

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

RKT MANAGEMENT GROUP14 DECEMBER 2010

POLICY ON CENTRES**1. Purpose and Scope**

- 1.1 The University encourages the establishment of research centres¹ as a framework for promoting and facilitating interdisciplinary research and postgraduate teaching initiatives. They provide a vehicle for the University to achieve its strategic aims in relation to research excellence, impact and increasing research income.
- 1.2 There are two types of centres – College Centres and University Centres. The designation as a College or University Centre will depend on the purpose, scope and standing of the proposed activities of the Centre. This policy covers the establishment, management and closure of centres.

2. Criteria for Establishment

- 2.1 The generic criteria for the establishment of both College and University Centres are as follows:
 - Recognised as (or have the potential to become) excellent in the defined areas for research according to publications, environment and impact (i.e. as measured against the REF criteria for Grades 3* and 4*),
 - Able to demonstrate the potential to generate significant external funding: for College Centres, typically £20k-£100k pa in Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) and £300k-£500k pa in Science, Technology, Engineering Mathematics and Medicine (STEM/M) and for University Centres, at least £100k pa in HASS and at least £500k pa in STEM/M.
 - Have existing (or clear plans to develop) external national and/or international partnerships.
 - Have plans to develop and capture the impact of the research through knowledge transfer and user engagement.
 - Show potential for sustained activity (typically over at least 5 years) which will reflect well upon the University.
 - Not substantially dependent on a single individual.
 - Have mechanisms to promote the work of the centre and for dissemination of results through workshops, websites and conferences as well as publications.
 - Provide a focus for postgraduate activity including training and the attraction of externally funded studentships.
- 2.2 In addition to these generic criteria **University Centres** must also:
 - Be of strategic importance to the University.
 - Have (or the potential to have) international standing in the field and act as ‘flagships’ for the University.
 - Promote and support interdisciplinary research activity across one or more Colleges.
 - Able to seek significant University funding for pump-priming or for capital investment.

¹ This policy does not cover institutes such as the Institute of Arab & Islamic Studies, Institute of Cornish Studies, and the Environment and Sustainability Institute which are exceptional and established on a case by case basis

3. College Centres

- 3.1 It is expected that the vast majority of centres will fall in this category. Colleges will establish centres within the context of their strategic plans which meet the criteria specified in section 2 above. Each new centre must be reported through Dual Assurance for Research & Knowledge Transfer (RKT) and added to the list of centres on the University website.
- 3.2 Responsibility for the management of centres rests with the College. College procedures in areas such as staffing, postgraduate supervision, quality standards and ethical procedures will apply. The website and promotional material for the Centre must conform to University requirements. The College Dean will appoint a Director.
- 3.3 Colleges should monitor the activity and performance of its centres and formally review and confirm or discontinue their operation on a three-yearly cycle.
- 3.4 A standard form for reporting to Dual Assurance on an annual basis is attached (Annex 1).

4. University Centres

4.1 Establishment

- (i) Proposals for the establishment of a University Centre should be made on the form attached (Annex 2).
- (ii) Centres will be established by recommendation to Council through Dual Assurance for RKT.

4.2 Management

- (i) Where more than one College is involved, the Deans concerned must agree which College will have overall responsibility for the management of the Centre and its finances.
- (ii) Deans must agree in advance those projects and associated income which can be attributed to the Centre. The distribution of earnings will be agreed on a case by case basis depending on relative input.
- (iii) The College Dean(s) must appoint a Director.
- (iv) Centres must establish a Board of Management which will include the Dean of the College responsible and a representative from each other participating Colleges. The membership of the Board must be approved by Dual Assurance for RKT. The Board will meet at least once a term. If appropriate, an Advisory Board may also be established and will include members from outside the University. Membership of the Advisory Board is also subject to Dual Assurance approval.

4.3 Monitoring

- (i) Following Council's decision to establish the Centre, the Director must produce a plan covering the first three years of operation for approval first by the Board of Management and then by Dual Assurance for RKT.
- (ii) Annual reports must be provided by the Director to the Board of Management and through it to Dual Assurance RKT.
- (iii) Centres will be reviewed by Council, through DA for Research, on a three-yearly cycle.
- (iv) Centre budgets will be monitored within the Business Plan of the responsible College. Centres will maintain separate project accounts which, for University purposes, will be consolidated into the accounts of the School concerned.

4.4 Resources

University Centres will be deemed of sufficient standing to be eligible for support from central University resources including the Strategic Development Fund. Council, through the DA process, will wish to promote the creation of major centres through pump-priming funding or other specific arrangements which emerge during the business planning process.

4.5 Closure

Centres which do not meet aspirations in terms of standing and purpose or where the level of activities cannot be sustained at the appropriate level will be closed on the recommendation of Board of Management (through Dual Assurance) to Council.

October 2001
Approved by APC on 9 October 2001 (Minute 01.72)
APC replaced by SPaRC 24 Jan 06
Revised September 2009
Revised December 2010

ANNEX 1Annual Report for Research Centres

Name of Centre	
College	
Director	
Staff Associated with the Centre	
PhD students	
MA Programmes and number of students	

Report to cover the following headings:

- Aims and Objectives
- Activities and Achievements
- User Engagement, and impact; collaborations and partner involvement
- International collaboration (visitors, joint projects, etc.)
- External Research Funding
- Publications
- Future Developments (including specific goals/targets for the coming year)

Annex 2Application to Establish a University Research Centre

Name of Centre	
Lead College	
Additional College(s) involved	
Director	
Management Board	
External Advisory Board	
Staff Associated with the Centre	
PhD students	
MA Programmes and number of students	
Current grant portfolio	

Proposal should outline the following:

- Rationale for University Research Centre Status
- Summary of purpose and activities
- Aims and Objectives
- Evidence of (or potential for) International Standing
- Evidence and proposals for User Engagement, impact; collaborations and partner involvement
- Evidence and proposals to secure appropriate levels of external research funding
- Assessment of national and international competitors / collaborators
- Future Developments (including specific goals/targets for the coming year)
- Request for University investment

Before completing the form applicants should read the University's Policy on Centres available at the following web address: <http://www.exeter.ac.uk>.....

The completed form must be countersigned by the Dean of College to be responsible for the centre and sent to Research & Knowledge Transfer.