

International Research Management Benchmarking Programme

Statements of Good Practice:

Section 1 – Development of internal research strategy

1. The research strategy is framed within the overall goals of the institution.
2. The research strategy links clearly with, and is complementary to, other institutional plans and strategies.
3. The research strategy explicitly states its purpose to assist the business of the institution, identifies priorities and recognises the need to make choices as well as monitor progress.
4. The institution's mechanism for determining research strategy is transparent and widely owned.
5. The institutional research strategy fully involves faculties in its design and implementation and policies carried out by individual schools or departments are consistent with it.
6. Implementation of the research strategy is overseen by an appropriate member of senior management.
7. The research strategy has the facility to draw on external peer review, including other universities.
8. The Research Management Office is fully involved in the drafting of institutional research strategies in conjunction with other appropriate offices.
9. The research strategy is underpinned by the internal funding mechanisms for research.
10. The research strategy is, as far as possible, responsive to the research funding environment (at national, international and regional levels).
11. The research strategy seeks to "add value" to existing activity by pro-actively highlighting new opportunities for internal and external collaboration.
12. The research strategy is effectively communicated, monitored, reviewed and developed/refined.
13. The research strategy should be defined within a reasonable time frame (e.g 5 years), reviewed regularly and be capable of evolving in response to events.

Section 2 – Retention and Support for Research Staff

1. The research strategy is effectively communicated and made available to all staff. It should also be publicly available through key institutional documents, the web and appropriate print media.
2. The Research Management structure and policies form a core element of induction programmes for new academic and technical staff as well as new postgraduate students.
3. Research strategy, policy and management issues form a core element of ongoing professional development programmes for mid-career and senior academic staff.
4. Staff in leadership roles (e.g. Deans) are offered appropriate instruction in research strategy, policy and management, as well as being involved in discussion of good practice within the institution.
5. The Research Office maintains effective ongoing relationships with internal clients at all levels (faculty, department, individuals,) with a view to supporting research staff and understanding their needs.
6. Performance measures for Research Management are established and are widely available/disseminated.
7. The institution makes appropriate on-going training and career development available for all staff in research support roles.
8. The institution makes provision for appropriate incentives to enhance the research activity of new and emerging researchers. Such incentives might include conference grants and other start-up funding.
9. Contact is maintained with other areas of the institution, which might provide more general management training, and with external suppliers, who might provide more specialist training, both of which might be relevant to research in specific circumstances.
10. Policies for providing incentives for staff research activity are transparent, easy to understand and consistent across the institution.

Section 3 – External promotion of University Research Capacity

1. Institutions have regular, effective and proactive means of informing academic staff on funding opportunities and the strategic directions of funding agencies.
2. Central Research Offices have developed and strategically use key contacts in faculties, schools, institutes and department to facilitate a two-way flow of information on funding opportunities and research interests.
3. The institution maintains a searchable database on institutional research performance, capabilities and contacts, including all past projects and proposals.
4. Information and current policy from all funders is maintained and communicated as appropriate.
5. The Research Office holds regular information sessions and targeted workshops for faculty members and graduate students with the purpose of providing information on funding opportunities, proposal development and the development of collaborative research teams to respond to one-off as well as on-going research opportunities.
6. The institution seeks to establish an effective two-way communication strategy between themselves and major sponsors and proactively seek to develop that relationship.
7. The institution has clear mechanisms in place to handle internal and external enquiries regarding possible research and consultancy opportunities and to monitor the outcomes of these on a regular basis.
8. The Research Office actively encourages collaboration between different departments within the institution including Senior Academic Offices, Public Relations, Marketing and Registry.
9. The institution seeks to develop mechanisms to effectively track and involve alumni working in key positions with current, past and potential sponsors and in government.

Section 4 – Submission and authorisation of Externally Funded Work

1. The Research Office actively brings key staff together in response to large scale tender and proposal requests where appropriate and where consistent with research strategy.
2. Institutions, through the Research Office, or other appropriate office, ensure that proposals are reviewed by experienced academic and research staff (externally, where appropriate), prior to submission.
3. Proposals are only submitted with clear support from Head of Department or other appropriate academic management authority.
4. The institution approves all proposals before submission and research offices maintain records on the progress of all proposals.
5. The information gained from previously submitted proposals is used to inform future proposals.
6. The institution has a clear, transparent and widely disseminated formula for determining the full economic cost of any given project, including indirect costs and staff time.
7. A full costing is calculated for each externally funded project, even if this is not reflected in the price charged.
8. All proposed research should be consistent with the institution's overall research strategy.
9. The institution provides clear guidance to staff and external sponsors as to which kind of projects and contractual terms are acceptable.
10. The institution has a clear authorisation process for accepting external projects which is widely communicated and rigidly enforced.
11. The institution has clear risk assessment procedures for proposed projects which recognise the need to involve several key offices within the institution.
12. The institution systematically reflects on its progress against its research strategy including regular comparisons with other institutions of similar nature.

Section 5 – Project Management and Control

1. Systems (in the broadest sense) are regularly reviewed to ensure alignment with the institution's strategy, goals and reporting needs.
2. All project proposals contain explicit statements of how the project will be managed and, where possible and appropriate, provision for the appointment of specialist staff.
3. Mechanisms are in place to recognise the critical role of Principal Investigators, to ensure that they and other key actors are aware of their roles and responsibilities before commencement of the project and where required, that appropriate training is undertaken.
4. Key milestones (including reporting and financial review dates) are agreed with key actors at the outset and updated amongst all those actors throughout.
5. IT systems are designed, as far as is possible, to accommodate the business and culture of the institution.
6. Key actors, including Principal Investigators and Deans, are provided with regular and up to date project information (including financial, human resources, IP, and commercialization information), through on-line access or regular statements.
7. Information provided to key actors, including Research Officers and Deans, pro-actively highlights any risks and obligations specific to both them and the institution.
8. Procedures are in place to ensure that all those with access to research are covered by appropriate confidentiality and rights assignment agreements (depending on jurisdiction), particularly those who are covered by a contract of employment with the institution.
9. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that intellectual property both brought to and emerging from research is identified, protected, tracked and signed off at all stages and that staff have access to specialist advice in this regard.
10. Procedures are in place for the appropriate monitoring of material transfer agreements.
11. Mechanisms are in place to identify possible delays and monitor expenditure to ensure it is in line with project budgets.
12. The institutions has an explicit consistent framework within which academic units can predict future revenue and expenditure, especially where such income contributes to underpinning core activities.
13. Mechanisms are in place for the disclosure and management of conflicts of interest.
14. Mechanisms are in place to obtain feedback project sponsors, which can be taken into account in future planning.
15. Formal closure and continuous monitoring processes are in place ensuring that all obligations have been and continue to be met and that opportunities arising from the project are identified.

Section 6 – Commercialisation and Exploitation of Research

1. The institution has a clear strategy in place towards all forms of Intellectual Property Management.
2. Clear mechanisms are in place for conflict resolution within commercialisation.
3. The Intellectual Property strategy takes account of different jurisdictions and regulatory frameworks involved in international collaboration.
4. There is a broad strategic approach in place toward the management of investment in Intellectual Property where the university has an interest. The appropriate level of funding is made available, or sources of funding are identified, for successful delivery of the strategy.
5. Clear regulations are in place to determine the ownership of intellectual property by and between staff, students and third parties. These regulations are effectively disseminated throughout the institution and externally.
6. Academic departments and research projects are systematically monitored to identify emerging intellectual property at an early stage.
7. The institution establishes a register of intellectual property assets and pro-actively manages and maintains it at all stages of development and exploitation.
8. The institution has, or has access to, specialist expertise in the identification, assessment, legal protection, marketing and exploitation of its intellectual property appropriate to the scale of activity.
9. Mechanisms are in place to monitor the use by external partners of intellectual property in which the university has an interest.
10. The rights and obligations of external sponsors on particular projects with regard to the commercialization (ownership, licensing and protection) and publication of emerging intellectual property and know-how are fully defined, recorded and disseminated to individuals.
11. The institution has appropriate procedures in place for protecting and managing disclosure of IP so as not to unduly delay publication.
12. Staff are given appropriate incentives to engage in knowledge transfer activities. Such work is fully taken account of in staff evaluation, assessment and promotion procedures.
13. Clear policy mechanisms are in place to govern the distribution of revenues from intellectual property between the university and other key stakeholders.

Section 7 – Dissemination to Wider Society

1. The institution's research communication strategy is consistent with the institution's overall strategy and underpins the core missions of the institution, particularly in relation to the integration of research, education and service.
2. There is a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the different offices/officers responsible for research communication and good channels of communication exist between all these actors.
3. The institution pro-actively identifies projects (at various stages) and outcomes that are aligned with the universities priorities and are particularly suitable for external dissemination.
4. The institution has a programme of events, such as launches, to profile major achievements or projects which relate to the strategic objectives and any priority research themes of the institution.
5. The institution has clear criteria for the type of work most likely to generate good publicity, and guidance on how to avoid poor publicity, and makes this information available to staff.
6. The institution has a clear strategy and procedures with regard to handling crisis communications and ensures these are disseminated to every level.
7. The institution seeks to make key research findings accessible to a wider audience, through the use of research summaries, expert guides and speakers lists, produced in suitable lay language and in publicly accessible formats so as to engage public understanding of the core mission of the institution (including inter-institutional partnerships).
8. The institution has established clear mechanisms to review and reward the performance of departments and research groups in the area of dissemination, which are integrated with an incentivisation policy providing a variety of incentives.
9. Mechanisms are in place for staff to report their dissemination activity. Such mechanisms maximize research cudos and academic excellence and be consistent with any reporting requirements to external organisations.
10. The institution provides assistance and systematic training programmes for staff in handling the media, and specific assistance in the drafting of press releases and publicity materials.
11. The institution facilitates the participation of researchers, particularly early career researchers, in international conferences and other fora to present their research findings and raise their profile.
12. Where possible, dissemination outputs of staff are captured in a centrally managed integrated digital repository, linked to any central research activity database, which is made available to all units of the institution.
13. The institution has a framework for managing the expectations and communication requirements of external sponsors in a systematic and co-ordinated way.
14. The institution has a clear branding policy which is consistent with the research communication strategy.
15. The institution's web portal reflects the institution's core mission and strategy and is strategically and systematically managed as a key tool for promoting research to the broader community.