

# Guideline: Centres and Institutes Administration

## Purpose

To provide further details and explanations for the establishment, governance, implementation and review process of Centres and Institutes at the Australian National University (ANU).

## Scope

The Guideline applies to all Centres and Institutes covered by the [Centres and Institutes Policy](#).

## Guideline

### Establishment – Development of Proposal

1. This section aims to provide guidelines and explanations to enhance the clarity and expectation of the Establishment proposal, in line with Clause 1 of the Procedure: Centres and Institutes.
2. To ensure that the proposal includes necessary information and details for determining the establishment of a new Centre or Institute, the following sections should be addressed:
  - a. **Title:** the nomenclature of the Centre or Institute is expected to be concise, clear and accurate to reflect the nature and scope of activities;
  - b. **Responsible Area:** the Responsible Area is the parent organisational unit and should be clearly identified in accordance with the [Policy: Centre and Institutes](#) (refer to the Definition of Responsible area section);
  - c. **Status as an Academic Organisational Unit (AOU):** the status as an AOU should be clearly stated in accordance with the Policy: [Academic Colleges, Schools and Departments](#) (refer to the Definition of AOU section);
  - d. **Mission and Objectives;**
  - e. **Key performance measures tied to the Objectives:** key performance measures depend on the objectives of the Centre or Institute, and can include a range of indicators, e.g. external funding, publication outcomes, network growth, PhD

student load/completions or any other indicator relevant to the objectives. Where possible, include 2 and 5 year targets;

- f. **Research Overview:** outline key research activities, goals, and approaches with indicative timelines;
- g. **Education Plan:** the Education Plan should receive endorsement from the Associate Dean of Education (ADE) of the relevant College to ensure it aligns with the College's strategic direction for education;
- h. **Evidence of the consultation:** the proposal should include evidence of consultation with relevant stakeholders, demonstrating that their views and opinions have been taken into account;
- i. **Management and governance arrangements:** see the Governance Structure section below;
- j. **Reporting and review process:** see the Reporting and Review Process section below;
- k. **Administrative and operational arrangements:** the proposal should include a description of the administrative support requirements, refer to the checklist in the Administrative and Operational Arrangements section below;
- l. **Budget:** demonstrate a clear and effective funding model for the proposed term of the centre, showing key operational revenue, expenses and in-kind contributions;
- m. **Communication and engagement plan:** should the Centre or Institute interact with a significant number of schools or colleges, a cross-university engagement plan is highly recommended. The plan is expected to explicitly identify key stakeholders or associated areas, purpose of communication, engagement activities and channels as well as cadence.

## **Governance Structure**

- 3. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for governance. The Procedure provides flexibility and autonomy to a Responsible Area to design a governance model that is fit-for-purpose, responsive to the needs of the Centre or Institute, and appropriately scaled.
- 4. Each Centre or Institute should have a Governance and/or Advisory body.
  - a. The role of a Governance Board or Committee is to provide high-level oversight and strategic input on the directions of the Centre or Institute, risk management, effective engagement, budgets and other matters as set out in a Terms of Reference.
  - b. The role of an Advisory Board or Committee is to engage key stakeholders and provide input to the directions of the Centre or Institute. Advisory bodies may be

targeted to specific aspects of a Centre or Institute's operations, for example a Scientific Committee, Audit and Risk Management Committee, Industry Advisory Board etc.

5. The Board or Committee may make recommendations to the University about budget, staffing or other matters; however, these operational decisions are made by the University.
6. The size and composition of the Board or Committee should strike an appropriate balance between:
  - a. Representation from key stakeholders, whilst remaining agile and functional. It is recommended that Boards/Committees have no more than 7-9 people.
  - b. An appropriate mix of independent and/or ANU personnel – for example, a smaller centre may have an ANU-only membership, whilst an externally-facing Institute may have an Independent Chair and other external members.
  - c. An appropriate mix of skill-sets with emphasis more on governance and oversight.
7. A Centre or Institute may also have sub-committees as part of the governance structure, if decided by the Responsible Area and/or the Governance Board/Committee. Examples may include University Research Committee; Indigenous Advisory Committee; Student Safety and Wellbeing Committee, Audit and Risk Management Committee etc.
8. Decision whether to establish these sub-committees will depend on the scale, complexity and focus areas of the Centre or Institute in question.
9. It is recommended that one member from the Board/Committee sit on each sub-committee to support an appropriate level of information flow.

## **Management and Executive**

10. The Director may be supported by an Executive Team (e.g. deputy directors, research stream leads and program manager) to support decision-making and operational oversight.
11. The Executive Team typically meets frequently to progress and manage delivery of the Centre or Institute's mission and objectives.
12. Specific consideration must be given to:
  - a. Who the Centre / Institute Director will be supervised by;
  - b. Any other 'indirect' reporting lines and the purpose of these connections;
  - c. The expected time commitments of the Director for the Centre / Institute. Often, the Director is faced with a heavy burden of administration, particularly at the point of

establishing a new Centre or Institute. This needs to be well understood by the Director and there must be clear communication between the Director, their Supervisor and Head of School, and appropriate workload adjustments made.

## **Administrative and Operational Arrangements**

13. The Responsible Area should coordinate provision of adequate space, access to resources and operational and administrative support to the Centre or Institute. While some items in this list may be provided directly by the Responsible Area, many will be services provided by other professional service units in College or Portfolio teams.
14. Discussing appropriate administrative and operational support with service providers ahead of time is essential to ensure it is clear which area(s) is(are) providing services typically delivered at School and/or College level.
15. Below is a list of areas/functions where Centres and Institutes require support, and may be used as a checklist to ensure Centres and Institutes are covered for support in each area by at least one team at the University.
  - \* **Human resources:** coordinate recruitment, hiring and promotion of staff, offer professional development opportunities and review resourcing plans as needed;
  - \* **Finance and budget:** provide guidance on financial setup and budget framework, set expectations for financial reporting and ensure the budget remains up to date;
  - \* **Research management:** assist with the submission of research proposals and support grant application and administration process;
  - \* **Student services (as applicable):** act as the point of contact for undergraduate and HDR students, address general inquiries related to courses and programs, events and other activities;
  - \* **Business development and advancement:** collaborate with the Centre or Institute to design and implement initiatives for the purpose of promoting innovation and research excellence and exploring commercial opportunities with industry, government and community;
  - \* **Relationship management and partnership building:** establish networks and connections within and outside the University to create a supportive environment for researchers and students;
  - \* **Marketing and communications:** support website and newsletter development, organise events and campaigns to promote a strong and consistent brand image for the Centre or Institute;
  - \* **Access to space:** provide appropriate access to teaching and research, meeting, socialising and other working spaces;

- \* **Access to necessary resources including research infrastructure:** provide access as well as training and technical support for the use of infrastructure (e.g. facility, equipment, software);
- \* **Procurement and contracts:** review the request for goods and services, assess the quotes from suppliers and provide oversight for the execution of the contract.

## Review Requirements and Process

16. The objectives of the review are set out in the [Procedure](#):
  - a. Assess whether the Centre/Institute is meeting its mission and objectives;
  - b. Assess the overall research performance, added value to ANU, and ongoing need for the Centre or Institute; and
  - c. Make recommendations as the review panel sees fit that may improve the outcomes, governance or standing of the Centre or Institute;
17. The mission and objectives should be drawn from the Proposal or a more recent Strategic/Operational Plan. The performance measures should refer to the Key Performance Measures outlined in the Proposal document or a more recent Strategic/Operational Plan.
18. Given that each Centre or Institute is unique with different purpose and scale, the Responsible Area has the authority to determine the specific approach for the review ensure it is relative to the scale and complexity and fit for purpose.
19. The terms of reference and panel members for the review must be approved by the lead of the Responsible Area and consulted with the executives of Centre or Institutes.
20. If the Centre or Institute is established under an external funding contractual arrangement, the review must be conducted in accordance with the funding contract.
21. Review logistics and support are provided by the Centre or Institute, including supporting associated costs.
22. Considerations for the review methodology:
  - a. **Personnel:** for larger-scale or externally-facing Centres and Institutes, it is appropriate to engage an external, independent panel to conduct a review according to agreed terms of reference. The panel members should be selected based on their expertise and should reflect different key stakeholder groups or objectives of the Centre or Institute. For Centres that are more internally-focused or smaller in scale, the Responsible Area may determine that the review can be conducted internally or with input from one external reviewer, for example.

- b. **Review materials:** Appropriate materials such as historical performance, strategic and operational plans and other key contextual information should be provided to the panel ahead of time. The responsibility for compiling this information rests with the Centre or Institute.
- c. **Format of review:** reviews will typically include campus-based meetings and workshops, however this is not a mandatory requirement.
- d. **Format of report:** there is no standard format of a review report. We encourage all reports to be brief and make actionable commendations and recommendations about the performance of the Centre or Institute. It should be clear in terms of reference or other communications who these recommendations will be going to (e.g. a School Director, a College Dean, the DVCRI) and how they will be considered.
- e. **Frequency of reviews:** reviews should happen at least once every five years; however, it is possible to conduct a review at any time. As an example, some Centres or Institutes may host a smaller mid-term review that ensures that serves as a marker for whether the Centre/Institute is on track to deliver its longer-term goals. A review may also be triggered by organisational changes, personnel changes or other major shifts (such as major funding contracts being terminated).

## Document information

Title	Centres and Institutes Administration
Document Type	Guideline
Document Number	ANUP_7558452
Version	
Purpose	To provide further details and explanations for the establishment, governance, implementation and review process of Centres and Institutes at ANU.
Audience	Staff-Academic, Staff-Academic-Research, Staff, Staff-Professional
Category	Governance
Topic	Governance & Structure
Subtopic	
Effective Date	21 Sep 2023
Review Date	21 Sep 2028
Responsible Officer	Director Planning and Service Performance
Approved By	Vice-Chancellor (eo.vc@anu.edu.au)
Contact Area	Planning and Service Performance Division (director.psp@anu.edu.au)
Authority	
Printed On	4 Nov 2024

Please ensure you have the latest version of this document from the Policy Library website before referencing this.