Research Policy

Research Policy Group

1 Purpose

This policy establishes the research environment within which academic staff and postgraduate research students carry out their Research. It also provides an overarching framework for the development and implementation of all research management at Victoria University of Wellington ('the University').

2 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide statute.

3 Definitions

For purposes of this statute, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Academic Staff	Includes all staff that have a contractual obligation to carry out Research
AEC	Animal Ethics Committee
Associate Dean (PGR)	The person in each faculty who is responsible for the approval of all administrative decisions and for all academic matters related to the postgraduate research degree programmes of candidates within their faculty
Associate Dean/Deputy Dean (Research)	The person in each faculty who is responsible for Research matters in their faculty and liaison between their faculty, faculty research committee(s) and URC
Council	The governing body of the University
Creative works	Definition included in the definition of Research
Dean	Dean of a Faculty
FGR	Faculty of Graduate Research
HEC	Human Ethics Committee
PBRF	Performance Based Research Fund
PDCP	Performance Development and Career Planning
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PVC	Pro Vice-Chancellor of a Faculty

Research	Research is original, independent* investigation undertaken to contribute to knowledge and understanding and, in the case of some disciplines, cultural innovation or aesthetic refinement. Research typically involves inquiry of an experimental or critical nature driven by hypothesis or intellectual positions capable of rigorous assessment by experts in a given discipline.

Research includes work of direct relevance to the specific needs of iwi, communities, government, industry and commerce. In some disciplines, Research may be embodied in the form of artistic works, performances or designs that lead to new or substantially improved insights. Research may include: contributions to the intellectual underpinning of subjects and disciplines (for example, dictionaries and scholarly editions) the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved, materials, devices, products, communications or processes the synthesis and analysis of previous Research to the extent that it is new and creative.

Research findings must be open to scrutiny or formal evaluation by experts within the field. This may be achieved through various forms of dissemination including, but not limited to, publication, manufacture, construction, public presentation, or provision of confidential reports.

Research does not include activities that are part of routine standard practice or outputs that do not embody original Research. This excludes:

- routine testing
- data-collection
- preparation for teaching where it does not embody original Research
- the legal and administrative aspects of commercialisation activities
- professional activities that do not embody original Research.

[PBRF definition]

RTV	*The term "independent" does not exclude collaborative work.

The Research Trust of Victoria University of Wellington (RTV) is a charitable trust established in 2006 to manage internal and external funds acquired for and committed to Research

Scholar	Person employed by the University to undertake Research
Scholarship	The undertaking of scholarship in the context of Research is as per the definition of Research
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
URC	University Research Committee
URF	The University Research Fund (URF) is a part of the Research investment made by the University. Applications for grants of more than $10,000 are considered by subcommittees of the University Research Committee on the basis of the University's strategic objectives
VPR	Vice-Provost, Research

VicLink   (or Victoria Link Limited) is the University's commercial arm through which the management and commercialisation of disclosable Intellectual Property (see Intellectual Property Policy) are conducted.

4   Policy Content and Guidelines

4.1   Requirement to Undertake Research

(a)   Each scholar will carry out independent Research, scholarship and/or creative activities that are appropriate to their discipline.

In doing so they will, individually or in collaboration with colleagues:

   (i)   supervise Research students;

   (ii)   broadly disseminate Research results (i.e. through more than one medium or one audience) including through their teaching practices and, where appropriate, protect the results of their Research;

   (iii)   be active within appropriate professional and discipline communities and external stakeholders;

   (iv)   contribute to the Research environment and culture of Victoria through activities such as mentoring, engagement in new Research initiatives and strengthening the Research infrastructure; and

   (v)   participate in initiatives designed to secure financial support for Research activities from external sources (including for example, government funding, industry partnerships and contracts, philanthropic gifts, Research translation and commercialisation opportunities).

(b)   The requirement to undertake Research is a career expectation and will be balanced with the other obligations of academic staff including teaching and administrative responsibilities.

(c)   Nothing in this policy is to be construed so as to prevent Heads of School from allocating teaching and other responsibilities in the light of the Research record of academic staff.

4.2   Statutory and Ethics Obligations

(a)   Academic staff and students are required to carry out their Research in compliance with all the University's obligations under legislation and any ethical and contractual obligations.

(b)   Research projects that involve human or animal subjects, including those undertaken as part of a teaching programme, must be approved in advance (see the Human Ethics Policy and the Animal Ethics Policy with oversight through the HEC and the AEC).

(c)   All Academic staff, students, and visitors of the University are required to make themselves aware and follow the contents of the University Health and Safety Policy and the Health and Safety section of the University's website.

(d)   Academic staff and students are required to comply with the University's approach to Risk and Risk Management as detailed in the University Risk Management Policy.

4.3   Research Management

Policy and advice in Research matters is coordinated through a number of bodies and committees:

(a)   URC, chaired by the VPR, is the University's senior research management body. It advises SLT and informs Academic Board on Research strategies to be pursued, develops policy (including strategic and scholarships policy for Research students) and reviews progress in these areas (see Appendix A).

(b)   Faculties and Schools are required to establish Research committees to support the research activities of their staff and postgraduate thesis students. Both committees are expected to comply with and oversee the implementation of university-wide Research policies. Faculty Research committees are formed by deans to advise the URC and their own faculties on Research matters.

(c)   The Research Office provides Research services for staff. This support includes but is not limited to:

(i)   Assisting URC with coordinating the activities of its subcommittees and monitoring external Research policy developments

(ii)   Managing the URF

(iii)   Managing the internal administration of the PBRF

(iv)   Securing and supporting external Research funding from the public and private sectors

(v)   Monitoring and reporting on externally funded Research grants

(vi)   Providing professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their Research performance.

(d)   The FGR is responsible for oversight of the quality of Victoria's PGR and enhancement of the PGR student experience.

4.4   Resources in Support of Research

(a)   University Research Fund

(i)   The general principle governing the allocation of all Research funding in the University is that it is an investment intended to maximise the range of outcomes that the University expects to result from staff and student Research. The Allocations and Investment Subcommittee of the URC allocates grants from this fund.

(ii)   A portion of the URF supports early career researchers and staff at Lecturer/Senior Lecturer level who are in their first five years at Victoria University who have not previously received external Research funding support and is allocated by a subcommittee of the Allocations and Investment Subcommittee of the URC.

(iii)   A portion of the URF is allocated to strategic support of external funding bids and partnerships.

(b)   Faculty and School Research Grants

Faculties and Schools may allocate Research funding according to their internal processes.

(c)   External contracts/external Research provisions and obligations

(i)   All applications for any external Research funding are to be submitted through the Research Office in the name of the RTV.

(ii)   All research contracted by an external party is administered by the Research Office.

(iii)   The Research Office provides the contract, financial and non-financial management services for the University's grant management process.

(d)   Academic staff are expected to comply with the Management of External Research, Consultancy and Related Contracts Policy in the costing and pricing of external Research and consultancy. They may also do Research or consultancy under the Entitlement to Undertake Private Work Policy and are required to report such activity to their Head of School. Staff doing private work under the entitlement of this policy may manage their funds through the RTV using the Guidelines for Independent Work in the RTV.

(e)   Academic staff are eligible to apply for leave in support of their Research including Research and Study Leave, Overseas Conference Leave, New Zealand Conference Leave and Exchange Leave. Faculty committees recommend the award of such academic leave to their Faculty's PVC for approval.

(f)   A range of scholarships are available centrally and through the Faculties and Schools to support PGR students.

4.5   Research Planning

Each Faculty, and its constituent academic units, is required to develop and implement its own Research plan that is consistent with and delivers to the University Research Strategy and the University Strategic Plan.

4.6   Evaluation and Monitoring of Performance

(a)   The VPR has responsibility for the evaluation of the University's Research performance. Annually the Alignment, Outcomes and Evaluation Subcommittee of the URC will advise the VPR and URC on the University's performance, its alignment with external Research funding sources available, opportunities for development and the impact and intensity of its Research.

(b)   The relevant PVC and Dean will monitor the performance of schools and Research centres in accord with the evaluation of the University's Research performance.

(c)   Staff are required to annually complete the staff PDCP process through which their Head of School (or delegate), Director (or Delegate) or PVC will evaluate their Research performance.

(d)   Staff are required to participate in the external assessment of performance such as the PBRF as directed by their PVC.

(e)   Staff are required to supply full and accurate details of their Research outputs as required by their Head of School (or delegate)/Director (or delegate). This shall be done at least annually. The information will be supplied to the Research Office.

(f)   The Research Office will publish an annual list of staff and student publications in the categories outlined in Appendix B.

4.7   Recruitment and Staff Development

(a)   Section 162(4)(a) of the Education Act 1989 sets out the characteristics a university must have. An important element of the characteristics of a university is the requirement to engage in Research at a higher level. Therefore, the appointment of new academic staff must give appropriate consideration to the quality of their Research record or Research

potential commensurate with the requirements of the position. Responsibility for oversight of this rests with the relevant PVC.

(b)   Academic staff are required as part of the annual PDCP process to prepare a Research plan and to review that plan annually in consultation with their Head of School or Director. Consultation should include a review of: Research objectives, anticipated applications for external Research funds, details of other initiatives to secure financial support for their Research activities, opportunities for collaboration, timelines and expected outputs for the dissemination of their Research results, protection of their Research results where appropriate, supervision opportunities, activities within the Research community, activities to enhance the impact of their Research. The PDCP process should also identify the support staff need to facilitate their Research and scholarship, and reflect any special agreements reached regarding teaching, administration, Research duties and Research training and/or development opportunities for Research according to the career stage of the staff member.

(c)   Schools are required to adopt a procedure to ensure that workload issues are considered before the approval of the enrolment of PGR students.

(d)   Heads of School should ensure that newly appointed staff are familiar with Research evaluations, Research training and funding opportunities and the importance of publishing in suitable venues, both within the University and external to it.

4.8   Postgraduate Student Research

(a)   The Dean (FGR), Deans of other faculties, Associate Deans (PGR), Heads of School and the FGR are responsible for ensuring that the management of PGR degrees complies with the relevant University Statutes, policies and procedures (see the policy website).

(b)   PVCs are responsible for ensuring that faculties and schools make appropriate budgetary provision for the support of postgraduate student Research (note the Minimum Resources Agreement).

4.9   Publication and Intellectual Property

(a)   Subject to 4.9 (b) and (c), the University expects all Research outputs will be publicly available.

(b)   As stipulated in the Official Information Act 1982, Research outputs may be withheld by the University where "good reason" exists.

(c)   To the extent permitted by law, Research outputs may be embargoed as required by the University's Intellectual Property Policy.

(d)   Staff and PGR students are required to comply with the University's Intellectual Property Policy.

4.10   Research Centres and Institutes; Distinctiveness Themes

4.10.1   Characteristics of Research Centres and Institutes

(a)   The University establishes Research centres to raise the Research profile of the University, focus strengths in areas where there is (or the University wishes to develop) a concentration of Research excellence (including areas of applied Research) and to maximise external Research funding. Research centres help position and promote the University's areas of Research excellence and build the University's Research reputation. They also serve as vehicles for engaging with other Research institutions and industry and facilitate interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary relationships.

(b)   Research Centres and Institutes are:

    (i)   High quality and competitive, and may include involvement of nationally and internationally recognised researchers

    (ii)   Consistent with the strategic interests of the University

    (iii)   Expected to deliver outcomes that would not otherwise occur

    (iv)   Aligned to the priorities of Research funders and the interests of end-users

    (v)   Substantial, involving an integrated group of researchers generating significant Research outputs and attracting sizeable Research funding

Research Institutes and Centres are approved by Council. The title "centre" or "institute" is only to be used after approval. Research groupings not so approved should use other general identifiers such as "project" or "unit".

4.10.2   Characteristics of Distinctiveness Themes

(a)   Similarly to Research Centres and Institutes, a suite of multidisciplinary themes define the academic emphasis of the University. They promote an outlook that goes beyond disciplinary, school, faculty and other traditional boundaries, and frame and develop Victoria's distinctive teaching, Research and public engagement endeavours.

5   Legislative Compliance

The University is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework. The legislation directing this policy includes the:

Education Act 1989;

Copyright Act 1994; and

Official Information Act 1982

6   References

Animal Ethics Policy

Entitlement to Undertake Private Work Policy

University Health and Safety website

Health and Safety Policy

Human Ethics Policy

Intellectual Property Policy

Management of External Research, Consultancy and Related Contracts Policy

Risk Management Policy

Previous Version: Research Policy 24 October 2013

7   Appendices

Appendix A: Research Committee Structure at Victoria University of Wellington

Appendix B: Research Output Types

8   Approval Agency

Vice-Chancellor

9   Approval Dates

This policy was originally approved on: 2 December 2004

This version was approved on   4 December 2016

This version takes effect from   4 December 2016

10   Policy Sponsor

Vice-Provost, Research

11   Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

Associate Director, Research Services

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