

Code: QA508
Title: Governance and Management of Designated University Research Institutes
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Approval: UMT

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the requirements for the management and governance of designated University of Galway Research Institutes. It sets out the relationship between Institutes and Colleges; the role and reporting relationship of Research Institute Directors; and the principles, responsibilities and requirements of Research Institute membership.

2. Description

Designated Research Institutes are characterised by significant interdisciplinary (generally cross-College) and high-quality research activity, including extensive collaboration nationally and internationally.

Research Institutes are a key feature of the university's research and innovation landscape. They:

- Reflect the university's priority thematic research areas and promote and market the major institutional research activities in a clear and consistent manner, as part of a coherent and clear brand identity;
- Enable/facilitate research on a larger scale than can be achieved by individual researchers and/or smaller units, through clustering of cognate research activities into Centres or Clusters to encourage collaborative team-based activities;
- Provide the required technical and administrative facilities and supports to its members to enable their research; and
- Allow the university to respond to key developments in national and international research and funding.

3. Scope

This policy shall apply to existing designated University Research Institutes and new Institutes that receive formal approval through the appropriate process.

This document is focused on research undertaken by Principal Investigators within Research Institutes. Research activities not supported by Research Institutes (e.g. undertaken within Schools and Disciplines) are also important and valuable to the reputation of the university and should also be adequately supported and enabled.

4. Relationships with Colleges & Schools

Each Research Institute shall have a primary affiliation to a College. In most instances this is informed by the thematic focus of its research activity and the academic affiliation of the majority of its members.

These affiliations are established for existing Institutes. However, for future Research Institutes – where there is no clear majority alignment/affiliation - the College of affiliation shall be proposed and agreed during the approval/establishment process.

Academic staff members of Research Institutes are affiliated to Colleges and Schools. This dual affiliation is mutually beneficial and Deans, Heads of School, Institute Directors and Institute University Board should seek to support/facilitate these relationships.

The governance and management structure of Research Institutes must complement College/School line management relationships.

The Vice-President for Research chairs the Institute University Board (see Section 5.3). The Dean of the College of primary affiliation and other associated Deans are members of the Board.

5. Management & Governance

Each Institute has a formally appointed Institute Director, an Executive Management Team (EMT), an Institute University Board and an External Advisory Panel (EAP). Collectively, these groups shall take responsibilities for the operations, management, oversight and governance of the Institute, as summarized in Appendix 1 and set out below.

5.1 *Institute Director*

Each designated Research Institute must be headed by a Director; a member of academic staff with a distinguished track record of research in a discipline of relevance to the Institute and demonstrated leadership ability. The Director is expected to actively undertake/direct research and to generate research funding for this purpose.

The Director, working with the EMT and the Institute University Board, is responsible for academic and research leadership and management of the Institute and leads the ongoing development and implementation of the Institute's Strategy and Operational Plans.

In most instances, the Director is appointed internally¹. The University may, however, in some instances, wish to invite external applications for consideration. In such instances, budget considerations should be agreed/approved in advance.

Appointment of Directors of Research Institutes will be for a period of four years, renewable for one further period of four years.

Institute Directors will report directly to the Institute University Board via a dual **reporting relationship**:

- Directors shall report to the VP Research (Chair of the Institute University Board) in relation to the strategic direction and development of the Institute's research activity; compliance with University and national policies with respect to research and innovation; and responsibilities to external funding agencies.
- Directors shall report to the relevant Dean (i.e. Dean of the College of primary affiliation of the Institute) and associated Deans on matters relating to finance; resources and personnel;

¹ The current procedure for appointment of Research Institute Directors is set out in the [Role and Reporting Relationships of and Appointment Procedures for Directors of Research Institutes](#).

risk management and compliance; and shall work with the appropriate College(s) on strategic recruitment needs, workload models and educational programme matters.

Research Institute Directors will be a member of the Executive Committees of the College of primary affiliation of the Institute.

Directors may delegate certain duties to a senior administrator/manager and/or appoint an Associate Director(s). Such Associates shall be nominated by the Director/EMT and approved/appointed by the Institute University Board.

Further details on the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationship of Institute Directors is provided in Appendix 2.

5.2 Executive Management Team (EMT)

The EMT supports and assists the Institute Director in the operations of the Institute; the delivery of the research agenda; the setting and implementation of operational plans; and the long-term strategic direction of the Institute.

The EMT is chaired by the Institute Director and includes Associate Directors (where relevant) as well as representatives of PIs (e.g. Centre/Cluster Leaders), support staff and contract researchers – with a maximum of 13 members. Members shall be appointed for a period of four years, with the option of a second term. The Director, in agreement with the PI cohort, shall select the membership of the EMT, which shall be approved by the Institute University Board.

The EMT shall meet at least six times per annum.

Further details on EMT membership, roles and responsibility are set out in Appendix 3.

5.3 Institute University Board

The Institute University Board provides internal oversight and direction for the Research Institute and ensures coherence of the Institute with cognate Colleges and the University's strategic and operational plans. The Board shall encourage active engagement and participation of academic staff members in the Institute and facilitate the Institute to work with Schools to encourage the alignment of recruitment to the Institute's strategic priority research areas. The Board will advise upon financing, resourcing and staffing of the Institute to ensure that activities are adequately resourced and supported.

The Board is Chaired by the Vice President for Research and includes the Dean of the College of primary affiliation, other relevant Deans, Dean of Graduate Studies, the Institute Director, Associate Directors, Finance and HR Representatives and 1-2 members of the Institute (as agreed by the EMT) - with a maximum of 13 members.

Members shall be appointed for a period of four years, with the option of a second term.

The Board shall hold a minimum of two meetings per annum, which shall be organised/administered by the College/Institute.

The Board shall provide an annual briefing for the University President on the development and evolution of the Institute.

Further details on Board membership, roles and responsibility are set out in Appendix 4.

5.4 External Advisory Panel (EAP)

The External Advisory Panel has a non-executive role. The panel provides advice on the strategic direction and development of the Institute and, as appropriate, research and policy trends, partnerships and networking opportunities and benchmarking/review. It acts as a mechanism to review and guide the Institute's research strategy/programme, with the goal of achieving internationally recognised excellence.

The EAP comprises 4-5 nationally/internationally-respected experts in relevant fields – e.g. research, policy/public sector, industry, innovation. Membership shall be proposed by the Director and VP Research, approved by the Institute University Board and appointed by the President.

The EAP meets annually with the Institute Director, chair of the Institute University Board and the Dean of the College of primary affiliation. The Director may interact informally with members as required.

Further details on the EAP, including roles and responsibility, are set out in Appendix 5.

6. Membership

The principal benefits of Research Institute membership include:

- Scale of activity and reputation/profile in individual and collaborative research funding proposals
- Demonstrated alignment for individuals/clusters/centres to university strategic priority areas
- Access to dedicated research and office space, technical (including core) facilities, administrative and technical support staff, and mentoring and support.

Each Research Institutes shall have clearly documented membership criteria/guidelines/procedures, including mechanisms to review membership, agreed by the Director and the EMT and approved by the Institute University Board. In general, membership should be open to the following categories of staff:

- Academic Staff – whose research interests and outputs are aligned to that of the Institute
- Contract Researchers (Post-Docs and Research Fellows) - whose research interests and outputs are aligned to that of the Institute
- Administrative Support Staff
- Technical Support Staff.

Academic members of staff shall inform their School of their application for membership of a Research Institute. Research Institute membership should not disadvantage academic units and line management responsibility for faculty members will continue to reside with the Head of School to which the faculty member belongs. Schools should strive to ensure that faculty members are encouraged and enabled to engage in and grow the research activities supported by the Research Institute. In addition to the School line management requirement, Institute members report to the Institute Director specifically in relation to the management and progress of research projects and programmes within the Institute, as well as post-graduate supervision within the Institute, and, as relevant, the management and operation of smaller affiliated research units (clusters, centres, etc.).

In general, members shall:

- Have a track record in a research area associated with or relevant to the Institute's strategic research thematic areas
- Commit to contribute positively to the development and implementation of the Institute's research strategy and objectives
- Agree to abide by the responsibilities associated with Institute membership.

Staff may be a member of more than one Research Institute but must have a clearly stated primary affiliation to a single Institute – i.e. they may be an **Associate** member of additional Institute(s).

Academic staff who are members of a Research Institute are required to affiliate their research grants to the Research Institute, so that the research activity can be supported by the Research Institute as part of its overall portfolio of grants. Staff may in some instances affiliate different grants to different Institutes, depending on the nature of the grant.

Institutes may also allow Associate and Affiliate membership, the criteria for which should be outlined in the membership guidelines/procedures.

The general principles, benefits and responsibilities of Research Institute membership are set out in Appendix 6.

7. Affiliation of Research Centres

The approval/establishment of Research Centres is currently devolved to Colleges.

University Research Centres will normally be affiliated to Research Institutes. Applications for Research Centre affiliation to an Institute shall be considered by the EMT and Institute University Board. All members of the Research Centre shall become members of the Institute – and are subject to the principles and obligations set out in Appendix 6.

Research Centres that are not affiliated to Research Institutes are not subject to this policy.

8. Resource Allocation

Responsibility for the allocation of resources (space, financial and human) lies principally within Colleges and will be considered by the Institute University Board.

Where an Institute resides wholly within a single College, resource allocation is the responsibility of the Dean.

Where Institutes involve members across more than one College, the responsibility for resource allocation lies with the Dean of the College of primary affiliation in partnership with the other relevant Deans and the VP Research within the Institute University Board.

9. Strategic and Operation Plans

Strategic Plans

Research Institutes shall have a 5-year Strategic Plan. The plan should align with the University's Strategic Plan, any university-level research and innovation strategies and the strategic plan(s) of the relevant College(s). The Institute Director and EMT will develop the plan, with input from the College

