1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out the requirements and procedures necessary for the establishment, management and review of Centres wholly within the University.

2 Centres

2.1 A ‘Centre’ is a grouping of primarily academic staff into a formal unit for the purposes of advancing certain teaching, research and/or learning objectives in accordance with the University’s Strategic Directions. A Centre must add value to existing academic activities and structures of the University in a manner which cannot be achieved through existing structures (such as faculties, schools or other subsets of those entities).

2.2 A Centre may undergo some form of community engagement (for example through an Advisory Committee), as long as its activities primarily reflect the definition in 2.1.

2.3 The University limits the use of the term “Centre” to those entities that have been approved in accordance with 4.3 of the Delegations of Authority – Administrative Functions (“Delegations”) and the processes set out in this Policy.

2.4 For historical reasons some Centres within the University may be known by various nomenclature including ‘Institute’, ‘Unit’, ‘School’ or ‘Committee’.

2.5 Where a Centre is largely externally funded or involves an external party, requirements additional to those placed on an internal Centre must be fulfilled including obtaining approval in accordance with 4.5 of the Delegations. These are listed in clause 6 of this Policy.

3 Procedure for Establishing Centres

3.1 In order to establish a Centre a proposal should be submitted to the Dean of the Faculty most closely associated with the object and scope of the proposed Centre, or in the case of a non-faculty based Centre the Principal Officer of the most closely associated portfolio.

3.2 A proposal should contain the following details about the proposed Centre:
(a) The name.

(b) Faculties and schools involved (including presiding Faculty).

(c) The object and scope of activities.

(d) A business plan and academic plan for the Centre which clearly covers financial arrangements, expected sources of income, and distribution of returns from activities (if any).

(e) How the object and scope of activities intend to add value in a manner which cannot be achieved through other existing structures.

(f) The main relationships with academic units or administrative portfolios.

(g) How the object and scope are consistent with:

1. the Strategic Directions of the University;

2. the strategies and plans of the University and the relevant Faculties /Schools and/or administrative portfolios.

(h) A detailed description of resources required, by way of infrastructure (including equipment, facilities or allocation of space), and proposed funding; together with an indication as to the extent to which approval may have been given on a preliminary or conditional basis of the provision of these resources.

(i) Operation including:

1. Details of the name, qualifications and experience as well as the proposed term, reporting lines and any other conditions of appointment of:

   (A) the proposed member of staff who is to be responsible for management and performance of the Centre (ie HOA or proposed Director), and

   (B) any other key academic staff associated with the Centre or member of the proposed Management Committee (see clause 8);

2. Details of any Management Committee or any Advisory Committee (see clause 9); and

(j) A list of persons consulted in relation to the Proposed Centre.

3.3 The supporting Dean/Principal Officer will be responsible for ensuring that the Proposal adequately addresses the criteria set out in clause 3.2 including (if necessary) liaising with the staff member who has submitted the original Proposal to request additional information, determining whether the object and scope are consistent with the Strategic Directions of the University and addressing considerations in relation to allocation of resources.

3.4 Once sections 3.2 and 3.3 above have been satisfied the supporting Dean/ Principal Officer will submit the Proposal, to the Provost, for review and approval.

3.5 A Centre will be established pursuant to 4.3 of the Delegations, for a period of up to 5 years from the date it is approved by the Provost and subject to any conditions attached to such approval.
4  **Reclassification or Name Change**

Any significant change to the operation of the Centre (including change of name, sources of funding or proposed involvement of external parties) must be approved by the Provost.

5  **Competitive Grant Funded Centres**

5.1 The procedure for establishment of a Centre (set out in clauses 3.2 and 3.3) must be followed prior to submitting an application:

(a) through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and in accordance with section 4.4 of the Delegations for Cooperative Research Centres; and

(b) through the Research Office and in accordance with section 4.6 of the Delegations for other competitive grant funded Centres (including but not limited to ARC Centres of Excellence, NHMRC Centres of Clinical Research Excellence, and other competitive grant funded Centres).

5.2 The Provost will consider such applications and may grant provisional approval for the establishment of a Centre and on award of funding the Centre will become a Centre of the University.

5.3 Competitive grant funded Centres may also be subject to additional governance, compliance and reporting requirements in accordance with the terms and conditions of the external funding agreement.

6  **Centres Involving External Parties**

6.1 Centres involving external parties must fulfil the requirements for establishment of a new Centre set out in 3.2 above before the University will consider entering into any agreement with an external party.

6.2 Where a proposed relationship with an external party brings a Centre within the ambit of 4.5 of the Delegations due to, for example, the establishment of a partnership, company or joint venture then the Director, Business Liaison Office must be informed and approval must be sought in accordance with that Delegation.

6.3 Where a proposed relationship with an external party relates to funding or sponsorship and does not bring a Centre within the ambit of 4.5 of the Delegations, the proposal for establishment must outline the terms and conditions of such funding arrangements.

7  **University Officer (Centres)**

7.1 A “University Officer (Centres)” will be appointed by the Provost in respect of each Centre. In the usual course, this will be the Dean most closely linked with the Centre. The University Officer has the important duties of:

(a) closely monitoring the performance of the Centre against its proposed objectives and business plan
and academic plan;
(b) ensuring compliance with the University’s policies and procedures; and
(c) exercising relevant delegations under the Delegations of Authority – Administrative Functions.

8 Management of Centres

8.1 A member of University staff will be appointed as Director of the Centre and will be responsible for the overall management and day to day direction of the Centre ("Director"). The Director will be appointed by the Provost, on the recommendation of the supporting Dean/Principal Officer. A Director will be appointed for a fixed term, normally of three years. The term may be renewed by the Provost, on the recommendation of the Dean/Principal Officer. A Centre may have two co-directors, or a Director and Deputy Director.

8.2 The Centre may have a Management Committee which may comprise persons in the following categories:
(a) the Director of the Centre, Deputy Director or nominee;
(b) the University Officer (Centres) or nominee;
(c) up to three other members from Faculties and/or Schools associated with the Centre; and
(d) any other member co-opted as required.

8.3 Members of the Management Committee will generally serve 3 year terms (other than the University Officer (Centres)).

8.4 The Director will:
(a) ensure that any research funds are acquitted in accordance with the terms required by the relevant funding body;
(b) ensure that any gifts are accepted under the direction of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Community) and in accordance with the Delegations of Authority;
(c) establish and maintain proper accounting records and systems of financial control, in accordance with University policies and procedures from time to time, and as directed by the Chief Financial Officer;
(d) ensure that a budget for each ensuing financial year is prepared in respect of the Centre in accordance with Budget Guidelines issued from time to time by the Chief Financial Officer;
(e) ensure that the Centre meets all costs of conducting and maintaining its operations without drawing on, depending on or committing other University income or capital resources except as approved in writing in advance by the University Officer (Centres);
(f) if required by the University Officer (Centres), provide an annual report that includes:
   (1) a summary of the Centre’s activities in relation to the identified objectives and targets;
   (2) a statement of financial performance;
   (3) a statement of in-kind contributions;
(4) details of any publications, research projects associated with the Centre during the previous year;

(5) details of significant changes to the Management Committee or other significant managerial or personnel changes;

(6) a record of the meetings of the Centres Management and/or Advisory Committees;

(g) provide such other update or report as required by University Officer (Centres) from time to time.

8.5 The University Officer (Centres) will be required to provide annually:

(a) a brief report to the Provost in relation to each Centre for which they are responsible, confirming the continued operation of the Centre or noting any issues which require resolution; and

(b) a copy of the annual report in relation to any Centre which is required to provide an annual report pursuant to 8.4(f) and certification letter to the Chief Financial Officer (for submission to the Senate).

8.6 The Centre may also establish an Advisory Committee which is responsible for advising the Management Committee and or Director in relation to the object and scope of the Centre. The formation of an Advisory Committee is recommended where active participation and engagement of external or professional organisations is required.

8.7 Members appointed to the Advisory Committee would be selected by the Management Committee on the basis of their capacity to contribute to the effective working of the Advisory Committee by having relevant expertise and experience, an appreciation of the role, values and independence of the University and the capacity to appreciate what the University needs from the external community, and the external community needs from the University, through the activities of the Centre.

8.8 The Provost may, at any time, remove a member of the Management Committee or the Advisory Committee.

8.9 The Management Committee shall determine how often the Advisory Committee is to meet (with a minimum of one annual general meeting), and the procedures for Advisory Committee meetings.

8.10 The nature and terms of activities conducted by or through a Centre which create legally binding obligations on the part of the University (for example, by agreement, by representations or by specifying purposes) must first be approved in writing in accordance with the Delegations of Authority - Administrative Functions (“Delegations”).

8.11 Those responsible for the management and operation of a Centre or proposed Centre (including the Director and members of the Management and Advisory Committee) should specifically be aware of the following sections of the Delegations:

(a) 4.2 Intellectual property rights;
8.12 Those responsible for the management and operation of a Centre or proposed Centre must ensure that they comply with all University by-laws, rules, policies and guidelines including without limitation those with respect to use of the University Coat of Arms and branding including any logo or other image of the Centre itself.

9 Review of Centres

9.1 All Centres must undergo regular review, at intervals of five years or less. New Centres must undergo a review after two years.

9.2 Each Faculty/administrative area must set up and maintain a forward program for the review of all of its Centres.

9.3 The two year review for new Centres will consist of a self-evaluation document which clearly lays out the aims, objectives and targets for the period and reports any achievements against targets together with the five-year plan. The report should also include any other matters of relevance to the proper management of the Centre. This document should be approved or not approved by the relevant Dean and University Officer prior to forwarding to the Provost.

9.4 At the five year review all Centres should be reviewed by a panel chaired by an appointee of the Provost. Panels should consist of at least three members of staff of the relevant Faculty/administrative area and one member of staff from another Faculty or administrative area. Members of the Centre should not be members of the panel.  

9.4.1 In preparation for review, a Centre should produce a self-evaluation document which clearly lays out the aims, objectives and targets for the period and reports achievement against targets. It should also produce a plan for the next five years which covers the matters itemised in section 3.2, giving revised targets where appropriate.

9.4.2 The review should compare achievements with targets and should make recommendations about (a) the continuation of the Centre, (b) adequacy of the forward plans, and (c) other matters of relevance to the proper management of the Centre. The panel may request additional information from the Centre and will normally hold interviews with the Centre Director and other key staff.

9.4.3 Based on the recommendations of the review panel, the University Officer (Centres) should ask the Provost to continue the Centre for a further period (normally five years) or to initiate winding up of the Centre.

9.5 With the written permission of the Provost, a University Officer (Centres) may use the outcomes of an external review of a Centre in lieu of an internal review.

9.6 The Audit, Risk Management and Assurance Unit of the University or its representatives may review the financial and other operations of a Centre at any time. All documents and records are to be made available by the University Officer (Centres).

9.7 The Provost may review the financial viability or activities of a Centre at any time.
9.8 A Centre will lapse 5 years after its establishment or shorter period (or other approved renewal period) unless a review recommends its continuation.

10 Closure of Centres

10.1 A Centre may be closed by a decision of the Provost in the following circumstances:

(a) on the grounds that it is no longer financially viable or that it no longer meets the strategic objectives of the University;

(b) it is no longer functioning adequately; or

(c) where the Centre has seriously breached University policy, or potentially brought the University into disrepute.

10.2 Where a Centre is to be closed, or lapses and approval is not given for its renewal, the Director of the Centre, in consultation with the University Officer (Centres), will be required to put in place a strategy for closure of the Centre which covers without limitation the following matters:

(a) distribution of funds and resources (or management of any deficit); and

(b) impact on any staff and students.
1. Background/context

2. Authority/consultation
This document was developed by the Offices of General Counsel and the Provost and DVC in consultation with a working group (Professors J Brien, G Chapman, P Goodyear, Mr S Malcolm, Ms O Perks, Dr V Terry, Ms H Ware), the Research Office, the Business Liaison Office and the Provost’s Academic Strategy Group (including all Deans).

3. Management Responsibility
Provost and DVC

4. Implementation Responsibility
Deans, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Provost and DVC

5. Dates

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Appendix 1

Proposal for Establishment of a Centre within the University of Sydney

1. Proposed name:

2. Faculty(ies) and School(s) involved (indicate presiding Faculty):

3. Object and scope of activities:

4. A brief statement of how the object and scope of activities adds value in a manner which cannot be achieved through other existing structures:

5. Main proposed relationships with academic units or administrative portfolios:

6. State how the object and scope are consistent with
   6.1 the Strategic Directions of the University:

   6.2 the strategies and plans of the University and the relevant Faculties /Schools and/or administrative portfolios:
7. A detailed description of resources required (including an indication as to the extent to which approval may have been given on a preliminary or conditional basis of the provision of these resources)

7.1 Infrastructure (including equipment, facilities or allocation of space)

7.2 Proposed funding (and details of funding Agreements)

*Attach* a draft business plan and academic plan for the Centre which clearly covers financial arrangements, expected sources of income, and distribution of returns from activities (if any).

8. Management arrangements:

8.1 member of staff who is proposed to be responsible for management and performance of the Centre (ie proposed Director)

Name:
University appointment:
Qualifications and experience:
Proposed term:
Reporting lines and any other conditions of appointment:

8.2 any other key staff associated with the Centre

Name:
University appointment:
Qualifications and experience:

Proposed term:

Reporting lines and any other conditions of appointment:

9. Details of any proposed Management Committee or any Advisory Committee/Board:

10. Persons consulted in relation to the proposed Centre:

11. Details of any other agreements or relationships with external parties not noted above:

………………………………………….

Signed: Head of School/primary author of proposal/Director-designate of the Centre

Date:

To be forwarded to

1. the relevant Dean/Principal Officer

I am satisfied that the information and plans submitted above and in any attachments comply with the requirements of the University’s policy on ‘Centres’: Policy for establishment, management and review’, and recommend the Centre’s establishment/extension for five years.

I recommend as University Officer (Centres) for the Centre: ……………………………
2. Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, for review and approval

Signed:
Date:
Appendix 2

Guidelines for the oversight and management of Centres of the University of Sydney by University Officer (Centres)
- To be read in conjunction with the Policy document entitled ‘CENTRES: Policy for Establishment, Management and Review’

1. The appropriate level of accountability of the Centre is to be determined by each University Officer (Centres) on a case by case basis.

This may take the form of:
- representation on the Management Committee of the Centre or other attendance as required; and
- the requirements of the Centre to report in relation to funding, managerial issues, financial performance or any other significant issues impacting the Centre, including the frequency and detail required for such reporting.

The accountability of each Centre will vary depending on the University Officer (Centres) assessment of factors such as:
- the comparative expertise of the Management Committee and other staff involved in the Centre;
- other external mechanisms of accountability to which the Centre is subject (such as governance, reporting and compliance requirements required by funding agreements); and
- potential for exposure to risk or liability (including risk of damage to the University’s reputation).

2. Naming of the Centre should be decided with reference to:
- consistency with the general conventions for naming entities in the University; and
- the need to identify the Centre as part of the University, if not by inclusion in the actual title, then by use in all documentation of a ‘strap line’ such as ‘– a Centre of the University of Sydney’.

3. Web presence of a Centre should be:
- at a usyd.edu.au site;
- with a ‘look and feel’ and content that is in accordance with University policy and guidelines; and
- maintained with information that is regularly updated.

4. Variations to any of the essential features that formed the basis of the approval of the Centre’s establishment should result in reconsideration and a recommendation from the Director to the University Officer (Centres), and thence the Provost.

Centres should be monitored for continued viability in terms of scale, purpose and available resources to support them, and any significant change in any of these features should prompt a review of the form or even existence of the Centre.