

RESEARCH CENTRES

GUIDELINES ON THE PURPOSE, ESTABLISHMENT AND REVIEW OF RESEARCH CENTRES

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction:

- to those seeking university approval for the establishment of Research Centres; and
- to aid Schools in the review of the performance of Research Centres

For information on the purpose, establishment and review of University Research Centres or Research Groups please see the [Overview of Sussex Research Groupings](#).

1. DEFINITION

Research Centres are groups of faculty working on collaborative, world-leading research, and whose work together provides added value over and above their individual research. They are often interdisciplinary in nature, undertaking research that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour and that has considerable impacts.

2. KEY FEATURES OF A RESEARCH CENTRE

2.1 Purpose of a Research Centre

A Research Centre's purpose is to:

- Promote and facilitate collaborative and / or interdisciplinary research
- Act as an externally facing entity representing an area of excellence for Sussex
- Generate research funding, outputs and impact over and above that which individual members might generate in isolation.

2.2 Research activities

A Research Centre will:

- Undertake research collaboratively with researchers externally and in UK.
- Undertake research leading to joint publications, outputs and impact.
- Undertake high-quality activity that will contribute to the REF in terms of environment, impact and outputs.
- Submit joint external grant applications.
- Undertake public engagement activities.
- Maintain an up-to-date externally facing website.
- Organise and run conferences and symposia.
- Sponsor and organise lectures, conferences, colloquia.
- Have partnerships with non-academic partners.

2.3 Teaching activities

A Research Centre will:

- Co-supervise doctoral students

- Provide a supportive environment for early career researcher development.

A Research Centre may offer:

- Masters programmes
- Postgraduate training
- Postgraduate seminars
- Masterclasses

2.4 Management and Reporting

Management

- Research Centres will normally be led by a member of Sussex faculty who is given the title 'Director'.
- For details on the responsibilities of Directors see section 3 'Duties and Responsibilities of Directors'
- Centres are expected to develop and maintain a three-year plan and communications strategy, and may also be required to submit an annual plan to their Head of School.
- The term of the Director will be determined by the Head of School.
- Beyond the Director, Centres are expected to have a management group and /or advisory board where appropriate.

Reporting

The reporting requirements for a Research Centre will be defined by the Head of School in which the centre is based.

2.5 Membership

Research Centre members will:

- Be committed to collaborative working
- Take an active interest in other member's work
- Have signed up to a core set of values

A Research Centre can include:

- Smaller research groups, networks or labs that fit within the larger centre structure
- Associated members: generally visiting academics and PhD students
- Core members: generally members of Sussex faculty who contribute to the centre's activities on a regular basis.

2.6 Funding and resources

- There is no core university funding for Research Centres.
- Funding arrangements will be defined by the Head of School
- Research Centres are expected to seek external funding for their activities

3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTORS

The Centre Director will report to the Head of School in which the Centre is based.

- Approval process will include discussion with Pro-Vice Chancellor Research, Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Interdisciplinary Research) and one Centre Director to discuss the expectations of this leadership role.

The University expects that Research Centre Directors will be research leaders, capable of:

- Maintaining the confidence and cooperation of centre members.
- Developing the wider centre aims in addition to their own research focus.
- Fostering a supportive and collaborative research environment for all members, including early career researchers.

Research Centre Directors are responsible for:

- Managing any centre budget and administrative matters for the Centre
- Ensuring the centre's three-year plan is aligned with the University's Strategic Plan.
- Encouraging and supporting the development of applications for external research funding.
- Working in collaboration with the Research Centre's governance committee where relevant.

4. ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

Stage 1: Thinking of becoming a Research Centre

If you are thinking of applying to become a Research Centre we strongly advise you contact Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Interdisciplinary Research) in the first instance.

Centres will normally be funded by the Schools involved and any start-up and maintenance costs for the new centre must be approved by the relevant Heads of School before an application is submitted

Stage 2: Applying

A completed Research Centre Application form should be submitted to C.Brownbridge@sussex.ac.uk.

Stage 3: Review

The application will be reviewed by a panel generally comprising:

- Pro-Vice Chancellor Research
- Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor Interdisciplinary Research
- Head of School in which the Centre is based
- Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange for the host School
- A Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange with no links to the proposed centre.

Stage 4: Approval

If approved the decision will be reported to Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

Sussex Research set up the Centre's database record. The Director will then be expected to establish and maintain the website and database membership record.

5. REVIEW OF RESEARCH CENTRES

Once approved, Research Centres are reviewed according to their host School's procedures.

6. CLOSURE

Host Schools may decide upon the closure of centres, subject to their review procedures.

Where Centre Directors wish to close their centre, they should notify both their Head of School and the Sussex Research Initiatives Officer (C.Brownbridge@sussex.ac.uk).