



## UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE

# GUIDELINES FOR ACCREDITED RESEARCH GROUPINGS

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Following a decision regarding the naming of inter- and / or intra-Faculty teaching or research groups (Approved by Senate and Council via PC6/99 15 June), the University Research Committee (URC) further refined the categorization of *research-specific* groupings that fall under its remit [Approved by Senate and Council via PC6/2017 21 June 2017]. This categorization applies to URC-accredited research-specific groupings only, is based on good practice, and reflects a systematic classification according to size, structure, scope, and objectives. For accounting purposes, all research-specific groupings have departmental and Faculty homes. Directors of groupings are permanent academic staff based in departments. For URC-accreditation purposes, nomenclature is limited to units, centres and institutes. Designations such as groups, programmes, projects, initiatives or platforms are not encouraged.

### Unit

- Operationally a unit is smaller than a centre or an institute.
- Has a focused research mandate that may span across disciplines or rest with one discipline.
- Has a defined structure beneath a director and includes a critical mass of researchers.
- The director should be a nationally recognised researcher on the permanent academic staff.
- On-going projects and measurable outcomes evolve from its focused research theme.

### Centre

- Operationally a centre is larger than a unit.
- Has a broad research mandate that spans across disciplines or rests with one discipline.
- Has a formal management structure with a director of international standing, a number of research staff and a team of researchers.
- The director and at least one research staff member should be on the permanent academic staff.
- On-going projects and measurable outcomes evolve from its broad research mandate.

### Institute

- Operationally an institute is larger than a centre and may be housed in a defined, visible space.
- Has a broad research mandate that spans across disciplines or sub-disciplines and implies extensive collaboration on a wide range of associated research questions.
- Has a formal management structure with a director of considerable international standing and several research teams, which are individually headed by internationally recognised researchers, and constitute a large-scale network of researchers.
- The director and several team leaders should be permanent academic staff who generate significant research outputs as a product of their contribution (commitment) to the institute.
- Categorisation of membership based on the percentage of time spent in the institute is encouraged. Membership categories would for example include full, affiliate, associate and adjunct, thus indicating varying degrees of time commitment to the institute.
- On-going projects and measurable outcomes evolve from its broad research mandate.
- Is sustainable over a long-term period.

## 2. CATEGORIES OF ACCREDITATION

### FIVE-YEAR ACCREDITATION.

Groupings with five-year accreditation meet all the criteria as set out in section 4 of this document and undergo external peer-review once every five years.

### THREE-YEAR ACCREDITATION (Developmental Model).

‘Developmental’ groupings may be considered for three-year accreditation if they do not yet meet all accreditation criteria relevant to the group’s definition, but aspire to meet a clearly articulated strategic

goal. Such groupings are reviewed in the final six months of the first three years. This review is internal and would focus on the productivity of the group as measured against the criteria for the level of grouping, as well as against its proposed strategic goal. If supported, the research grouping would convert to the five-year accreditation cycle. Alternatively, its accreditation will be withdrawn.

**TABLE 1: NOMENCLATURE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE THREE TYPES OF RESEARCH GROUPINGS**

	FIVE-YEAR ACCREDITATION		
	RESEARCH UNIT	RESEARCH CENTRE	RESEARCH INSTITUTE
<b>RESEARCH MANDATE</b>	A focused research mandate that largely lies within one discipline.	A broad research mandate that may span across disciplines or rest with one discipline.	A broad research mandate (with wide ranging research questions) that spans across disciplines.
<b>MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE (See Appendix 5 for Governance of University Institutes (established through a top down, executive-driven process))</b>	<p>A defined management structure with a director.</p> <p>Hosted by the department of the Director, and affiliated to faculty.</p> <p>Administrative support typically provided by the host department.</p> <p>Operational and financial decisions overseen by HOD.</p> <p>Reports to the URC through the HoD, with approval by the Dean.</p>	<p>A formal management structure with a director and researchers with agreed management roles.</p> <p>Hosted by either the Department or Faculty of the Director, as appropriate to the breadth of research mandate. If hosted by a department, will be affiliated to the department's faculty.</p> <p>Will typically have an advisory or steering committee, convened by the Dean of the host Department/Faculty.</p> <p>May have different membership categories based on proportion of time committed to Centre activities (e.g. Full, Associate, Affiliate, Adjunct).</p> <p>Administrative support provided by host department or faculty.</p> <p>Operational and financial decisions overseen by HOD or Dean, depending on hosting arrangements.</p> <p>Reports to the URC via HoD or Dean, depending on hosting arrangement.</p>	<p>A formal management structure with a director and several established researchers and academic staff with agreed management roles.</p> <p>Hosted by a Faculty within which the Institute has a critical mass of membership.</p> <p>Governed by an advisory board, usually comprising a mix of internal and external members, chaired by the DVC for Research.</p> <p>Typically has a management committee, made up of senior academic and operational staff.</p> <p>Typically, will have different membership categories based on proportion of time committed to Centre activities (e.g. Full, Associate, Affiliate, Adjunct).</p> <p>Has dedicated administrative and technical support staff (where relevant) provided through Institute resourcing.</p> <p>Has dedicated administrative and technical support staff (where relevant), provided through Institute resourcing.</p> <p>Reports to the URC via the DVC for Research.</p>
<b>MINIMUM CORE TEAM STAFFING REQUIREMENTS</b>	<p>One permanent academic staff member who is the director.</p> <p>A team of researchers, who may include other permanent and contract academic and research staff, as well as postdocs and research students.</p>	<p>More than two permanent academic staff members of whom one must be the director.</p> <p>One or more teams of researchers, who may include other permanent and contract academic and research staff, as well as postdocs and research students.</p>	<p>Five or more academic staff members of whom one must be the director.</p> <p>Several teams of researchers, each of which may include other permanent and contract academic and research staff, as well as postdocs and research students.</p>
<b>TEAM CREDENTIALS AND REQUIREMENTS</b>	<p>The director should hold a PhD and should be an established research scholar.</p> <p>Possibly limited institutional collaborations. Members who belong to other accredited</p>	<p>The director should have considerable international standing.</p> <p>Research time must <i>include</i> collaborative research that contributes to the wider agenda of the Centre, but will typically also include disciplinary</p>	<p>The director should be a distinguished international researcher.</p> <p>Team leaders should have considerable international standing.</p>

	groupings must produce distinct bodies of work to qualify as members of more than one grouping.	research that provides the foundations for the overall research agenda.	
<b>EXPECTED COLLABORATIONS<sup>1</sup> BEYOND THE RESEARCH GROUPING ITSELF</b>	<p>Collaborations beyond the grouping within and outside UCT are encouraged, but not essential.</p> <p>Membership of more than one Unit must undertake research that aligns distinctly with the agenda of each grouping.</p> <p>Outputs should be reported against the most relevant grouping, unless there is clear justification for dual attribution.</p>	<p>Extensive and relevant institutional, national and international collaborations.</p> <p>Membership of more than one Centre must undertake research that aligns distinctly with the agenda of each grouping.</p> <p>Outputs should be reported against the most relevant grouping, unless there is clear justification for dual attribution.</p>	<p>Extensive and relevant institutional, national and international collaborations.</p> <p>Membership of more than one Institute must undertake research that aligns distinctly with the agenda of each grouping.</p> <p>Outputs should be reported against the most relevant grouping, unless there is clear justification for dual attribution.</p>
<b>ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP</b>	<p>The application should explicitly state whether, and if so, how the research agenda of the grouping will respond to societal needs – especially locally.</p> <p>Commitment to stakeholder engagement already at conceptual stage of projects is recommended.</p>	<p>The application should explicitly state whether, and if so, how the research agenda of the grouping will respond to societal needs – especially locally.</p> <p>Commitment to stakeholder engagement already at conceptual stage of projects is recommended.</p>	<p>The application should explicitly state whether, and if so, how the research agenda of the grouping will respond to societal needs – especially locally.</p> <p>Commitment to stakeholder engagement already at conceptual stage of projects is recommended.</p>

<sup>1</sup> The term ‘collaborations’ should be widely interpreted. It could range from informal networking and demonstrated cognisance of other knowledge areas, to full-scale extensive research collaborations and co-authored publications.

### 3. BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION

Accredited status strengthens the identity and branding of the grouping, and provides an officially recognised platform for collaboration. The URC funds the external peer-review process that takes place every five years, which provides an opportunity for self-reflection and showcasing as well as hosting two world-renowned scholars in the relevant field. The review also places the grouping on the Faculty radar and requires the dean to position the review report in the context of the Faculty's own planning and budget.

It should be noted that accredited research groupings derive no direct financial benefit from the URC and are expected to raise their own funds through research grants and contracts. Deans are encouraged to consider the needs of their accredited groupings in their Faculty plans, as research is central to Faculty identity. Infrastructure and administrative support must be negotiated with the host Faculty. In the case of cross faculty groupings, support may be jointly negotiated.

In addition, groupings that have been reviewed in the past year and achieved positive reports (including groupings accredited by the South African Medical Research Council) are invited to bid for a postdoctoral fellowship on a competitive basis. Four to five such fellowships are made available annually, on condition of URC funding being available.

### 4. APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR ACCREDITATION AS A RESEARCH GROUPING

The applicant needs to ensure that the *Application Check-List for Accreditation Proposals* (available from the Research Office) is completed.

The applicant submits the application via the relevant head of department to the dean for endorsement. Should the dean endorse the application, he/she has to provide the URC with a brief motivation on why and how the Faculty would support the grouping.

The endorsed application is sent to the Research Office, for tabling at the URC.

- URC assesses the application against set criteria. The URC has the right (in consultation with the research grouping and associated dean) to reclassify the application to the appropriate category should this be required.
- The research grouping, head of department and dean are informed of the outcome of the application.

If the proposal is supported by the URC, a summary of the application is tabled at SEC for their endorsement; and then published in the next *Principal's Circular* for information.

### 5. ACCREDITATION ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

A proposal for establishing a research grouping will be assessed against the following criteria

- a. **Strategic gain**  
It is common practice for researchers to collaborate loosely across a range of cognate projects and fields. What is the strategic gain of formalising such activity under the umbrella of an accredited research grouping?
- b. **Research agenda**  
How well is the grouping's research agenda defined, with a set of on-going projects that are inter-linked or focused around a common theme? Are the broad timelines and team responsibilities appropriately articulated?
- c. **Core research team and linkages to other research groupings or networks**  
Are these linkages clearly defined and articulated? Members who belong to other accredited groupings must produce distinct bodies of work to qualify as members of more than one grouping except where units / centres are embedded in an Institute. In the latter case, the outputs may be claimed both by the unit / centre and by the Institute under which the unit / centre falls.

d. **Non-financial support**

Are the required infrastructural resources readily available and accessible e.g. space, support staff, equipment?

e. **Current financial viability**

Does the proposed grouping have current financial viability in terms of operational costs, human capital development resources and infrastructural support?

f. **Future sustainability**

Is there a clear three-year budget forecast to enable sustainability in terms of staffing and operating costs?

g. **Quality of collaborative research outputs**

Is there good evidence of generating quality research in relation to the research agenda over the past 3-5 years as a collective group? The quality of the research activities is reflected in measurable outputs such as accredited, peer-reviewed publications; funding generated through grants and / or contracts; throughput of postgraduate students and the registration of patents. Engaged scholarship as it relates to the research must be in evidence. Note: Groupings that are able to meet this criterion on accreditation immediately enter the five-year cycle, which means they will be reviewed five years after being accredited. The review panel includes expert-peers external to UCT.

**OR**

If the above collaboration and outputs are not yet in place – Is there a clearly articulated strategic goal for the (developmental) accreditation of the grouping? Has the application clearly motivated why and how such collaboration will occur and what the envisaged collective outputs will be in relation to the proposed research agenda, if granted accreditation?

Note: Groupings in this category that achieve three-year accreditation will be reviewed in the final six months of the first three years by an internal panel to assess evidence of a collaborative body of work that resulted from the three-year accreditation. If satisfactory, the grouping enters the five-year review cycle, as above. If not, the grouping's three-year accreditation is withdrawn.

h. **Human Capital Development**

Is there evidence of current postgraduate student participation in the grouping? AND is there evidence of a proactive student recruitment strategy?

i. **Equity and redress**

Is there a development plan, if appropriate, to assure transformation in terms of equity imperatives?

j. **Governance structure**

Is there evidence of an effective governance structure to monitor activities and initiate improvements?

k. **Engaged scholarship**

To what extent will the grouping's research translate into alleviating problems locally, in the region, the country or on the continent?

l. **Visibility**

Does the grouping have a clear plan on how it will enhance its visibility in the public domain?

m. **Proposal eligibility**

Does the proposal appropriately address the nomenclature guidelines of a 'Unit', 'Centre' or 'Institute'? The purpose of the nomenclature guidelines is to assure internal consistency as well as alignment with international good practice. The URC will exercise discretion where a change in nomenclature would impinge on the branding strategy or established reputation of a grouping that is already fully operational.

## **6. REVIEW OF RESEARCH GROUPINGS**

### **6.1. APPROACH AND STRATEGY**

Quality Assurance (QA) of research groupings at UCT is informed by national as well as international benchmarks for research, such as publications, postgraduate theses and competitive grants that are all subject to peer review. A variety of mechanisms also continue to be developed to measure the social

impact of research. Although the process is informed by international good practice as well as strategic priorities, it is also driven internally by the choices of the university itself. The process also takes discipline-specific conditions and criteria into consideration, for example to acknowledge that the criteria for research output from the College of Music will not necessarily be the same as those for Chemical Engineering.

## 6.2. TYPES OF REVIEW

Reviews are implemented as follows:

In the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of accreditation

- External Peer Review after five years (in the case of a five-year accredited grouping)
- University Research Committee-based internal review during the last six months of the third year (in the case of a three-year accredited grouping). Depending on the outcome of the review, the grouping dissolves or enters the five year cycle of External Peer Reviews.

Subsequent cycles

All groupings have a peer-review every five years.

All reviews are conducted in the final year of the accreditation cycle.

## 6.3. PROCESS

Each grouping is reviewed once in the final year of its accreditation cycle, except where such groupings are subjected to credible external review in that year, as in the case of Medical Research Council groupings hosted at UCT.

In the URC review process (administered by the Research Office) research groupings identified for review submit self-review portfolios<sup>2</sup> according to an agreed timeline, usually to enable distribution of the portfolios to the review panel at least two weeks before the scheduled review date.

The review panel consists of the DVC in his / her capacity as Chair of the URC; two external reviewers<sup>3</sup> who are recognised experts in the field and are selected by the Chair from five nominees provided by the relevant faculty; two internal reviewers nominated by the host dean, from fields relevant to the research agenda under review; the executive director of research; the relevant dean and the relevant head of department. Continuity is built into the panel membership through the Chair (the URC Chair or the Executive Director of Research) and the consistent participation of up to three URC members. This core membership also ensures consistency across the reviews. Prior relations between members of the panel and the grouping must be fully declared and taken into account. The Research Office provides administrative support, supplying the review panel with the necessary documentation and servicing officer.

The review typically lasts half a day, depending on the size and scope of the unit to be reviewed. The review may also include a site visit, if applicable.

A joint review report<sup>4</sup> is produced by the two external panellists within four weeks of the review. A response is prepared (preferably jointly) by the grouping director and the dean, which is tabled together with the review report at the URC's Committee on Research Reviews (CRR) meeting. Both the dean and director are invited to attend the CRR meeting to have an opportunity to clarify and elaborate

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1 for guidelines on preparing self-review portfolios.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 2 for guidelines on selecting expert reviewers.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 3 for guidelines for the reviewers on preparing a review report.

on the Faculty's position in relation to the tabled comments. Consensus or a decision on the way forward is reached at this meeting.

The URC may:

- unconditionally endorse the research grouping's accreditation for the next cycle; or
- require an improvement plan according to agreed-upon time-lines; or
- request a change in nomenclature if the grouping classification is deemed to be inappropriate as a result of the review findings; or
- withdraw accreditation if the outcome of the review is negative.

Both self-review portfolios and review reports are treated as confidential, although these are made available for institutional audits. A consolidated summary of the year's review outcomes is included in the annual Report on Research to Senate and Council.

Where applicable, the schedule of reviews will be clustered according to research fields in order to optimize – as much as possible – the contribution of any particular external reviewer that could serve on more than one panel in the course of his / her visit.

## Appendix 1

### **GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING THE RESEARCH SECTION OF THE SELF-REVIEW PORTFOLIO**

The following considerations should inform the research section of programme or departmental **self-review portfolios** (or the SRPs of research groupings), although units under review may use their own discretion in the final structure of the SRP:

#### **THREE-YEAR REVIEWS**

##### **Descriptive Information**

- Describe the nature of the research activities undertaken in the research grouping under review. Outline the key focus areas and quantify their associated research outputs. Outline any structures or processes that exist to coordinate the research activities and enable collaboration.
- Explain the mechanisms and practices for promoting research and sustaining and developing an active and vital research culture in the research grouping under review.
- Describe the nature and quality of the research infrastructure, including facilities for research students.
- Provide a statement about the main objectives and activities in research over the next five years. The panel's attention should be drawn to ongoing research work that is not producing immediate visible outcomes.

#### **FIVE-YEAR REVIEWS**

##### **Descriptive Information**

- Describe the nature of the research activities undertaken in the research grouping under review. Outline the key focus areas and quantify their associated research outputs. Outline any structures or processes that exist to coordinate the research activities and enable collaboration.
- Explain the mechanisms and practices for promoting research and sustaining and developing an active and vital research culture in the research grouping under review.
- Describe the nature and quality of the research infrastructure, including facilities for research students.
- Describe any arrangements that are in place for supporting interdisciplinary or collaborative research.
- Provide information on relationships with industry and commerce or other research users and, where appropriate, the account taken of national policy initiatives and objectives.
- Describe the arrangements for the development and support of the research work of staff.
- Describe any arrangements for developing younger and / or new researchers and for integrating them into a wider, supportive research culture.
- Provide a statement about the main objectives and activities in research over the next five years. The panel's attention should be drawn to ongoing research work that is not producing immediate visible outcomes.

#### **QUESTIONS ON QUALITY OF RESEARCH OUTPUT**

- What counts as 'research output' in the context of this research grouping's review? (Books, journals, patents, reports, materials, images, devices, performances etc.)
- What self-defined goals and criteria have been established for the research activities of this research grouping's review?

- What measures of quality are applicable in your context (and what debates typically attend these measures)?
- How does your research grouping's output fare in terms of these goals, criteria and measures?
- What conditions contribute to your current output profile?
- What initiatives are underway, or are planned, to further strengthen the quality of your output in terms of these measures?

### **QUESTIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH CAPACITY**

- What developmental goals does this research grouping have for future research projects or directions?
- What is the current profile of researchers in this research grouping in terms of qualifications and track record?
- What goals does this research grouping have in terms of this profile (e.g. succession planning, capacity gaps, equity issues etc.), and how are these related to broader institutional or national goals?
- What initiatives are underway, or are planned, to address the capacity developmental goals of the research grouping?
- What conditions currently support or frustrate the rollout of capacity development initiatives?
- Is there a succession plan in place?

**NOTE:** In cases where there is not much critical mass and the existence of a unit depends on the research interest of the director, it is acceptable not to have a succession plan in place, on condition that the relevant Faculty accepts that the unit will be de-credited when the leadership retires or leaves the institution.

Research groupings under review may want to comment on how they fare in terms of a combination of the following evaluation criteria, which are based on existing practice as well as on international examples of good practice. We acknowledge that the following approaches may not be universally applicable and that considerable debate exists over the use of these measures.

It would be important for research groupings under review to show how they are taking these debates forward in their own context of research:

- Quality of journal publications and other research outputs using appropriate international mechanisms of measure;
- Social impact of the research and how this is measured / evaluated.
- Promotion of engaged scholarship as it relates to research, and ways in which this is embedded in collaboration and postgraduate training.
- Quantitative assessment to measure the number of research outputs as with the DHET system for subsidy purposes;
- NRF rating of academics, across all disciplines;
- Level of collaborative work, nationally and internationally;
- Level of relationship established through research with industry, civil society and government departments;
- The critical mass of researchers, postgraduates and postdoctoral fellows within a specific research field;
- Income generated through appropriately-costed contracts; and
- Internal and external funding.

## Appendix 2

**AN ADAPTED NRF GUIDE TO THE SELECTION OF REVIEWERS**

This section draws largely on Appendix 3 of *The Evaluation and Rating of the Research Performance of Researchers in South Africa –through the National Research Foundation (NRF)*, October 2002.

- The selection of appropriate reviewers constitutes the very essence of the review system. Great circumspection in nominating reviewers is needed. At least five external research active reviewers should be nominated who *are best able to assess the scope and impact of recent research and other scholastic outputs, activities and contributions* of the research grouping. **Relationships between members of the research grouping and reviewers should be indicated and reasons for each nomination should be given in order to provide additional information for the selection of reviewers. There should also be an opportunity to decide which reviewers should not be approached.** Two of the five nominated reviewers will be selected.
- It must be affirmed that the reviewers nominated are genuine peers and that they are experts in the particular field (either by reputation, citation, publications, members of editorial boards of journals etc.).
- Where reviewers are not rated by the NRF, *curricula vitae* of reviewers are required in order to ensure the quality of reviews.
- In some cases the research grouping's work may cover several divergent fields. Reviewers should therefore be chosen to ensure that the scope and impact of the work is adequately covered.
- Reviewers who are generalists and those who are aware of the 'broader picture' are essential in the evaluation of researchers who do prescriptive research because they can place the research into a wider context.
- Care must be taken not to approach the same reviewer too often. When a particular person is suitable for several reviews he / she could be approached for some of them but could also be asked to suggest names of other suitable reviewers.
- Final approval of reviewers is the prerogative of the URC Chair who reserves the right to select reviewers outside of earlier nominations.

## Appendix 3

**THE RESEARCH SECTION OF THE REVIEW REPORT – A GUIDE FOR THE REVIEWERS**

The following is offered as a guide for conducting the review process and completing the **review report**. Amongst other things, the reviewers are expected to consider:

- The extent to which the self-evaluation portfolio adheres to *Guidelines for preparing the research section of the self-review portfolio* as in Appendix 1.
- The extent to which there is a focussed or interlinked research agenda.
- The extent and quality of the research conducted in the grouping.
- Linkages to other research groupings or networks.
- Governance and management / planning structure.
- Sustainability in terms of leadership and resources.
- Capacity building (including equity and redress issues) through recruitment and participation of postgraduate students and / or postdoctoral fellows.
- Any other strengths and weaknesses of the research grouping, based on the information provided in the self-review portfolio and the review.
- The classification of the grouping as a unit, centre or institute and its justification in terms of the URC guidelines for nomenclature, as approved by Senate and Council. Based on examples of good practice nationally and internationally, these guidelines aim to provide some consistency in nomenclature across the University.
- The review process itself and ways in which it may be improved.
- A succession plan that would effectively manage handover once a director retires.

(In cases where there is not much critical mass and the existence of a unit depends on the research interest of the director, it is acceptable not to have a succession plan in place, on condition that the relevant Faculty accepts that the unit will be de-credited when the leadership retires or leaves the institution.)

## Appendix 4

**A GUIDE FOR JOINTLY ACCREDITED UCT-SAMRC RESEARCH GROUPINGS**

The following applies to jointly accredited UCT-SAMRC research groupings:

- As the URC recognises the review criteria of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), only the latter will review jointly accredited research groupings until such time that SAMRC-accreditation no longer applies;
- The Faculty of Health Sciences must inform the URC of any changes in research groupings' names or their research directors;
- When a joint UCT-SAMRC research grouping ceases to have SAMRC-accreditation for whatever reasons, the unit director must inform the Faculty of Health Sciences Research Office (FRO) which will inform the URC accordingly;
- Should the research grouping not want to continue with being URC-accredited, they can either dissolve the unit or continue informally as a research grouping. They must advise the FRO accordingly which in turn will inform the URC;
- Should the research grouping wish to continue being URC-accredited they must inform the FRO which will in turn inform the URC. The URC will then officially acknowledge the accredited status of the research grouping subject to consideration of the last SAMRC external reviewers' report;
- The research grouping needs not undergo a review when transitioning from UCT-SAMRC to URC-accredited status but will go straight into the URC five-year review cycle i.e. their first review will be five years after their last SAMRC review and in accordance with the URC criteria;
- At their first URC review, the research grouping will have to demonstrate that they are viable even though they have not received SAMRC funding; and
- The URC review guidelines should inform the research grouping's strategic planning.

## Appendix 5

**GUIDELINES FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INSTITUTES**

UCT has, over the last several years, established a number of large interdisciplinary research initiatives and institutes. These groupings are called “University Institutes or University Initiatives” to distinguish them from other recognised research groupings<sup>5</sup> as having either gone through a competitive selection process for prioritisation or having been put in place for strategic purposes. These include the Institute of Infectious Disease & Molecular Medicine (IDM); the Vice Chancellor’s Strategic Initiatives;<sup>6</sup> and five interdisciplinary institutes<sup>7</sup> that were established as the result of a competitive process. All of these have membership from multiple faculties – both individual staff members and from recognised and informal research groupings, and most have external adjunct and honorary members as well. As such they require governance arrangements that support and facilitate membership and operation across traditional departmental, faculty and other university structures.

Currently, the University Research Committee (URC) has three categories of recognised research groupings, which are - at least in theory - differentiated by size, breadth of research enquiry and degree of interdisciplinarity:

- Research Unit - A focused research mandate that may span across disciplines or rest with one discipline.
- Research Centre - A broad research mandate that may span across disciplines or rest with one discipline.
- Research Institute - A broad research mandate (with wide ranging research questions) that spans across disciplines.

The key differentiation between these entities relates to the breadth of research enquiry, where at one extreme a Unit will have a focused research question, and at the other an Institute works in a broad domain, with multiple research questions. Research of Units and Centres *may* cross disciplines, while Institutes *must* span disciplines. An institute will necessarily draw on expertise from multiple departments and (likely) research groupings, but may be wholly situated within a faculty, or may span faculties. This document is specifically for *University Institutes and Initiatives* that span faculties, but many of the principles may be applicable to recognised groupings that do not span faculties, but do span departments.

*Overarching Principle: University Institutes are hosted by a faculty, but governed by the university.*

A **host faculty** will be one in which a significant proportion of the critical mass of membership of the Institute lies. The relationship between the host Faculty and the institute will be articulated by a MoU. In general, the host faculty will offer the following support:

- Provide space for the Institute

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<sup>5</sup> Other institutes may develop bottom up (there is no competition), might be more focused, can apply for accreditation, and require different governance arrangements and levels of central funding not discussed here.

<sup>6</sup> The African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI); The Safety & Violence Initiative (SaVI); The Poverty & Inequality Initiative (PII).

<sup>7</sup> Future Water; Neuroscience Institute; Institute for Communities and Wildlife in Africa; Institute for Democracy, Citizenship and Public Policy In Africa; Institute for Safety Governance and Criminology.

- Provides administrative support not available within the Institute – HR, Finance,
- Provide academic support to the Institute – e.g. approval and administration of academic programmes
- Will, through the Dean and their alternates, act on the Institute’s behalf within existing university structures - such as in central budget, space, equipment and building requests.

The **university governance** aims to ensure cross faculty and university level support, guidance and evaluation of the Institute, and through these governance arrangements, have clear agreements with each faculty, their departments, on the “rules of engagement” of individuals and research groupings that make up the Institute membership.

In general, governance arrangements will include:

- A clear statement of purpose for the Institute – as might be expected when applying for URC accreditation – supported by all faculties from which membership of the Institute will be drawn.
- A constitution that formalises the purpose, governance, financial and other institutional arrangements, types of membership, etc.
- A governing board – typically chaired by the DVC for Research, and with senior representation from all supporting faculties (the Dean, or their nominated deputy Dean, senior members of the Institute, and external advisors). The Board acts to provide strategic advice on the direction and management of the Institute, as well acting as advocates for the Institute in external settings.
- A management or leadership committee – typically led by the director, along with a leadership team drawn from the Institute membership. The management committee is responsible for delivery of strategic and operational decision making of the Institute.
- Operational staff – support the Director and Management Committee in implementing the Institutes activities.
- Rules of engagement:
  - MoUs between individual faculties and Institute that describe the ways in which the faculty will support and engage with the Institute – for example, in registration and examination of graduate students, on the attribution of research outputs, on cost recovery and GOB salaries covered by research proposals, and on the principles by which departments within the faculty should approach academic and research staff affiliation / membership of the Institute
  - MoUs between each accredited research group (that forms part of the Institute), and the Institute
  - MoUs between individual members and the Institute