FACULTY RESEARCH PERFORMANCE FUND: GUIDELINES

Purpose
Faculty Research Performance (FRP) Funds provide a resource to support faculty-based strategic research investment, at the faculty level. The University apportions the Faculty Research Performance (FRP) Fund to reward research performance aligned with University Research Development and Investment Strategy and associated Key Performance Indicators.

Background
Financial support for the faculties to underwrite research and research training is provided from external and internal sources, including researchers winning external research grants. Major sources of external support that are distributed internally to support the research and research training effort, include the three DIISR research block grants:

a. Institutional Grants Scheme (IGS) that is partly distributed back to Faculties, Research Centres and Institutes;
b. the Research Training Scheme (RTS) that is distributed back to Faculties specifically to support places for Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students; and
c. the Research Infrastructure Block Grant (RIBG) that is allocated competitively to University Research Centres, Institutes, successful external research grant recipients and the University Library.

It is University policy to allocate the block grants and central University funds to both reward research performance and to support strategic initiatives.

The block grants are distributed on the basis of research and research training performance. It is not proposed to make any changes to the internal distribution of the RTS and RIBG block grants. While most of the changes are proposed to the IGS block grant are minor, it should be noted that under the current proposal, as outlined in the document “New Research Initiatives”, part of the IGS component will not be distributed directly to faculties, but rather to the researchers who generate these funds.

In addition, faculties support research and research training from the funds provided from their Recurrent Operating Grants, directly and indirectly through various mechanisms including the ‘Research Active’ classification. Faculties are expected to deploy resources in support of research, including time allocation for staff to engage in research and research training activities, to support research students and to support applications for grants and awards.

Distribution mechanism
A total of 2.5% of the Higher Education Faculties’ annual Operating Budget is reserved for allocation to these Faculties, distributed based on the research performance of the Faculties. Research performance is measured by the weighted* key performance indicators (KPIs) of:

- external research income (40%);
- publications (10%);
- higher degree by research timely completions (40%); and
- higher degree by research load (10%).
The distribution mechanism also incorporates the high cost/low cost student differential.

*It is important to note that the weightings are based on the University's Composite Research Index (CRI) performance measure. The CRI weightings reflect the financial value attributed through the RTS and IGS Schemes.

Use of funds
The FRP Funds are to be used to invest in and support high quality defined research initiatives and the achievement of the University’s strategic aims and targets for research in line with the University’s Research Development and Investment Strategy 2008-2010.

It is anticipated that each Faculty's Research Committee, in consultation with the Associate Dean (Research and Research Training), will be responsible for developing, monitoring and reporting on each year's expenditure and forward planning for FRP Funds. The Executive Dean of each Faculty has approval and oversight of the final strategic investment of FRP funds as proposed by the Faculty Research Committee.

Faculties are required to use these funds strategically to provide resources and incentives for research activities that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Postdoctoral fellowship support
- Seeding grants at Faculty level to support new strategic research initiatives
- Postgraduate research scholarship support (e.g. Faculty-level scholarships)
- Collaborative research projects in the University's identified areas of research strength
- Early- and mid-career researcher development
- Publication, specifically in ERA A* and A journals, including postgraduate research publications
- International conference presentation support
- Strategic engagement of external research expertise to support specific project development and/or researcher development
- Joint Faculty/University research development initiatives, e.g. VPAC membership, co-funded postdoctoral fellowships, start-up funds, etc.

Accountability and reporting
Faculties, via their Faculty Research Committees, will be required to submit a written annual report on each year’s FRP Fund allocation to the University Research Committee, typically to the November/December meeting, outlining details of the use of funds. This will include:

- actual expenditure of previous round of FRP funds against previously budgeted expenditure
- associated strategic outcomes and gains from FRP expenditure for the previous round
- itemised expenditure planned for the next round of FRP funds

Unexpended FRP funds will be returned to the University at the end of each round.

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