** (building reference) etc., **Flat 1, 2, 3** etc. (this is where there are significant buildings)
[Sussex Town/retained name] (development reference), **[Sussex Town]** (district reference) etc., **Block A/B/C** (building reference, if applicable), **Flat 1,2,3** etc. (where there are multiple small buildings such as town houses in a small group).
 - Within residential developments there are often occasions where communal/open space which might lend itself to naming opportunities.
- 5.7 Social Spaces - in addition to buildings (in whole or in part), be those academic, administrative or residential the University has numerous spaces across the campus that would lend themselves to naming in response to opportunities to recognise benefactors, past academics and significant alumni. The threshold for approval for the naming of these spaces (be that financial or value-in-kind to the University) might be set at a lower bar than for buildings. There will remain some social spaces e.g. Library Square, where the current name is so in-grained in the history of the University that any change to their nomenclature would need there to be considerable benefit to the University to justify.
- 5.8 The University has to date made little tactical use of memoria across the University (statues, plaques, art installations, benches etc.). As with Social Spaces these would naturally lend themselves to recognition e.g. Nobel winners, famous alumni, “lower-tier” benefaction. As for buildings, any award would normally only be once the individual being recognised had deceased.
- 5.9 Where virtual entities/opportunities require (or are requested) to be named then the same principles and procedures as for physical entities should be applied.

6. Procedures

- 6.1 The Naming Policy for the University’s physical and virtual entities will be owned by the Director of Estates, who will have responsible for maintaining the integrity of nomenclature of the campus overall. Any proposal to name or amend the name of a building (part/whole), space or put up memoria will need an outline business case to be prepared and proposed for consideration by the “Naming Panel”. The Business Case will capture both the nature of the request and be required to explore the benefits to the University of that request (and any potential risks of so doing). It will also propose a duration for the usage of that name. All proposals will require the sponsorship of a member of the University’s Leadership Team in order to be considered by the Naming Panel.

- 6.2 It is the responsibility of the sponsor of the proposal to ensure that sufficient due diligence has been undertaken on the name being proposed and that any risks to the University's reputation that the University might expose itself to, should the name be adopted, are clearly highlighted in the Business Case. Should the Panel give "in principle" approval to a name then a further due diligence check will be undertaken by the General Counsel's Office prior to the Vice-Chancellor's approval being sought.
- 6.3 Where the naming proposal is linked and/or conditional on the University's acceptance of a significant donation then that consideration shall be taken first, and only if the University feels able to accept that donation would any subsequent (linked) naming request be considered.
- 6.4 The "Naming Panel" will only be convened at such point where a request is made for business case to be considered – be that where a new building or facility is being constructed or a where a building or facility (in whole/part) is being re-purposed. The panel will comprise:
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor - Chair
 - Director of Estates
 - Director of External Relations
 - Director of Development and Alumni Relations
 - President of the Students' Union

The sponsoring Director or Head of School will be invited to join the Panel for the consideration of their proposal.

Following the review of any submission the Panel will make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor for final approval.

Naming Policy (approved by University Executive Group on 12 March 2018)