

Research plan 2007-2009

Research Centre for Languages and Cultures, University of South Australia

The Centre's plan has been developed in line with the University's goal to conduct high quality and high impact research and consultancy with an emphasis on the application of knowledge in collaboration with government, industry, commerce, the professions and community groups.

The Centre has four main areas of focus:

- languages and cultures in education
- international education
- language and culture in the professions
- social and political contexts of languages and cultures

Aims and strategies

In the past several years, the Centre has been very good at inputs, in terms of attracting research and consultancy income. We have been very good at research impact, although we have been less effective at developing the evidence base for demonstrating this. We have not been as good at outputs as anticipated; and not as good at promoting the Centre as we might like.

- Over the next three years our primary focus will be on outputs in terms of DEST publications, with publications in recognised national and international journals.
- We intend to at least maintain our current strong research income, and maintain our consultancy work, but ensure that both of these contribute more effectively to the Centre's research output and impact goals.
- We intend to maintain at least one project (funded or non-funded) in each focus area; based on the spread of expertise detailed in SC2 above, this goal of at least one project per area will be easily achieved.
- We also intend to maintain our strong national profile and enhance our international profile through closer co-operation with similar centres internationally, attendance at key international and national conferences, and through a carefully planned program of national and international visitors.

Research outputs

Our primary aim with regard to research outputs is to increase DEST publications; the following strategies will be implemented to ensure this. The Staff Development plan (see below) is designed to support this aim, as are several of the points discussed under Research Culture below.

- At a Centre level, we will develop a publication plan during 2007, in which we will ensure that from 2008 we publish at least 1 DEST publication in each focus area per year, and at least 4 DEST points in at least one of the focus areas per year.
- In the second half of 2007, as a Centre we will identify the top 25% of journals in relevant fields, and target publications in these journals where appropriate.
- We will ensure that each presentation by Centre staff at key national and international conferences (see under Research Culture) results in a submitted publication within 12 months.
- The Centre will develop a publications strategy as an integral part of all contract research.
- At an individual level, we intend to ensure that all Key Researchers develop and maintain at least the equivalent of supported researcher status through the publication points system only (that is, Key Researchers should be the equivalent of supported researchers ignoring their research input and their HDR completions). Thus Key Researchers at level A/B should produce an average of at least 2 DEST publication points per year, level C researchers should produce an average of at least 3, and level D/E researchers an average of at least 5. We will implement this system of identifying Key Researchers from 2010 (based on 2008-09 publications). See also Staff Development below.

Research income

Our primary goal with regard to research income is to maintain our very strong current contract research, while increasing our National Competitive Grant applications.

- We intend to maintain the Centre's research income at over \$500,000 per year.
- We will actively seek funded projects in each focus area.
- We intend to rebalance the Centre's funding mix to increase the proportion of Category 1 funding. We will increase National Competitive Grant applications to at least 1 per year from the Centre in one of the focus areas. Our strategy here will be to identify potential projects 2-3 years in advance, and identify what (if anything) will be needed to develop the track record of the applicant(s) over that period; then provide support specifically to develop the project application in the year before application. This strategy aligns with the Staff Development strategy below.
- There are currently two ARC Discovery applications from Centre members in the system for funding 2008-10. Additionally, one research program which was established with a DRPF grant is being developed into a joint NHMRC application to be applied for in 2009, with a Centre member as one of the Chief Investigators; this program currently has produced two papers which are in press, and a further three which are under development for submission during 2008.
- The national Department of Education, Science and Training has allocated approximately \$1.2 million per year for national research and development projects in the languages area for the period 2005-08. The Centre has been successful so far in gaining approximately 50% of these projects, and plans to maintain this rate of success.

Research impact

Our Centre has a strong research impact, but without necessarily having an evidence base for establishing this impact. We are usually very aware our performance on the earlier segments of the impacts chain (Inputs > Activity > Outputs > Usage), but often relatively unsure of the final Usage > Impact segment of the chain for our research.

- In particular, we need to ensure that we fully document for our research the entire scope of the impacts chain: Inputs > Activity > Outputs > Usage > Impact.
- We will introduce thorough, ongoing auditing of the impact of our research on end-users. While strategies will depend on the precise nature of the research, we will at least ensure we contact those who contract us to do funded research within a year of the completion of research to enquire about any implementation of the research which they may have undertaken. Further strategies will include development and implementation of procedures by which to identify, follow up and record all relevant aspects of end-user impact.
- We will ensure the alignment of our collection of evidence with the final discipline-specific RQF measures of impact once these have been released in mid-2007.

Research culture

We intend to enhance our internal research culture and its contribution to the research culture of the Division and the University as a whole. We also plan to improve our international profile, while maintaining our current strong national profile.

- We intend to invite research students to join the Centre as Associate Researchers.
- We have established a weekly Centre seminar series, beginning in the second half of 2007, in which Centre members can present their current research. These seminars will be strongly focussed on assisting researchers (particularly Teacher Researchers and research students) to develop their research into publications.
- We are planning to have an Annual Symposium on one of the focus areas each year, beginning in 2008. These will be open to the University and wider community and involve recognised experts in the relevant field.
- To lift our national and international profile, we will identify key international and national conferences relating to our focus areas, and ensure that at least one paper is presented at each conference by a Centre member (and that these presentations then lead to DEST publication, as discussed in Research Outputs above).

- We will invite to the Centre at least 1 international visitor each year from 2008 whose research is internationally recognised in one of our focus areas.
- We will invite to the Centre at least 4 national visitors each year from 2008, one with expertise in each of our focus areas.
- We will identify and establish relationships with international centres with complementary focus to that of our own Centre (such as CARLA, CAL, INALCO, the Berkeley Language Centre). We intend to establish one relationship per year in 2007-09, where relationships are to be measured in terms of the production of at least one collaborative output being produced jointly between a member of our Centre and the associated centre.

Staff development

Over the next three years, we intend to institute a strong mentoring program to ensure that all categories of members within the Centre develop and contribute to the Centre's output focus. In particular, we will focus on advancing current Teacher Researchers to Key Researcher status; and on strengthening the research outputs of current Key Researchers in line with the aims of the Centre. The target for the staff development program is to move at least one Teacher Researcher to Key Researcher status per year from 2008 based on DEST publications alone and to move all Key Researchers to Supported Researcher status based on DEST publications alone by the end of the three years. Beyond this period, the staff development program will continue to strengthen the research output of the Centre, to develop the research potential of existing members and to contribute to the induction of new members. This performance planning focus will also include support for completion by Centre members who are currently HDR students.

The program will support the development of individual research plans; identification of research development needs; development of research skills and knowledge; collaborations between Centre members; and achievement of individual research plans.

The program will be implemented through the following strategies:

- All Centre members will continue to complete biannual activities records documenting activities relevant to the work of the Centre. This biannual activities report will be used to track our performance through the period in terms of the RQF measures.
- Building on these records, we are currently developing individual research plans with all Centre members to support and align their research with both the Centre's aims and the RQF measures in an accountable process, integrated into the performance management cycle. Members are developing their plans in terms of individual research income targets, publications (numbers and locations), and esteem.
- Beginning in Study Period 5, the Centre has established a process of developmental forums to support researchers in meeting the goals of their research plans. This is a collaborative review process in which Key Researchers provide support on papers in progress, advice on research initiatives, and collaboration where appropriate.
- In 2008-2009, the progress of Centre members towards achieving their research plans will be further supported through presentations of research by each member at scheduled Centre presentations open to the Division, and the inclusion within the program of visiting scholars (see Research Culture).
- Additionally, as noted in the Centre's management plan in SC2, it is intended that over the next three years two current 0.5 contract positions will be converted to continuing positions.

Education and training

Research education and training focuses on supporting research students in the focus areas of the Centre plan. Currently six of the Centre's Key Researchers are involved in supervision of 15 research students in these areas. These include 11 PhD students enrolled in the School of International Studies, of whom four are expected to complete over the next three years.

The Centre's three-year plan focuses in this area on expanding research training and completions. The Centre aims to continue its current rate of growth in PhD enrolments and

completions over the next three years, and to expand the number of staff members supervising PhD theses. The Centre will actively seek PhD students in each research focus area. Strategies include:

- Identifying and recruiting research students from the Bachelor of Applied Language and Intercultural Communication program, developed and implemented primarily by Centre members in 2006. The program has been designed with a strong research component, with a clear link between the areas of study in the program and the research focus of the Centre.
- Providing one 3-year PhD stipend at any time, in one of the focus areas.
- Inviting research students enrolled in the School whose topics align with the focus areas of the Centre to become Associate Researchers. As such, they will be supported in their research through involvement in weekly seminars on research topics relevant to the Centre, and will participate in the development and support of their own research plans along with other Centre members (see Staff Development). The seminars are scheduled during Study Period 5 in 2007, and Periods 2 and 5 in 2008/2009.