Victoria University

University Institutes:
Policy and Procedures

1 Introduction

University Institutes are alternative organizational units that will be established to provide a specific operational focus.

In the University’s Strategic Plan for 2002–2003, our vision incorporates the statement that the University aspires to be a highly quality, progressive and competitive university. To achieve this, some of the themes that will be implemented are to:

- Build on disciplines to develop multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches to education, training and research
- Develop education, training and research with industry, government and the community, particularly the communities in our region

To assist in giving effect to these goals, the University has determined that University Institutes may be established to provide a distinctive organizational unit that will draw on cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral strengths to provide a focus in a strategic area, and that will undertake research, research training, education, training and consultancy activities.

University Institutes are alternative organizational units that will provide a specific operational focus. They are expected to develop operational relationships with the University’s academic schools, departments and designated University Research Centres, where appropriate.

Note: This Policy applies to those University Institutes that are formed after the date of this policy.

2. Purpose of University Institutes

The purpose of University Institutes is to aggregate, coordinate and focus diverse University skills and resources in a strategic area, and to develop and apply knowledge for the benefit of industry, government and community organisations. Furthermore, University Institutes are expected to focus on cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral activities in a thematic area. Accordingly, University Institutes will have the capability to offer ‘total solutions’ for our external partners based on an integrated approach to research, education, teaching and consultancy.

3. Functions and Characteristics of a University Institute

University Institutes can be considered as bridges between traditional academic activities (which form a particular “community of practice” with its own set of values, language and recognition systems) and industry, community or government groups which are distinctly different communities of practice. The types of skills needed, the mode of operation and the measures of performance for any University Institute will need to be considered in the context of the particular environment in which it specifically operates.
A University Institute must have a clear strategic rationale and a focus, which is external to the University. Given their purpose, University Institutes may cover the full range of University activities – research and research training, teaching and learning, consulting and community engagement. Furthermore, University Institutes are expected to undertake cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral activities that would not normally be undertaken by existing academic units.

University Institutes are expected to:

- Build on existing University activities and develop synergistic relationships that will achieve significant added value and impact for the University. It is to be noted that without the formation of the University Institute, these added outputs would not normally be realized.
- Undertake activities in a key strategic area for the University, as well as have the potential to contribute significantly to the national economy or well-being.
- Deliver significant profile and recognition for the University.
- Hold a position of leadership in its field, at least at the national level.
- Normally be an operating unit with the Director of the University Institute reporting to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Development) (PVC (R&D)).
- Normally comprise a cluster of cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral activities around a major theme.
- Have a critical mass of staff and students.
- Be led by a Director who has a full-time commitment to the University Institute.
- Exhibit significant annual growth in performance and achieve a degree of self-support.

4. The Establishment of an University Institute

To be considered for designation as a University Institute, it will be necessary to demonstrate that the proposed University Institute meets the criteria specified by the University. Although there will be no specified quota of University Institutes in the University, it is expected that the assessment criteria used for the establishment of University Institutes will result initially in only a small number of such University Institutes.

A written proposal in support of the establishment of a University Institute must address the criteria in a formal way. The proposal must specify:

(i) How the proposed University Institute will achieve the intended Purpose as specified previously;

(ii) How the proposed University Institute intends to conduct activities which are in accord with, and supportive of, the University’s Strategic Plan;

(iii) How the proposed University Institute will build on disciplines to develop cross-disciplinary approaches and cross-sectoral linkages in support of research, education and training;

(iv) The extent of external support, endorsement and involvement that will result from the formation of the University Institute;

(v) How the University Institute will increasingly enhance the performance and output of the University;
(vi) How the University Institute will achieve significant profile and recognition for the University;

(vii) The academic rationale for the University Institute, the national or international significance of its objectives, and the key performance indicators it will use;

(viii) In what way the people associated with the University Institute are sufficient in number and appropriately qualified and experienced to enable the University Institute’s objectives to be met;

(ix) The extent of endorsement for the establishment of the University Institute from areas in the University which will be expected to provide support for the University Institute’s personnel, management, resourcing or operation.

In addition, the Proposal for Establishment should include the following:

- The strategic, operational and financial plans of the proposed University Institute.
- The proposed management structure, including the membership of the University Institute Advisory Board. The roles and responsibilities of the University Institute Advisory Board, the Director of the University Institute and any other University Institute structures such as a University Institute Coordination Committee should be clearly stated.
- The fields of activities to be included within the University Institute.
- The staff to be involved in the proposed University Institute, and the arrangements for effective and comprehensive engagement of staff of the Faculty(s) and Schools.
- External collaborations.
- Activity for the preceding three years against agreed key performance indicators with the expectation that the Institute will commence operations with an appropriate level of activity; refer to Attachment 1.
- Evidence of an appropriate balance of grants and contracts.
- Strategies that will be adopted to achieve growth in performance and standing.

- The Director of the University Institute will normally be appointed via external advertisement.

5. Procedures for Seeking Designation as an University Institute

A detailed submission must be prepared in support of a University Institute. The proposal must address the criteria for the establishment of a University Institute and such other matters as are appropriate to the University Institute. In preparing the proposal, the proponents should seek the advice of the PVC (R&D) who will also seek input from relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVCs).

Once a proposal has been completed, comments on the proposal will normally be sought initially from the University Research Committee and then from the Academic Board and the Vocational Education Board. The Vice-Chancellor and President may also refer the proposal to other groups in the University for advice.

The Vice-Chancellor and President may decide to approve the proposed University Institute if satisfied that the proposal is soundly based and appropriate for the University.
6. Operation of an University Institute

A University Institute will operate as a separate cost centre and the Director of the University Institute will normally be responsible to the PVC (R&D).

Operational procedures and requirements for University Institutes include:

- The University Institute will be required to pursue actively the agreed strategic program and operational plan.

- The Director will be responsible for the implementation of strategic and operational plans and for the day-to-day management of the University Institute.

- The University Institute Advisory Board will normally include the relevant DVCs, Deans, Deputy Directors, the Director of the University Institute, the PVC (R&D), and individuals, external to the University Institute, who have senior expertise that is of relevance to the University Institute. The Advisory Board is expected to meet at least twice per year.

- The University Institute Advisory Board will provide advice to the Director on the University Institute's portfolio of activities, staffing and operational issues, funding and commercialisation opportunities for the University Institute's research.

- The Director, in consultation with the Deans, and Deputy Directors, will appoint an University Institute Coordination Committee that will comprise relevant Deans and Deputy Directors or their nominees and representatives of internal stakeholders. The Coordination Committee will meet on a regular basis.

- An Annual Report must be submitted by the Director to the PVC (R&D). The Annual Report must include:
  - details of staffing, students and resources, and the use to which they have been put;
  - activities and achievements of the University Institute over the reporting year;
  - performance for the reporting year against agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); (refer to Attachment 2);
  - financial statements for the reporting year and budget projections for subsequent years;
  - aims and forward projections, including KPIs, for at least two years following the reporting year;
  - strategic and operational plans.

The Annual Report will be considered by the University Research Committee.

- Discretionary central University funding will be contingent upon the endorsement of the Annual Report by the PVC (R&D), with advice from the relevant DVCs and the University Research Committee. The Annual Report is to be submitted by the Director within 9 months of the reporting year.
• The University Institute should have evidence of effective and comprehensive engagements with staff of the University; for example, by the appointment of Associates. (Associates are staff of faculties and schools who are actively engaged in the planning and execution of the activities of the University Institute and who agree to attribute their outputs to the University Institute).

• Staff and students whose activities are to be associated with the University Institute will have their association formally agreed between the individual, the University Institute Director and the Head of School/Department through which the individual is employed or enrolled.

• University Institutes will be eligible to receive additional funding from the University, including:
  o the Director's salary will be supported from central University funds; and
  o a minimum weighting of 2x for Research Quantum funds

The University will make no general commitment to ongoing funding for a University Institute. Any specific funding provided from University resources will need to be negotiated in advance. The University would prefer that each University Institute was self-funding but recognizes that this cannot always be achieved.

7. Review

In addition to an evaluation of the Annual Reports required of an University Institute, the University will normally review the performance of a designated University Institute at the end of its third year of operation to confirm its designation and subsequently when renewal of designation is being considered.

A University Institute is expected to achieve national prominence and deliver significant outcomes that have high impact and are valued by its stakeholders.

The formal review will be undertaken by a Review Panel formed by the PVC (R&D) with advice from the relevant DVCs and the University Research Committee. This Panel may include people internal and external to the University.

1. Information for consideration by the Panel will be against a set of pre-agreed criteria and is to be submitted by the Director in advance of the meeting.

2. The review will normally extend over one full day only. Issues to be considered will include (i) relevant information provided by the Director via a formal submission (ii) comments from key stakeholders, (iii) comments from students and (iv) comments from one or two independent individuals and academics, familiar with the activity of the University Institute.

If the formal review of a University Institute determines that a University Institute has been under-performing consistently, the PVC (R&D) may recommend to the Vice-Chancellor and President that the University Institute be disestablished.

If, on the basis of the Annual Report, the University Institute is considered to be performing at lower than the required level, the PVC (R&D) may arrange for an immediate review and/or commence procedures for the disestablishment of the University Institute.
Prior to the implementation of any of the recommendations of the review panel the PVC (R&D) will forward a report from the Panel to the Academic Board and/or Vocational Education Board for comment.

The Vice-Chancellor and President will advise Council of the outcomes of the review where these significantly alter the operations or status of the University Institute.

Policy approved by:
Professor Elizabeth Harman, Vice Chancellor & President

Date of Approval:
21 April 2004

Responsible for Conducting a Review of the Policy:
Professor Vaughan Beck, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Development)

Date of Review of Policy:
12 months after approval
Attachment 1

EXPECTED MINIMUM PERFORMANCE FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIVERSITY INSTITUTES

Normally, the expected initial performance for designation as a University Institute is as outlined below:

- Yearly external income $500,000; a significant part of this income is expected to be derived from research
- Yearly publications as DETYA categories: 1 DETYA author weighted point per EFT staff member
- Equivalent full-time staff (including associates): 10 EFT
- External recognition from academics and stakeholders: state/national leadership*
- Impact arising from outcomes: medium/high*
- Value/prestige/profile to the University: medium/high*

* While these three specified performance criteria would be required to be achieved within a few years, a University Institute would normally be established with a substantial suite of existing activities that were highly regarded.

The above performance may be varied to account for differences in operating environment and the associated capacity of potential stakeholders to engage in the activities relevant to an University Institute.
Attachment 2

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

An agreed set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and associated performance targets will be used to assess the performance of each University Institute. A list of possible KPIs is given below:

Inputs:
- External research income according to the DEST categories
- External income for educational and training programs
- External income for consultancy
- Funding for infrastructure
- External contributions (non-financial)

Outputs:
- Total weighted DEST publications per EFT
- Number of TAFE, undergraduate, postgraduate course work and postgraduate research completions
- List of knowledge transfer activities (workshops, courses, contract reports)
- Details of Intellectual Property generated
- Staff and Associates holding grants or contracts (at Chief Investigator level)
- Number of visiting fellows. The expectation is an average one per two years for a University Institute
- Number of equivalent full time staff employed by the University Institute
- Number of internal seminars and workshops

Students:
- Number of enrolled equivalent full-time TAFE, undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and postgraduate research students that are associated with the University Institute.

University Involvement:
- Funds and in-kind contribution to the University Institute from faculties and schools
- Number of, and full time equivalent of, staff attributing work and grants to the University Institute (i.e. Associates)
- Listing of other activities demonstrating interaction between faculties/schools and, the University Institute (for example, teaching and supervision arrangements)
External Collaborations and Partnerships:
• List of long term (> 2 years), strategic research partnerships with external organisations
• List of long term (> 2 years), strategic collaborations with external research and educational organisations
• Active Advisory Board

External Standing of the University Institute:
• List of staff having national and international appointments/interactions demonstrating standing
• Independent assessments and/or reviews of the University Institute

Financial Standing:
• Detailed annual financial statement (previous years) and budget for the next 12 months

In addition to the above, University Institutes are encouraged to adopt and report other performance indicators (PIs) or measures that are seen to be appropriate, in particular “leading” PIs (for example, number of high quality student applicants) to complement the mainly “lagging” PIs (for example publications) specified above.

Outcomes
• List of identifiable impacts and their significance arising from knowledge transfer activities
• National/international standing of the University Institute
• Stakeholder views on the value of the outcomes delivered by Institutes