



UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG

Policy: UJ Research Structures

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<p style="text-align: center;">UJ documents (e.g. Policies, Regulations, Guidelines, Contracts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UJ Research Policy and Strategy • UJ Research Committee Charter • Report on Structural Definitions adopted by other HEIs 	<p style="text-align: center;">Other (e.g. Legislation, DoE and HEQC directives and guidelines)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRF IRDP; • NRF TRDP; • DST Strategic Plan.
<p>Stakeholders affected by this document (units and divisions who should be familiar with it):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Executives; • Executive Deans/Directors; • all academic employees; • Directors and Heads of Departments of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ academic units; ○ academic administration support services; ○ service and support divisions; 	
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1. PREAMBLE

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) inherited several disparate research entities and structures from its legacy institutions. As a result, there is a need to formalize research structures and link their operations to institutional strategic plans. Formally-established research structures play an important role in directing a focused research agenda and enhancing the image of the institution. They also play an important role in attracting external research funds. Given this, it is essential to provide clear directives concerning the functioning of existing and the establishment of new research structures. The current policy on research structures is formulated according to the most prevalent practices in the South African Higher Education sector, and integrates historic and present National Research Fund (NRF) and Department of Science and Technology (DST) definitions and frameworks.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 The NRF Institutional Research Development Programme (IRDP) Framework (2007-2011) sets out definitions for both “developing” and “developed” Research Niche Areas (RNAs), while the NRF Technikon Research Development Programme (TRDP) Framework (2002-2007) presented definitions for Research Units and Research Centers.

Other prominent research funders (DST, TELKOM, Sasol, MRC, Mintek, ESKOM, etc) have adopted similar definitions to be used within the Higher Education system. Therefore, the UJ adopts an approach that:

- where a research entity has been subject to external review by a credible (as determined by the URC) external body and process, the result of which is the awarding of a title to that entity, then the University will support and promote the utilization of that title; and
- the University will formally recognize the corresponding structure within the university system of research structures, and will accord it the rights and privileges accorded other university research structures.

2.2 In regard to the concept of Research Unit or group, the stipulations above mean that the term refers to a researcher or team of researchers in or between departments or faculties in reference to a specific project or strategic domain of research. The research unit or group falls outside the structures defined in Table 1 and the governance of the research unit or group falls within the domain of faculty structures.

2.3 In regard to the concept of “Research Niche Area (RNA)”, the above stipulations specifically imply that the UJ:

- adopts the NRF definition of a Research Niche Area (as set out in the table below, slightly modified from the original NRF definition);
- will allow and encourage NRF-approved RNAs to refer to themselves and to be referred to as the “Research Niche Area for ... (specific title)”;
- recognizes that RNA is a title assigned from outside the UJ; and, furthermore, it will not assign the title of RNA to any internal research structure(s).

2.4 In regard to the concept of “Centre of Excellence (CoE)”, the two stipulations above imply that the UJ:

- accepts the non-identical NRF and Telkom definitions of a Centre of Excellence; and
- will allow and encourage NRF- or Telkom-approved CoEs to refer to themselves and to be referred to as the “NRF/DST or Telkom Centre of Excellence for ... (specific title)”;
- recognizes that ‘Centre of Excellence’ is a title assigned from outside the UJ; and, furthermore, it will not assign the title of ‘Centre of Excellence’ to any internal research structure(s).

3 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a systematic approach to the naming and establishment of research structures and create an objective basis for comparison across the range of research structures in the UJ. Simultaneously, it provides a guideline for the classification of the existing and future UJ research structures.

4 SCOPE

This policy applies to all faculties and relevant divisions at the University.

5 PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 No university research activities, groups or entities may assume either of the following titles: Centre; Centre of Excellence; Niche Area; or Institute without seeking approval in terms of this policy.
- 5.2 All university research activities or structures existing at the time of approval of this policy by Senate who denote themselves utilizing either of the terms listed above will be reviewed to examine the extent to which they align with the stipulations of the Policy Document; the timetable and operational roll-out of this review will be formulated by the DVC: Research, Innovation and Advancement and the University Research Committee (URC) in consultation with faculties and the relevant divisions.
- 5.3 The review will express an opinion on the extent to which the existing research structures align with the stipulations of the Policy, and the URC will use this review to recommend an appropriate title for the specific research structure, or an action plan to address a possible mismatch between the title of a university entity and this policy.
- 5.4 All future research activities or structures that would wish to utilize one of the terms mentioned above, or any other structural term similarly denoting an organizational entity, will need to submit to the URC a rationale for the specific term of choice.
- 5.5 In exceptional instances and on the basis of arguments or existing contractual obligations put forward by the respective research group, activity or entity the URC may decide to recommend to Senate approval of a term or title, even where the research activity, group or entity does not align with the provisions of the Policy, provided the URC identifies and presents cogent reasons for such a recommendation and provided such a deviation is an exception to the rule.

- 5.6 All URC recommendations on the titles of research activities or structures, or on action plans as mentioned above, will be submitted to Senate for consideration and approval.
- 5.7 Once a University research activity or entity has received approval to utilize either of the terms listed above, it retains the right to that use unless a subsequent review suggests otherwise; such reviews must be conducted at least once every four years, unless the URC determines a shorter period.
- 5.8 Irrespective of the substance or timing of any prior approval by Senate to any research activity, group or entity for the use of either of the titles listed above, Senate may at any time withdraw such permission on the recommendation of the URC.
- 5.9 All researchers are in the first instance members of staff and therefore linked to a specific faculty or division, and that the research entities consequently are faculty or division structures that operate and report within established faculties or divisions; except for joint research entities where the Director reports to a Board.
- 5.10 The management structure for a Research Center need to be determined by a single charter, but at the same time retain flexibility taking into account all relevant factors such as inter-disciplinary research, focus, function, etc.

6 CLASSIFICATION OF UJ RESEARCH STRUCTURES

The definitions developed by the NRF were used to formulate the descriptive definitions for a Research Niche Area and a Research Centre, while the definition of a Research Institute was strongly informed by approaches adopted in other South African Higher Education Institutions. Accordingly, the definitions set out in Table 1 will be used as guidelines by the URC in considering whether to allow the use of either of the terms by a University research or academic entity, and will inform the URC's recommendation to Senate in this regard. The guidelines set forth would apply to existing and future research entities with provision for a gradual compliance. Also, the classification allows faculties and divisions to exercise flexibility in areas that might not be practically feasible to attain the stipulated requirements.

The following classification of research structures is adopted:

- Research Niche Area
- Research Centre
- Research Institute

TABLE 1. Guidelines for the Classification of UJ Research Structures

Dimension	Research Niche Area (RNA)	Research Centre (RC)	Research Institute (RI)
Focus/ Niche	<p>A RNA is a title assigned from outside the UJ by for example the NRF or Telkom.</p> <p>Research mandate may be located within a single discipline or may span across disciplines.</p>	<p>A RC is based in a Faculty or more than one Faculty.</p> <p>Research mandate may be located within a single discipline or may span across disciplines.</p> <p>Identified research area must be aligned with the institutional plan of the university and/or a focus in a South African research imperative.</p>	<p>A RI is based in a Faculty/ies or outside a Faculty/ies.</p> <p>Broad research mandate that spans across disciplines and implies extensive collaboration.</p> <p>Identified research area must be aligned with a focus in a South African research imperative and/or an external research imperative (national or international).</p>
Plans, resourcing & output	<p>Department/faculty approved business plan.</p> <p>Source of funds is the donor institution, for example DST/NRF.</p>	<p>Faculty and URC approved business plan whose budget provides for external contributions.</p> <p>Mostly funded by the university but must strive to attract significant external research funds.</p>	<p>Faculty/University and funder approved five-year business plan whose budget provides for external contributions</p> <p>Source of funding must come primarily from external sources.</p>
Governance	<p>A RNA is managed by the grant holder and reports to a Dean/s and the funder/s.</p> <p>RNA normally has no formal structure, rather adopting a more informal networking approach to a collection of associated research activities/projects. A RNA falls under the governance structure of the faculty or division.</p>	<p>A RC is managed by a Director reporting to a HOD/Dean(s) or a Faculty Board(s).</p> <p>A RC is expected to compile an annual report which must be submitted to the respective Faculty Board and the URC.</p> <p>A RC is expected to establish a formal Charter, which must be approved by the Faculty Board and noted by the URC and Senate. A RC falls under the governance structure of a faculty/ies.</p>	<p>A RI is managed by a Director who reports to the governing board.</p> <p>A RI reports to a governing board appointed through a nomination process by the funders(s) and University. The University has majority representation on the governing board, unless under exceptional circumstances Senate or, in the case of urgency, the MEC, approves that significant representation will suffice.</p> <p>A RI must prepare an annual budget and compile an annual report which must be submitted to the URC and approved by the governing board.</p> <p>A RI is established under a formal Charter of the University. Irrespective of whether a RI is based in or outside a faculty/ faculties, the Charter must be approved by the funder(s) and the Faculty Board(s) within which domain(s) the activities of the RI fall, as well as Senate, and must be noted by the URC.</p>