

# RESEARCH ENTITIES PROCEDURES

This is a set of Procedures related to Research Entities and is approved by the Senior Executive Team (SET) and the University research Committee (URC).

These Procedures must be read in conjunction with the Policy on Research Entities.

## Version Control

Version	Date	Lead author(s)	Description
1.0	3 Mar 2019	RLD	Working draft for consultation
1.1	8 July 2020	RLD	Draft considered by SET
2.0	24 Aug 2020	RLD	With inputs from SET related to naming procedures
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## 1. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

As indicated in the Preamble in the policy it is vital that Research Entities work with their host Schools and or Faculties to promote their combined research and postgraduate (PG) student supervision aspirations. At no time should the creation and operation of a Research Entity compete with a School or Faculty; indeed Research Entities should be seen as a means to an end for the School and Faculty. More specific arrangements are described below.

### 1.1. Organisational Arrangements

Research Entities can be embedded in a School or between Schools in a Faculty or between Faculties in the University Research Office. Programmes, Units and Groups (i.e., the natural gatherings category) are always embedded in Schools, while self-funded Entities (i.e., CoEs and Institutes) can be located in Schools but are more likely to be located in Faculties or even between Faculties. In the latter case the Entity is hosted by the University Research Office and is motivated by special developmental or strategic needs. These arrangements are generally transient with the intention that the Entity will eventually be relocated to a Faculty when it is firmly established and functioning as intended by the policy.

The organisational arrangements of Research Entities are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Organisational arrangements of Research Entities**

<b>These Research Entities:</b>	<b>1. Programme</b>	<b>2. Unit</b>	<b>3. Group</b>	<b>4. CoE</b>	<b>5. Institute</b>
Are always embedded in Schools	✓	✓	✓		
Are normally embedded in Schools or Faculties but can be embedded in between Faculties for a limited period of time				✓	✓
May request a formally approved organisational structure <sup>1</sup>		✓	✓		
Must have formally approved organizational structure <sup>1</sup>				✓	✓

The implication of this organisational structure is that once a Research Entity is formally recognized and located it will become the responsibility of the host (School or Faculty or Research Office). The URC will only perform a broad monitoring and oversight role, all other management activities will remain the responsibility of the host.

### 1.2. Staffing and Teaching Arrangements

The academic leaders of all of the five practicing types of Research Entities are referred to as Directors. In the case of programmes, Units and Groups this is a secondary appointment and has no impact on the conditions of service. The approving body (the Faculty Research

<sup>1</sup> Using the normal online approval process – Organization Change Request (<http://virtus.wits.ac.za:9083/wits-erpadhoc2/applogin>)

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Committee (FRC) and or URC) makes these secondary appointments. In the case of CoE and Institutes the position of a Director may be a substantive appointment following normal HR procedures or is may be a secondary appointment as described above, depending on mainly external funding circumstances.

Programmes, Units and Groups are staffed by members of Schools including the Director. In the case of CoEs and Institutes some of their academic and Professional and Academic (PS) staff members are hired by the Entity, at their cost, and some are seconded from Schools with the approval of the appropriate Head of School (HoS).

In the context of the Preamble which seeks to promote mutual co-operation between Entities and their hosts, it is important to have clear regulations regarding undergraduate (UG) and PG teaching responsibilities. Members of Programmes, Units, and Groups and those academic staff members seconded to CoEs and Institutes maintain their UG and PG teaching responsibilities as directed by their HoS. On the other hand, when an academic staff member is hired by an Entity, using external funding, his/her teaching responsibilities are determined by the Director. Should this academic undertake UG teaching duties within a School, then it is necessary for the Entity Director and the appropriate HoS to enter into agreement on the rate of payment for this service. These payments will not benefit the individual concerned but will accrue to the self-funded Research Entity (CoE or Institute) to be used to promote the activities of the Entity. PG teaching (or supervision) is not included in this arrangement and is the responsibility of all qualified University academics.

The staffing and teaching arrangements are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2: Staffing and teaching arrangements for Research Entities**

	1. Programme	2. Unit	3. Group	4. CoE	5. Institute
<b>Leadership titles</b>					
The academic leader of this type of Entity is called the Director	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Leadership arrangements</b>					
<b>The Director of these Research Entities:</b>					
Are always hired (and paid for) by School and are secondary appointments	✓	✓	✓		
Maybe hired (and paid for) by School and seconded to the Research Entity for an agreed period of time as determined by the HoS, <b>a seconded appointment</b> which is regarded as a secondary appointment				✓	✓
Maybe hired (and paid for by) the Research Entity, <b>an independent appointment</b> which is regarded as a substantive appointment				✓	✓
<b>Staffing arrangements</b>					
<b>Academic staff working in these Research Entities:</b>					
Are always hired (and paid for) by School	✓	✓	✓		
Maybe hired (and paid for) by School and				✓	✓

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seconded to the Research Entity for an agreed period of time, <b>a seconded appointment</b>					
Maybe hired (and paid for) by the Entity, <b>an independent appointment</b>				✓	✓

	1. Programme	2. Unit	3. Group	4. CoE	5. Institute
<b>UG teaching arrangements in the host School(s)</b>					
<b>Academic members of these Research Entities:</b>					
Carry a normal UG teaching load as determined by the HoS	✓	✓	✓		
When seconded to the Research Entity (and paid for by the School), will need to continue to teach UG students as determined by the HoS				✓	✓
When hired by the Research Entity, may teach UG students in a School but will have teaching time paid for by School to the Research Entity				✓	✓
<b>PG teaching arrangements in the host School(s)</b>					
<b>Academic members of these Research Entities:</b>					
Supervise PG students registered in Schools with no additional compensation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

### 1.3. Publishing, Student Subsidy and RINC Arrangements

Within the context of the Preamble, it is important to regulate the attribution of research publications, the allocation of student subsidy and research incentives (RINC).

Authors who are part of a Programme, Unit or Group, or who are seconded to self-funded Research Entities should firstly always acknowledge their University in their publications. Additionally they should use the address of the School AND the Research Entity. The only exception to this rule is in the case of staff hired by the Entity with no specific allegiance to a School who will only acknowledge the University and the Entity.

The financial credit arising from the input and output subsidy for UG and PG students will always accrue to the School where the students are registered. (Entities cannot register students.)

Research Incentive (RINC) funding, which is normally allocated to individuals, is transferred to accounts in a School for academics working in Programmes, Units and Groups, and for the seconded academics in CoE and Institutes. Only the RINC for academics hired by a CoE or Institute will be allocated to individual accounts located in the Entity.

The publishing, subsidy and RINC arrangements are summarised in Table 3.

**Table 3: Publishing and RINC arrangements for Research Entities**

	1. Programme	2. Unit	3. Group	4. CoE	5. Institute
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Which address to use on your publications?					
<b>Authors in these Research Entities:</b>					
Will use the University and School addresses	✓	✓	✓		
Will use the University, School and Entity addresses, if seconded from a School				✓	✓
Will use the University and Entity addresses, if hired by the CoE or Institute				✓	✓

	1. Programme	2. Unit	3. Group	4. CoE	5. Institute
<b>RINC arrangements</b>					
<b>Authors in these Research Entities:</b>					
Will have their RINC assigned to their School aligned RINC accounts	✓	✓	✓		
Who are seconded from a School will have their RINC assigned to their School aligned RINC accounts				✓	✓
Who are hired by the Entity will have their RINC assigned to their Entity aligned RINC accounts				✓	✓

## 2. PROCESSES

### 2.1. Application process

Application for formal recognition as a Research Entity may be lodged at any time.

The process for creation of a CoE or Institute is described fully in the Standing Order on the Creation of University Entities. In the case of Programmes, Units and Groups, the application, fully endorsed by the HoS and Dean that will host the proposed Research Entity, will be made using the prescribed template (see APPENDIX 2: APPLICATION TEMPLATE on page 16). The application will be considered firstly at the appropriate FRC. If the application is supported after suitable debate and discussion, the FRC will instruct the Assistant Dean for Research (ADR) to present the application at a meeting of the URC. If after debate and consideration the URC approves the application written notice will be provided to the Dean, HoS and Director of the formal approval of the Entity. Thereafter the support programme described below (Support Provided by Wits) will be initiated.

### 2.2. Naming Rights

The naming of Research Entities can easily become divisive. On the other hand the selection of names without the adherence to standards can devalue certain names. Thus although exceptions may be considered and approved by the URC and SET, the following guidelines for the naming of research entities are provided and should be followed closely.

- The naming opportunity should be used to maximise the branding of the University by having the name Wits appear somewhere in the title;

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- The selected name should reflect the status of the Research Entity (i.e., Programme, Unit, Group, Centre or Institute);
- Duplicate and confusing names should be avoided;
- Cognisance should be taken of the possible progression of the research entity up the research entity hierarchy, the implication of which is that the name may have to change to reflect the status of the entity and therefore upset the brand of the research entity. To assist with this difficulty the generic label 'centre' as distinct from Centre of Excellence may be used where needed and approved by the URC;
- In the broad field of the health sciences and particularly in the clinical setting Research Entities are often referred to as units although they may be large self-funded entities (CoEs or even Institutes) and clearly do not fit with the concept of an Unit as described in the policy. Thus they should be referred to as 'Medical Research Units';
- The institute label may only be used with the written approval of SET and the URC;
- When naming rights are claimed by an external funder the naming process will be guided by the Development and Funding Raising Office, but will need to be approved by the URC and SET as normal.

The promulgation of this version of Research Entities policy and procedure may require some existing Research Entities to be re-classified and possibly re-named. This will be considered during the normal five year reviews and will be done sensitively without damaging existing brand value.

### 2.3. Reporting Processes

Programmes, Units and Groups will need to report annually to their respective FRCs. While research CoEs and Institutes will report according to the directions provided by the Standing Order.

The Entity reporting requirements are summarised in Table 4 below.

### 2.4. Five Yearly Peer Review Processes

All types of Research Entities will undergo peer review assessment of quality, relevance and productivity once every five years. The purpose of the review will also be to help develop strategies for success in the future. In some cases the review may also recommend the closure of an Entity. Such a decision will be taken by the URC after consideration and discussion with the Director, HoS and Dean.

The process of peer review for each type of Entity is described in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Governance, Reporting and Evaluation Requirements**

Type of Research Entity	Governance over and above University governance	Day to day management	Reporting annually to	Monitoring and Evaluation
Programme	HoS	Director	Host School	Commissioned by host School, reporting to School & FRC
Unit	HoS	Director	Host FRC	Commissioned by URC, reporting to School, FRC & URC
Group	Collective decisions made by committee of core members	Director	Host FRC	Commissioned by URC, reporting to School, FRC & URC
CoE	See Standing Order			
Institute	See Standing Order			

### 2.5. Governance and Management of Research Entities

Good governance and management of the Research Entities is vitally important for short term success, long term sustainability and building the good reputation of the University. On the other hand, overly bureaucratic management is a damper to the creative research environment.

While balancing these principles and within the broader policy framework of the University, the governance and management requirements summarised in Table 4 above.

## 3. SUPPORT PROVIDED BY WITS

The University wishes to create an environment which allows Research Entities to maximise their external financial support and efficiently use it to produce high quality research and stimulating PG supervision. To this end, the support provided by the University is summarised in Table 5 and described in the text below.

**Table 5: Array of support mechanisms for Research Entities**

Types of support provided <sup>2</sup>	1 Program	2 Unit	3 Group	4 CoE	5 Institute
i. Teaching time is paid for				✓	✓
ii. Special financial arrangements				✓	✓
iii. RMA <sup>3</sup> support is provided			✓	✓	✓
iv. Co-investment through matching grant funding			✓	✓	✓
v. Grant writing support		✓	✓	✓	✓
vi. Idea development support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

<sup>2</sup> These types of support are described in the text below Table 5

<sup>3</sup> RMA = research management and administration support



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The support mechanisms introduced in Table 5 are described below.

- i. **Teaching time is paid for:** Where an academic, hired by a CoE or Institute, teaches UG students in a School then this contribution will be paid for by the School to the Entity at a rate agreed to by the Director and HoS. The payment will accrue to the CoE or Institute (not to the individual) and will be used to further the strategic intentions of the Entity. PG student supervision is not included in this arrangement.
- ii. **Special financial arrangements:** The following special financial arrangements are conferred on the self-funded Research Entities.
  - a. Income raised by the Research Entity designated to cover indirect costs must, according to the CORY Policy<sup>4</sup>, be shared between the Entity and the host Faculty at an agreed split. The Director should negotiate this sharing mechanism with the appropriate Dean(s). The recommend share split should be equal (that is 50:50) **at a minimum**. In the spirit described in the Preamble, Faculties should not see Research Entities as a way of generating income; rather the income must be seen as a way for enhancing capacity for research and PG supervision.
  - b. Interest earned by a Research Entity's unused grant deposits must be ring fenced for the sole benefit of the Research Entity and used by the Entity according to the funder's requirements to further its strategic intent.
  - c. Build and maintain an interest bearing reserve fund, or so called 'war chest', made up from unspent external funds, within the rules provided by the funder, CORY contributions and teaching time payments. The war chest is to be used to cover operational and labour costs of the Entity during lean times between external grants and so maintain the Entity. The maximum size of the war chest should not exceed the average annual turnover of the Research Entity measured over, at most, the last three years of the life of the Entity.
  - d. The University will budget for and make available retrenchment costs for the Entity. Should the Entity find that it cannot meet its salary commitments, despite access to the war chest, and the normal HR processes of redeployed or retrenched will be activated. The cost of possible retrenchments will be covered by the University.
- iii. **Research Management and Administration (RMA) support:** Varying amounts of expert RMA will be provided by the University to support the research efforts of the Entity. It is envisaged that this support will be provided at specific times, for example, while preparing a large and complex grant proposal project report, establishing a new research project, writing a grant proposal, etc. Its purpose is to free the Research Entity Director's time for academic research and leadership. The level of RMA support will

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<sup>4</sup> Cost Recovery Policy

increase with the status of the Entity, will be negotiated when needed by the Director and the University Research Office and is always dependent on the availability of budget within the University research Office.

- iv. **Co-investment through matching external research grants:** To be agreed before submitting a grant application to an external funder offering funding on a competitive basis the University may co-invest in the proposed research project. This direct financial support will always be dependent on the availability of budget and can never be guaranteed. It will be negotiated on a case by case basis and will be normally less than 5% of the annual grant value and limited to one research grant per Entity per year. The benefit of the funding is that it can be used flexibly to further the Research Entity's strategic intent related to the funded project.
- v. **Grant writing support:** Skilled grant writers will be hired by the University Research Office to help prepare large multi-national and multi-disciplinary research proposals to be submitted to international funding agencies and foundations. Again this support is dependent on available budget and expertise.
- vi. **Idea development support:** Direct support will be provided by the University Research Office for the development of new multi-disciplinary research projects that will be taken forward into to the preparation of competitive funding proposals. This will take the form of initial online meetings (using online meeting tools) moving eventually to support for the cost of physical collaborative meetings, while budget is available.

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## 4. APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS

The types of Research Entities mentioned in the Policy are defined here in detail.

### 4.1. Research Programmes

- 4.1.1. Consist of a number of similar research projects located in a School. Their existence is justified by seeking synergies in and amongst research projects.
- 4.1.2. Should have a designated leader who is referred to as a Programme Director.
- 4.1.3. Are approved at the School level by the Head of School and at the Faculty level by the FRC chaired by the ADR.
- 4.1.4. Are normally the precursors for establishing Units or Groups.
- 4.1.5. Receive only idea development support from the URC.
- 4.1.6. Have a lifespan that is consistent with the duration of the research projects that it embraces and is normally regarded as temporary in nature.
- 4.1.7. Are governed by the Research Entities Policy, this Procedure and are not impacted by the Standing Order.

### 4.2. Research Units

- 4.2.1. Consist of a research team centred on one individual, the core researcher, usually an eminent scholar with a strong research track record and a well-defined research programme. The core researcher would need to have a strong academic profile and would normally be a permanent employee of the University appointed at the level of Associate Professor or Professor and may (but not necessarily) hold an A or B NRF rating. This individual will build a research team consisting of PG students, junior associates and postdoctoral fellows working on projects within his or her research Unit.
- 4.2.2. The core researcher whose team is recognised as a Research Unit would carry the title of Director.
- 4.2.3. Are approved firstly at the School level by the HoS and at the Faculty level by the FRC chaired by the ADR. The ADR will then be mandated to take this application for consideration and approval by the URC.
- 4.2.4. Are the precursors for establishing Research Groups.
- 4.2.5. Are eligible for grant writing support and idea development support.
- 4.2.6. The lifespan of a Unit is closely related to the duration of tenure of the Director (that is the core researcher). When the Director departs (for whatever reason)

normally the Unit will be disbanded, however succession to another Director is possible but must be approved at the FRC and URC.

- 4.2.7. Are governed by this policy and are not impacted by the Standing Order.

### 4.3. Research Groups

- 4.3.1. Consist of a formally recognized grouping of at least two established core researchers, from a variety of disciplines, who share common and complimentary research interests and who have similar needs with respect to research infrastructure. The core researchers will need to have strong research and academic reputations. They will be on permanent or contract appointments or could be formally recognised visiting research fellow and be appointed at the level of Senior Lecturer or above and may (but not necessarily) hold an NRF rating. Where appropriate, these core researchers would share research/technical support staff and research equipment and would submit joint funding applications to various funders.

The Research Group would consist of, besides the core researchers, PG students, postdoctoral fellows and junior associates working on projects within the recognised research programme.

- 4.3.2. Should have a designated leader who is referred to as a Group Director. To this end, it is important that the core researchers select a leader for a five year term. The leader or the majority of the core researchers can terminate the term of leadership of the Director before the five year term is complete, in which case the Research Group Members will need to select another leader.
- 4.3.3. Are approved firstly at the School level by the HoS and at the Faculty level by the FRC chaired by the ADR. The ADR will then be mandated to take this application for consideration and approval by the URC
- 4.3.4. Are normally the precursors for establishing Centres of Excellence or Research Institutes.
- 4.3.5. Are supported similarly to Units but also qualify for co-investment and RMA support.
- 4.3.6. The lifespan of a Research Group will depend on the ability of its members to sustain their collaboration, their research productivity and necessary external funding.
- 4.3.7. Are governed by this Procedure and the Research Entities Policy and are not impacted by the Standing Order.

#### 4.4. Research Centres of Excellence

4.4.1. Are essentially Research Groups that have attracted sustained quantities of external funding that requires the formation of a CoE. A typical example of such funding programme is the DST-NRF CoE Programme. This funding allows the Entity to attain a reasonable state of stability over an extended period of time. The Research CoE may use any such funds to hire people according to normal HR policies on contract positions for the duration of the external funding.

The formation of a Research CoE will involve a formal change of organisational structure.

4.4.2. Should have a designated leader who is referred to as an Centre Director. The Director is most often the PI of the grant application which led the Entity being recognised as a CoE.

4.4.3. Are approved by the relevant FRC, URC, SET, Senate and Council according to the process description of the Standing Order.

4.4.4. Can progress to an Research Institute or a Research Group depending on research progress – quality and productivity – and the potential of financial sustainability in the near to midterm.

4.4.5. Are supported primarily by external funding. However the University will support them at the level of a Research Group and additionally provide special financial conditions and pay for teaching service in certain situations.

4.4.6. Have a lifespan equal to the duration of support by the external funder. Should that support be terminated or end naturally then the CoE may be re-constituted as a Research Group or a Research Institute following the normal approval processes.

4.4.7. Will comply with all the requirements of the Standing Order on creating “University Entities”, but may also have to accommodate requirements of the external sponsor.

#### 4.5. Research Institutes<sup>5</sup>

4.5.1. The establishment of a Research Institute signifies the University’s long-term strategic commitment to a particular area of research endeavour and its intention is to lend prestige and standing to this area. A Research Institute will perform high quality, multi-disciplinary research within a broad but well define field. It is likely

<sup>5</sup> Including those that were previously designated as 21<sup>st</sup> Century research institutes

to consist of a number of focus areas each with its own unique but largely complementary research programmes.

A Research Institute will only be established if there is demonstrable potential for significant external support from funding agencies and donors. The Research Institute may use any such funds to hire people into the Research Institute according to normal HR policies on contract positions for the duration of the external funding.

The formation of a Research Institute will involve a formal change of organisational structure.

- 4.5.2. Should have a designated leader who is referred to as an Institute Director. The Director must be a scholar of exceptional academic standing with a strong track record of leadership and attracting international funding. The Director may be appointed on a permanent basis or on a fixed term contract.
- 4.5.3. Are approved by the relevant FRC, URC, Senior Executive Team (SET), Senate and Council according to the process description of the Standing Order.
- 4.5.4. Are supported primarily by external funding. However the University will support them at the level of a Research Group and additionally provide special financial conditions and pay for teaching service in certain situations.
- 4.5.5. Have a lifespan of 15 or more years but will ultimately depend on its ability to sustain its external funding and related research productivity.
- 4.5.6. Will comply with all the requirements of the Standing Order on creating “University Entities”.

#### **4.6. Central Research Facilities**

Increasing costs make it imperative that the research infrastructure of the University should be strategically managed and linked to the research priorities of the University. Thus where feasible, items of equipment, which have a similar principle of operation and are utilized by researchers in cognate disciplines and schools will be grouped into entities called Central Research Facilities. The University will designate certain facilities as “Central Research Facilities” as guided by the URC. Staff appointed to a Facility will be responsible for the provision of professional advice during the assessment phase of equipment acquisition, the commissioning stage of the instrument on acquisition, all matters relating to the operation of the instruments in their facility, interaction with users and external clients, user training, technique development and the preparation of plans for upgrading and their implementation if funded.

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## 5. APPENDIX 2: APPLICATION TEMPLATE

Applications for recognition as a Programme, Unit or Group must be submitted using this template.



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#### Application for recognition as a research entity

The University recognises the benefit of forming collectives focused on research topics to the enhancement of the quality and quantity of the resulting research and innovation. Therefore, the University Research Committee (URC) has a process of recognising research entities, as described in the policy document entitled “University Policy on Research Entities, Research Thrusts and Central Facilities”.

This template is to be used to shape submissions for consideration by the URC. Please fill in all shaded areas and adhere to space allocations provided in brackets as far as is possible.

Indicate which URC-recognised entity is being applied for by marking the appropriate box.

Research Unit

Research Group

Research Institute

Indicate the title of the proposed research entity. It should reflect the type of entity selected above.

Indicate any branding that has been selected to identify the research entity.

Indicate the name of the proposed leader of the research entity.

#### Motivation

Provide a rationale for the creation of the research entity - why would we want it, what value would it add to existing competences and outputs? (Half a page maximum)



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How does the proposed research entity fit with the current strategic plan for research and postgraduate affairs? (Half a page maximum)

Indicate existing or proposed external collaborations that will assist the growth of the research entity. (Half a page maximum)

What contribution might the proposed research entity make to postgraduate student supervision? (500 words maximum)

### Governance Structure

Indicate the proposed governance structure and organisational location of the proposed research entity.
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1. Governance structure (300 words maximum)

2. Management and academic oversight of the entity (300 words maximum)

3. Suggested membership of an Advisory Board (roles, if not persons) and any other <i>ad hoc</i> governance or advisory structures; this would normally apply to Institutes only, traditional or "21st century"

4. Describe the organisation home for the proposed research entity (300 words maximum)

### Endorsements and Organisational Support

Indicate support for the establishment of the proposed research entity.
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1. Faculty / Faculties support (500 words maximum)

Name:		Signature:		Date:	
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Name:		Signature:		Date:	
Name:		Signature:		Date:	

2. School / Schools support (500 words maximum)					
Name:		Signature:		Date:	
Name:		Signature:		Date:	
Name:		Signature:		Date:	

3. Other support (500 words maximum)					
Name:		Signature:		Date:	
Name:		Signature:		Date:	
Name:		Signature:		Date:	

## Attachments

Please attach the following documents to this application.

1. CV of proposed entity leader.
2. An activity / business plan setting out the vision, mission, strategy and envisioned academic focus for the research entity. This plan should include at least:

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- a. An income and expenditure budget covering the first five years, identifying known and potential funders;
  - b. A five year research plan, to include, inter alia, timeframes, projected outputs, methodologies, proposed membership (if persons identified, otherwise by post, within the structure), office and laboratory accommodation, and where necessary equipment currently in place and major equipment acquisitions planned;
  - c. The proposed criteria by which the entity would wish to be judged at its next quinquennial review.