DIVISION OF HUMANITIES

Research Clusters

This document supersedes the previous guidelines on Research Clusters and Networks dated August 2006. With the issue of this document, the category of ‘Network’ will be discontinued and all new research groups formally recognised and promoted by the Division of Humanities will be called ‘Research Clusters’.

Definition

A Research Cluster is a formally recognised group of researchers whose research expertise is applied either to a common area, field, or theme, or who are involved in a collaborative research project, or set of related projects. Collectively, the quality-assured research publications of the staff involved should constitute a substantial body of knowledge, while the research record of each member of the Cluster should equip him or her to provide research-informed expert supervision to postgraduate students writing theses in the field of the researcher.

Purpose

Research Clusters exist to:

- Bring together, and provide a supportive and stimulating collegial context for researchers, postgraduate students, and postdoctoral fellows working on topics of common or related interest, with the aim of increasing the PBRF-eligible research outputs of the Division.
- Attract internal and external research funding for collaborative research, with the aim of being upgraded to a Research Theme or a Research Centre funded by the University.
- Generate, and promote awareness of, research opportunities for potential postgraduate students, and for research collaborations with staff and students in other New Zealand and overseas universities.

Criteria for Formal Recognition

Recognition as a ‘Research Cluster’ requires the approval of the Division of Humanities Research Committee, based upon a detailed application.

In appraising applications, the Research Committee will use the following guidelines:

1. There must be a minimum of three researchers working on a common theme, or in a common area of study (e.g. ‘Postcolonial Studies’). Members of a Research Cluster may be individual scholars pursuing independent projects in a related field, or scholars pursuing collaborative research as part of a team.
2. All researchers listed in the Research Cluster must have a record of research outputs that would qualify them to be classified as ‘research active’ under the PBRF, or, if they are emerging researchers, a developing platform of research in the area of the cluster that can be expected to yield a sufficient number of research outputs within three years for them to be appraised as ‘research active’ under the PBRF.
3. The cluster must have one or more research projects or programmes that will result in research outputs — especially in the form of quality-assured research publications, and the attraction of postgraduate research students to topics that relate to the theme or field of the cluster.

**Method of Application**

Applications are accepted by the Division of Humanities at any time.

Applications should be made by completing the application form for recognition as a Research Cluster.

**Approval Process**

Applications will be evaluated against the criteria for recognition by the Division of Humanities Research Committee, which will make recommendations to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

**Management of Research Clusters**

Information about Research Clusters (membership, research, publications, activities, etc.) will be featured in the Research section of the Division of Humanities website.

No automatic funding is attached to the Division’s formal recognition of a Research Cluster. Financial support for the Cluster’s activities should be sought not only within the University but also from various external funding bodies. Research Clusters are eligible to apply for Humanities Research Grants from the Division of Humanities.

**Performance Review**

At the end of academic year, the Director(s) representing the Research Cluster must provide an annual report on the activities and research outcomes to Associate Dean (Research), who will review the report. The report should include descriptions of (1) The Cluster’s collaborative research activities and achievements; (2) Directions of future collaborative research; (3) Successes of collective funding applications. Failing to submit the report for two consecutive years will terminate the Divisional recognition of the Research Cluster.

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