Research Management Vice-Chancellor's Directive

Abstract
This Directive outlines the requirements for the establishment and management of research projects and fellowships conducted by UTS academic staff and higher degree research students (HDR students).

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<td>Policy approved</td>
<td>05/06/2014</td>
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Approved by
Vice-Chancellor

Implementation Officer
Director, Research and Innovation Office

Relevant to
All staff and all students

Related documents
**UTS documents**
- Authorship Vice-Chancellor’s Directive
- Centres Vice-Chancellor’s Directive
- Code of Conduct
- Competitive Neutrality and Pricing (Policy on)
- Fundraising Policy and Fundraising Approval Procedures (UTS staff only)
- Honorary Appointments Vice-Chancellor’s Directive
- Open Access Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Recruitment and Appointment Vice-Chancellor’s Directive
- Research Data Management Vice-Chancellor’s Directive

Research Financial Management:
- Costing and Pricing of Research Projects Vice-Chancellor’s Directive (UTS staff only)
- Research Investment Accounts Procedures (UTS staff only)
- Research Funding from the Tobacco Industry Policy
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1. Purpose

Research is a core function of the University, contributing greatly to its objectives, strategic goals and to the advancement of knowledge and learning. Research outputs are also linked to the University’s ranking and reputation as a tertiary education institution, both nationally and internationally.

This Research Management Vice-Chancellor’s Directive outlines the requirements for the development, establishment and management of externally and internally funded and unfunded research projects, in order to optimise the quality of the research
undertaken at UTS and ensure effective utilisation of the direct and indirect investment committed to UTS research by the University and external funders.

2. Scope

This Directive identifies the requirements for UTS staff and higher degree research students (HDR students) involved in managing research projects and any associated funding.

The Director, Research and Innovation Office will implement this Directive with the support of faculty and institute research management staff and UTS support units.

3. Definitions

The following definitions are applicable to this Directive, and are in addition to those outlined in Schedule 1, Student Rules.

Authorised delegate means the holder of a position that has a delegation in respect of research management under section 5 of the Standing Delegations of Authority.

Donation means a voluntary transfer of money or property to the University by way of benefaction, where the donor receives no material benefit from the University in return.

Donor means any person or organisation making a donation to the University.

Faculty means an organisational unit identified by the University as a faculty and, for the purposes of this Directive, includes the Graduate School of Health.

First-Named Chief Investigator (FNCI) means the named UTS researcher responsible for the development, conduct, reporting and delivery of research project outcomes and who is named first in any listing of research team members.

Funding body means any person or organisation external to UTS that provides funding for the conduct of research.

Gift — see donation.

Institute means an institute established by UTS under the Centres Vice-Chancellor’s Directive for the primary purpose of conducting research.

National Competitive Grants mean research grants awarded by funding authorities listed on the Australian Competitive Grants Register published annually by the Australian Government.

OPeN means the University’s online research project notification system within ResearchMaster.

Project agreement (sometimes called a funding agreement by some funding bodies) means any document including but not limited to a contract for research services, an acceptance letter, a work order or internal approval, that commits the University to the receipt of funds or to otherwise undertake a research project.

Research project means a project that has investigation as a primary objective and has the potential to contribute new knowledge, both theoretical and practical.
4. **Directive principles**

The [UTS Research Strategy](#) aims to increase the scale, quality and impact of research in selected discipline fields so that the University develops a global reputation for research excellence.

The University’s research reputation rests on the quality of its research, as well as the standard of its research management governance, policies and practices.

This Directive identifies the University’s requirements for effective research project management in order to support the implementation of its Research Strategy through the submission of high-quality research funding applications, the timely execution of project agreements and the effective management of UTS research projects.

5. **Directive statements**

5.1 **Research funding applications to be administered by UTS**

All external research project funding applications — including but not limited to competitive grants, tenders, contract research proposals, intellectual property commercialisation and fellowships — must be approved for submission to any external funding bodies in accordance with section 5 in the [Standing Delegations of Authority](#), and be recorded in the University’s online research project notification system (OPeN).

UTS considers top-ups to higher degree research (HDR) scholarship stipends — whether funded internally or externally — to be a research project. As such, applications for these stipend top-ups must be submitted and accepted in accordance with this Directive.

HDR scholarship top-up schemes funded by the University are managed by the Graduate Research School.

All research funding applications shall be reviewed and approved by the FNCI’s faculty/institute prior to or in tandem with their submission to Research and Innovation Office (RIO). In approving funding applications for submission to funding bodies, the faculty/institute will determine that:

- the scope of the research project is consistent with the research program and objectives of the faculty/institute
- the research project application is well written and coherent
- all risks associated with the research project are acceptable and can be managed by the faculty/institute (see the [Risk Management Policy](#))
- the UTS investigators named on the application have the time to undertake the research project as proposed
- the infrastructure, materials and human resources required to complete the research project are already available or can be sourced from the requested funding
- a research project budget appropriate to the estimated value, duration and resource requirements has been completed
University cash commitments in the research project budget have an identified fund source and have prior approval by an officer authorised to expend those funds.

University in-kind commitments in the project budget (for example, the use of human resources, labs or equipment) have an identified source, can be substantiated and have been approved by an officer authorised to commit those resources.

Full account has been taken of University infrastructure costs for the type of work to be undertaken.

An online research project notification has been completed and submitted in the University’s OPeN system.

Once approved by the faculty/institute, RIO will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the research funding application meets the funding body’s eligibility requirements and complies with all funding rules and application guidelines.

The authorised delegates in RIO will not submit applications for funding that have not been endorsed by the relevant faculty/institute through the OPeN system.

For large funding calls, such as those by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), deadlines for compliance checking of funding applications will be set by RIO. Proposals submitted outside of these deadlines will only be considered under exceptional circumstances. This is to allow sufficient time for compliance activities by the faculty/institute, RIO and/or the UTS Development Office, and to avoid potential harm to the University’s reputation as a research provider.

Research project applications seeking funding from a philanthropic organisation or individual as a gift or donation must be submitted to the Development Office for review and feedback — in line with the Fundraising Approval Procedures (UTS staff only) — before submission to the funding body by the delegate authorised in the Standing Delegations of Authority.

Applications for research project funding from internal sources at UTS must be approved by the host faculty prior to submission, where applicable, to RIO or any other UTS division.

Faculties and institutes may identify their own requirements for the allocation of research project funding from their own resources.

**5.2 Acceptance of research funding**

All external research project funding awarded to the University or its staff must be accepted by a formal project agreement with the funding body and in accordance with the Standing Delegations of Authority (particularly section 5). RIO will, on behalf of the University, seek the advice of UTS Legal on any terms and conditions in the project agreement that may expose the University to legal risk.

Where an offer of research funding is substantially below the projected cost of the research outlined in the project proposal, there may be significant financial risks to the University in agreeing to undertake the project at that reduced level of funding. To ensure any potential financial risks are identified and evaluated, an appropriate process to review the research project objectives and budget will be instigated.
Where the offer of research funding is of a value that is less than 70 per cent of that requested in the funding application, and where that request was valued at $100K or more, the offer will not be accepted by the authorised delegate under Delegation 5.1 until the FNCI has reviewed and revised the project objectives and budget, and obtained relevant faculty/institute approval to proceed.

The impact of reduced funding, however, may vary between disciplines. Accordingly, each faculty/institute may vary the 70 per cent threshold, by identifying the threshold levels of reduced funding that would trigger a review process in its disciplines and advising RIO of these thresholds.

For National Competitive Grants, the revision of research project objectives following offers of reduced funding may warrant formal variations to the conditions of grant awards. RIO will determine when it is necessary to seek formal variations to the conditions of grant awards and submit them on behalf of the University.

5.3 Unfunded research projects
In exceptional circumstances, research projects undertaken by staff members of the University will not require external funding. These projects may however involve the use of University cash and in-kind resources.

Where an unfunded research project has been commissioned by an external body or individual, it must be formally identified and approved through the OPeN project notification system. Any use of University resources for these unfunded research projects needs to be fully identified and costed in OPeN.

Unfunded research programs generated by a researcher’s own enquiry will be reviewed and authorised through the annual academic staff work-planning process. At its discretion, each faculty is required to determine and, if appropriate to the faculty and discipline area, introduce specific project notification and reporting protocols for this category of unfunded research project.

5.4 Research project commencement
Externally and internally funded and unfunded research projects are not permitted to commence until all applicable project agreements have been executed, a project account established and any necessary human ethics, animal care and ethics, and biosafety approvals have been obtained. For the University’s ethics requirements, see UTS Research: Ethics.

5.5 Research project management and reporting
The FNCI is responsible for the conduct of the research and the management, administration and reporting requirements of the research project. This includes the management of budget and project resources in accordance with any relevant funding rules and the terms of the project agreement. The FNCI is also bound by the University’s Code of Conduct, Responsible Conduct of Research Policy and any associated University ethics requirements (see UTS Research: Ethics).

Any changes to the agreed project objectives, personnel, timetable and delivery of milestones that arise in the course of the project must be reported to the faculty and RIO, to determine if a variation to the project agreement or other action (including termination and relinquishment) is required under the project agreement.
All project expenditure will be authorised in accordance with the Standing Delegations of Authority.

The procurement of all research project services and materials will be approved and undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Policy.

The appointment of research project personnel will be made in accordance with UTS Human Resource Policies and Directives.

The engagement of UTS-enrolled HDR students in externally funded research projects will be in accordance with University policy and student rules.

FSU or its delegates will raise all invoices for project funding on behalf of the FNCI in accordance with the project agreement and manage the payment schedule.

5.6 Research project completion
On completion of the research project, the FNCI will provide a final report to the faculty/institute and RIO in accordance with the project agreement or, when no date is specified in the project agreement, within six months of project completion.

UTS recognises that the research outputs of many projects will take time to materialise. The emphasis on final reporting as outlined in this Directive is the financial acquittal of the project, although the identification of known research outputs at the time of final reporting is encouraged.

FSU is responsible for coordinating with faculties any financial reconciliation and audited statements for the project, as specified in the project agreement, and the subsequent closure of research project accounts.

6. Roles and responsibilities
The roles and responsibilities here are consistent with the Standing Delegations of Authority.

Accountable Officer: the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Directive by UTS staff and HDR students, and for proposing any necessary changes to the Directive.

Implementation Officer: the Director, Research and Innovation Office is the primary point of contact for advice on implementing and administrating the Directive, for establishing and maintaining the official file, for also proposing amendments as required and managing the consultation process when the Directive is due for review.

Other positions and committees
Associate Deans (Research) and Institute Directors are responsible for managing faculty and institute accountabilities in this Directive.

Research and Innovation Office (RIO) is responsible for managing the approval process by the authorised delegate of all research project applications to external funding bodies and the acceptance of research funding offered to the University from those external funding bodies. RIO also manages the approval and execution of any variations to research project agreements and ensures that all reporting requirements under a research project agreement have been fulfilled at completion of the project.
**First-Named Chief Investigator (FNCI)** is responsible for research project proposal development; the conduct of approved the research projects and the management of the resources allocated to research projects.

**Financial Services Unit (FSU)** is responsible for the raising of invoices under the terms of research project agreements and the preparation of any audited statements required for the acquittal of any research project.

**Faculties and institutes** are responsible for reviewing and approving research project applications from FNCIs in their jurisdictions for submission to RIO, and for reviewing and approving research projects where the level of awarded funding triggers the review process in clause 5.2 of this Directive. Faculties and institutes are also responsible for identifying and implementing management processes for unfunded research that is not externally commissioned.

**Development Office** is responsible for the implementation of the requirements of the Fundraising Approval Procedures for research projects seeking funding from philanthropic organisations or by donation or gift.

**Graduate Research School** is responsible for the management of doctoral scholarship top-up schemes funded by the University.

### 7. Version control and change history

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