

Research Entities Policy and Procedures

Purpose

1. This policy and its associated procedures provide a framework for the establishment, governance, operation and support of the University's Research Entities (i.e. institutes and centres). Their purpose in doing so is to support these Research Entities as important vehicles with which the University pursues its mission to advance knowledge through the development and dissemination of ideas, theories and concepts for the public good.

Scope

2. This policy and these procedures apply to all Research Entities at the University of York. The following are out of scope for this Policy and these Procedures:
 - a. The Humanities Research Centre; the Research Centre for Social Sciences; Research Groups.
 - b. Those Research Departments already established under the University ordinances.
 - c. Those centres and institutes established as part of the conditions of a grant unless they are expected to continue beyond the end of the grant.
 - d. Entities whose primary focus is either education or engagement.
 - e. Remuneration of Entity Directors (for which see the [guidance from Human Resources](#)).

Research Entities' activities may include teaching, but the teaching activities of Research Entities are also out of scope of this Policy and Procedures.

Definitions

3. The following terms are used in this document:
 - a. **Director:** the academic lead for the Research Entity. References in this document to director should be read as director or directors, as entities may have multiple joint directors. An entity director must be a contracted staff member.
 - b. **Home department:** for academic staff not employed by a Level 1 Research Entity, the academic department in which a member of academic staff is employed.
 - c. **Lead department:** the academic department with lead responsibility for a Research Entity. Where a Research Entity involves only one department it is automatically designated the lead department. Where a Research Entity involves more than one department (whether within a single faculty, or across multiple faculties), one of these departments must be appointed the lead department.
 - d. **Lead faculty:** the faculty with lead responsibility for a Research Entity. Where a Research Entity involves only one faculty it is automatically designated the lead faculty. Where a Research Entity involves more than one faculty, the faculty in which the lead department is based must be the lead faculty.
 - e. **Participating department:** an academic department participating in/contributing to the work of a Research Entity, other than the lead department.
 - f. **Research Entity:** a formally recognised and established research institute or centre at the University of York, established to facilitate and promote outstanding research and knowledge exchange frequently with a particular emphasis on co-, inter- and multi-disciplinary research.
 - g. **Research group:** a collaborative group of researchers working together on one or more specific areas of investigation to further the University's research mission and strategy, but with no formal standing within the University's organisational structures and processes.

Policy statement

4. The University recognises the significant contribution that Research Entities make to the delivery of its research mission, and will support these Entities accordingly.
5. The University will put in place structures and arrangements that balance recognising the legitimate variations in the needs and approaches between Research Entities, with seeking to identify common features across groups of Entities that will allow effective and efficient approaches to the organisation, leadership and management of Research Entities.
6. The University will establish a typology of Research Entities, setting out the key characteristics of each category of Research Entity and the nature and scale of the contribution of Entities in each grouping to delivery of the University's research mission. The characteristics of each category will determine the key organisational features of Research Entities within that category.
7. All Research Entities will be allocated to one of the three following categories, according to their alignment (on a best fit basis) to the relevant descriptor:

Level 1 Research Entity

A Research Entity established to facilitate and advance the strategic development and delivery of research and knowledge exchange that would be less effective, within existing organisational academic structures. Level 1 Research Entities tend to be smaller, and involve staff from one or more departments.

Level 2 Research Entity

A Research Entity established to develop and deliver a co-ordinated programme(s) of research and knowledge exchange activity in a thematic area, which would not be possible, or would be less effective, within existing organisational academic structures. Level 2 Research Entities normally include staff from more than one department, and for some Entities in this category, cross-/inter-/multi-/trans-disciplinary work plays a vital element in developing and delivering this programme.

Level 3 Research Entity

A Research Entity addressing a research theme that is aligned with the University's mission and Research Strategy. A Level 3 Research Entity will have critical mass, and be delivering a programme of work and significant value that would not be possible within or across existing organisational structures. Typically this involves a significant element of cross-/inter-/multi-/trans-disciplinary work, and it is likely (though does not need) to offer some educational provision (e.g. credit-bearing modules/programmes; Continuing Professional Development provision) and significant opportunity for postgraduate training. A Level 3 Research Entity must be underpinned by a sustainable medium-term funding model, independent of any existing academic department(s).

Budgets for research entities can come from faculties or departments, as deemed appropriate by the Faculty.

8. The table below sets out the University's framework for Research Entities, aligned to the commitments in paragraph 6 and the categories in paragraph 7:

Table 1: Framework of responsibilities and powers for Research Entities

		Level 1 Research Entity	Level 2 Research Entity	Level 3 Research Entity
Organisational Governance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinct identity as a research entity, responsible and accountable to its lead department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinct identity as a research entity, responsible and accountable to its lead department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally established entity under the Ordinances, based for governance and organisational purposes in a single faculty. Entity director attendance at faculty committees will be at faculty discretion.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering committee or equivalent does not include faculty-level representation. Entity Directors appointed for a three-year term, with the potential for renewal. Where there are multiple lead directors, any issues that cannot be agreed by the directors should be referred to the head of the lead department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering committee or equivalent includes faculty-level representation. Entity Directors appointed for a three-year term, with the potential for renewal. Where there are multiple lead directors, any issues that cannot be agreed by the directors should be referred to the Associate Dean for Research in the lead faculty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering committee or equivalent includes faculty and University level representation Entity Directors appointed for a three-year term, with the potential for renewal. Where there are multiple lead directors, any issues that cannot be agreed by the directors should be referred to the Associate Dean for Research in the lead faculty.
	Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in the planning process as part of its lead department. Objectives and targets may be separately identified, or integrated into the lead department's plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in the planning process as part of its lead department, with objectives and targets separately identified within the lead department's plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in the planning process in the same way as an academic department.
Finance	Financial status and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget managed as part of the overall budget of the lead department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget contained within the overall budget of the lead department, but managed as a distinct and identified sub-budget within that. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be an independent budgetary unit (with budget managed through the faculty budget of the lead faculty), or a sub-budget within the overall budget of the lead department.
	Reporting of research income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported via the home department or with research income reported as per PI/CI split as currently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in the budget reports for the lead department, but with research income reported as a distinct, identifiable line. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported as an independent budgetary unit or as part of the budget of the lead department, as appropriate to financial status.
Staffing	Academic staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director line-managed in respect of their directorship* by the head of the lead department. Academic staff line managed through their home department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director line-managed in respect of their directorship† by the head of the lead department, with oversight by the Dean/Associate Dean for Research of the lead faculty. Academic staff line managed through their home department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director line-managed by Faculty Dean (the Director may also have an association with an academic department). May include academic staff line managed within the entity and/or academic staff line managed within an academic department/school.
	Approval of staff costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the home department of each individual member of academic staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the lead department for the research entity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the entity as an independent budgetary unit or budget of lead department, as appropriate to financial status.
	Workload modelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the home department of each individual member of academic staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the home department of each individual member of academic staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within the entity for academic staff managed within it; through the home department for any academic staff line managed in an academic department/school.
Support	Professional services support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed between Deputy Heads of Faculty Operations and Heads of Faculty Research Operations as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed between Deputy Heads of Faculty Operations and Heads of Faculty Research Operations as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed between Deputy Heads of Faculty Operations and Heads of Faculty Research Operations as appropriate
	Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to priorities set by Faculty(ies). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to priorities set by Faculty(ies). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On a par with academic departments.
Research	Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the most relevant LREC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the most relevant LREC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the most relevant LREC.
	ARR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included within ARR of the lead department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in ARR submission of the lead department, with explicit reference to the Entity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate ARR submission.

* The director of the entity may be based for their substantive role in a department other than the lead department for the entity. In those cases the director is line managed by the head of the entity's lead department in respect of their role as director, and by the head of their home department in relation to their substantive role.

† The director of the entity may be based for their substantive role in a department other than the lead department for the entity. In those cases the director is line managed by the head of the entity's lead department in respect of their role as director, and by the head of their home department in relation to their substantive role.

9. A Research Entity at any level may be called an institute or a centre, as determined at the point at which establishment of the Entity is approved.
10. The allocation of a Research Entity to one of the levels set out in paragraph 7 and Table 1 will be a holistic decision taken in relation to four parameters:
 - a. Scale of contribution and added value to University's strategic priorities and initiatives.
 - b. Scale of cross-/inter-/multi-/trans-disciplinary approach.
 - c. National / global recognition for Excellence and Impact.
 - d. Potential to become a sustainable national/international centre of significance.

Recognising the importance of taking account of the specific individual context, there is no predetermined weighting or prioritisation of these parameters. The allocation of each Research Entity to one of the levels set out in Table 1 will be done on a case-by-case basis, on the basis of the expertise and judgment of the body responsible for approval and taking into account both the parameters in paragraph 10 and the characteristics descriptor in paragraph 7.

11. The location of the authority to propose, approve, modify or disestablish a Research Entity will be determined by the Level at which any given Research Entity sits within the University's Research Entity typology.
12. The framework in Table 1 above and the procedures below will, together, allow effective support for and oversight of the University's portfolio of Research Entities through both the University's academic governance and executive leadership structures.

Procedures

13. The following procedures are designed to ensure effective implementation of the policy set out above, and thereby facilitate delivery of the policy's purpose set out in paragraph 1. These procedures must be read and implemented within the context set by that purpose and policy.

Authority to approve new Research Entities

14. To ensure effective and proportionate oversight, the University operates a tiered system for considering approval of proposals of new Research Entities:

Table 2: Authority to recommend and approve new Research Entities

	Initiating body	Recommending body	Approval body
Level 1	Participating department(s)	Lead department	Faculty
Level 2	Participating department(s)	Lead department	Faculty
Level 3	Lead department	Faculty	URC and UEB

(Note: for a Research Entity involving a single department, a single academic department will be both the participating department and the lead department).

15. Where a proposed Research Entity includes departments from more than one Faculty, all faculties with departments involved in the Entity must recommend/approve the proposed Research Entity.
16. All decisions on proposals to establish a Research Entity must be made by the approval body on the basis of the Framework set out in Table 1, and the parameters for decisions in paragraph 9.

Process for proposing new Research Entities

17. All proposals to establish a new Research Entity must be made using the Research Entity Proposal Form. Advice on the completion of this form can be obtained from RIKE.
18. Completed proposals for establishing a Level 1 or Level 2 Research Entity must be submitted to the relevant Deputy Head of Faculty Operations (DHOFO), who will arrange for it to be considered by the relevant approval body. The DHOFO is responsible for notifying the proposer of the outcome of the consideration of their proposal.

19. The approval of Level 1 or Level 2 Research Entities must be reported to the Faculty. Faculty must report to URC the establishment of all Level 1 and Level 2 Research Entities.
20. Once completed a proposal to establish a new Level 3 Research Entity must be submitted to RIKE, who will arrange for it to be considered by the relevant approval body. Where a proposed Research Entity involves more than one department, the submission must include written evidence of support from the heads of all the departments involved in the proposed Research Entity.
21. RIKE will notify the proposer(s) of the outcome of their proposal to establish a new Level 3 Research Entity. Where an application has not been successful, the approval body may recommend that the proposal be considered for approval at a lower level of the framework. In these cases the final decision on whether to approve rests with the approval body for the lower level.

Monitoring and review

22. The Annual Research Review (ARR) is the primary means of monitoring the performance of Research Entities. All Research Entities must participate in the ARR process as set out in the relevant policy and process document, with the level of reporting for each level of Research Entity set out in Table 1.
23. In addition to annual monitoring, the continuation of each Research Entity should be subject to regular review. The specific cycle for each Research Entity must be agreed at the point its establishment is agreed, but must be no longer than five years.

Process for changes to a Research Entity's level

24. Once a Research Entity has been established, it may make a case to have its Level in the framework reviewed and changed. Such proposals should not normally be made until a Research Entity has been in operation for at least a year.
25. Proposals from a research entity to change its level (up or down) should be made as part of the relevant ARR submission. These proposals will be considered by the approval body designated in Table 2, in respect of the criteria set out in paragraph 10.
26. Scrutiny of a Research Entity's ARR submission may lead the Faculty or URC to consider changing an Entity's level (up or down). Where such a move is being considered, the reasons for such a move must be shared with the Research Entity in question prior to any decision being made.
27. The Research Entity must be given the opportunity to respond to the proposed move of level, prior to a decision being taken. The authority to take these decisions sits with the approval body designated in Table 2, in respect of the criteria set out in paragraph 10.

Closure

28. A Research Entity may propose that it be closed, for example if its work has been concluded or superseded. The Research Entity may request this at any point, including but not limited to doing so as part of an ARR submission. The authority to approve closure sits with the approval body designated in Table 2.
29. A Research Entity may also be laid down at the instigation of the Faculty or URC. This may be the result of the scrutiny of a Research Entity's ARR submission, or because the work of the Entity has been concluded, or its mission fulfilled may lead the Faculty or URC to consider closing the Entity. Where such a move is being considered, the reasons for such a move must be shared with the Research Entity in question prior to any decision being made.
30. The Research Entity must be given the opportunity to respond to the proposed closure, prior to a decision being taken. The authority to take these decisions sits with the approval body designated in Table 2, in respect of the criteria set out in paragraph 10.

Monitoring and review

31. The operation of this policy and these procedures will be monitored on an ongoing basis by RIKE, and updates and changes brought forward as necessary in light of this.
32. A first full review of this policy and procedures will take place after one year, and thereafter at least every five years.

Document control

Approval body:	University Research Committee
Policy/procedure Owner:	Pro-Vice-Chancellor - Research
Responsible Service:	Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (RIKE)
Policy/procedure Manager:	Head of Policy, Integrity and Performance, RIKE
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