

CENTRES POLICY 2023

The Vice-Chancellor and President, as delegate of the Senate of the University of Sydney, approves the following policy.

Dated: 12 December 2023 (commencing 22 January 2024)

Last amended: 5 March 2024 (administrative amendment)

22 April 2024 (administrative amendment)

Name: Professor Mark Scott

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1 Name of policy

This is the Centres Policy 2023.

2 Commencement

This policy commences on 22 January 2024.

3 Policy is binding

Unless the contrary is expressly stated, this policy binds the University, staff, students and affiliates.

4 Statement of intent

This policy:

- (a) sets out the University's requirements for establishing, naming and closing centres; and
- (b) establishes a framework for:
 - (i) classifying University centres; and
 - (ii) regulating them according to their classification.

5 Application

- (1) This policy applies to:
 - (a) all University staff and affiliates;
 - (b) all University centres.
- (2) This policy does not apply to:
 - (a) Cooperative Research Centres;
 - (b) competitively funded centres;
 - (c) partnerships; or
 - (d) joint ventures.

6 Definitions

advisory committee means a committee that provides advice on a centre's strategy and direction. Its members are internal and external stakeholders.

affiliate has the meaning given in the [Staff and Affiliates Code of Conduct](#). This is:

means a person appointed or engaged by the University to perform duties or functions on its behalf, including but not limited to:

- an honorary title holder engaged under the [Honorary Titles Policy](#);
- a consultant or contractor to the University; and
- an office holder in a University entity, a member of any University committee, board or foundation.

An affiliate is not an employee of the University.

centre	means an academic grouping that is recognised by the University and structured consistently with this policy. Centres aim to achieve national or global impact through any of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• building research capacity;• leading and conducting research;• enhancing engagement;• raising the University's public profile.
competitively funded centre	means a centre which is: established as result of an external, competitive funding process. Examples of such processes include those conducted by the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council or similar bodies.
dean	means any of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive Dean of a faculty• Dean of a faculty• Head of School and Dean of a University school.
faculty	includes a University school.
formal affiliation	means a relationship between the University and another party, which is documented in an affiliation agreement.
management committee	means a committee of senior staff and or members of a centre. It: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• approves the centre's strategic direction; and• oversees and advises on its operations.
presiding dean	means the dean of the faculty responsible for a centre.
presiding faculty	means the faculty responsible for a centre.
procedures	means the Centres Procedures .
University Executive	means the University senior management committee of that name.

7 Principles

- (1) Centres must align with the University's strategic goals.
- (2) Centres may focus on a single discipline or may be multidisciplinary.
- (3) Centres should have a focus of expertise which:
 - (a) is of national or international significance; and
 - (b) raises the University's profile.
- (4) Centres should advance the excellence and impact of either or both of research or research training at the University. They should add value in a way which cannot be achieved through existing structures.

- (5) Centres must remain under the control of the University, even if they have affiliations or relationships with external entities.
- (6) Centres undertaking credit-bearing unit and course development and delivery must do so in collaboration with a presiding faculty.
- (7) Centres proposing, or taking part in, commercial activities must also comply with the [Guidelines Concerning Commercial Activities](#).

8 Classification

- (1) The University classifies centres into 4 levels.
- (2) **Level 1 Centres:**
 - (a) consist of a group of researchers from one or more faculties, working collaboratively;
 - (b) must have a presiding faculty;
 - (c) must align with the presiding faculty's strategic goals the centre is aligned; and
 - (d) must be called a collaborative network, group or cluster.
- (3) **Level 2 Centres:**
 - (a) consist of a group of researchers from one or more faculties working collaboratively;
 - (b) must have a presiding faculty;
 - (c) must align with the presiding faculty's and the University's strategic goals;
 - (d) must work on focussed research in one or more disciplines;
 - (e) may have formal affiliations with external entities;
 - (f) may be involved in education, research training or engagement activities; and
 - (g) must be called a centre.
- (4) **Level 3 Centres:**
 - (a) are major groupings of researchers from several faculties working collaboratively;
 - (b) facilitate multi-disciplinary research that addresses significant research or social challenges;
 - (c) must have a presiding faculty or be under the supervision of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor;
 - (d) must align with the strategic goals of:
 - (i) any presiding faculty;
 - (ii) any supervising Deputy Vice-Chancellor's portfolio; and
 - (iii) the University;
 - (e) may have formal affiliations with external entities;
 - (f) should be involved in education, research training or engagement activities; and
 - (g) must be called a centre.

- (5) **Level 4 Centres:**
- (a) are University-wide structures with significant engagement across faculties and portfolios;
 - (b) must be multi-disciplinary collaborative groups, involving several faculties;
 - (c) must conduct leading research with broad impact;
 - (d) may have formal affiliations with external entities;
 - (e) must be involved in, research training and engagement activities;
 - (f) must have a significant profile, to achieve national or international recognition; and
 - (g) must be called an institute.
- (6) If there is disagreement about the classification of a centre, the Vice-Provost's decision will be final.

9 Naming

- (1) Groups not subject to this policy may use a name listed in this policy if:
- (a) the relevant dean or deans recommend it; and
 - (b) it is approved by the Vice-Provost.
- (2) Centres subject to this policy may use a name which is not listed in this policy if the Vice-Provost approves it.
- (3) Centres may change their names to:
- (a) reflect the current focus of their activities; or
 - (b) promote their activities more effectively.
- (4) Name changes for **Level 1 Centres** must be approved by the presiding dean.
- (5) Name changes for **Level 2 and Level 3 Centres** must be approved by the Vice-Provost;
- (6) Name changes for **Level 4 Centres** must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor, after being endorsed by the Provost and the University Executive.

10 Establishment

- (1) New centres must be established consistently with this policy and the procedures.
- (2) The presiding dean may approve a **Level 1 Centre**.
- (3) The Vice-Provost may approve:
- (a) a **Level 2 Centre**, on the recommendation of the proposed presiding dean; and
 - (b) a **Level 3 Centre**, after consultation with any supervising Deputy Vice-Chancellor and after endorsement by the University Executive.
- (4) The Vice-Chancellor may approve a **Level 4 Centre**, on the recommendation of the Provost and after endorsement by the University Executive.
- (5) Requests to establish a new centre must be made in the form specified, and address the criteria specified, in the procedures.

- (6) All new Level 2 to 4 Centres will be approved for an initial period of 5 years, with further approvals of up to five years after reviews as provided in clause 16.

11 Governance

- (1) Governance arrangements for centres must be proportionate to their classification and complexity.
- (2) The presiding dean will decide the governance arrangements for a **Level 1 Centre**.
- (3) **Level 2 Centres** must have:
 - (a) a written strategic and operational plan; and
 - (b) other governance arrangements as approved by the presiding dean.
- (4) **Level 3 Centres** must have:
 - (a) a written strategic and operational plan;
 - (b) a management committee constituted with approval of the Vice-Provost;
 - (c) an advisory committee, constituted with approval of the Vice-Provost; and
 - (d) other governance arrangements as decided by the Vice-Provost after consultation with the University Executive.
- (5) **Level 4 Centres** must have:
 - (a) a written strategic and operational plan;
 - (b) a management committee constituted with approval of the Vice-Provost after consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research);
 - (c) an advisory committee, constituted with approval of the Vice-Provost after consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research); and
 - (d) other governance arrangements as decided by the Provost or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) after consultation with the University Executive.

12 Management

- (1) Management arrangements for each centre must be proportionate to its classification and complexity.
- (2) Each centre must clearly allocate responsibility for its management.
- (3) **Level 1 Centres** may have a convenor or director, approved by the presiding dean.
- (4) **Level 2 Centres** may have one or more directors, approved by the presiding dean.
- (5) **Level 3 Centres** may have one or more directors, approved by the Vice-Provost on recommendation of the presiding dean or supervising Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- (6) **Level 4 Centres** must have at least one director, approved by the Vice-Chancellor.
- (7) Convenors, directors and management committees are responsible for managing their centres.
 - (a) Advisory committees and their members have no management responsibility and are not representatives of the University.
 - (b) Advisory committees and their members must not:
 - (i) make management decisions; or

- (ii) purport to act for, or to bind, the University in any engagement with parties outside the University.

13 Resources

- (1) Each centre must have its own cost centre code in the University's finance system.
- (2) Centres must be financially responsible.
- (3) Centres may be resourced through any or all of faculty support, external funding or University support.
- (4) **Levels 1 and 2 Centres.** Resourcing is the responsibility of the presiding faculty.
- (5) **Level 3 Centres.** Resourcing is the responsibility of the presiding faculty or supervising Deputy Vice-Chancellor. It may include external funding.
- (6) **Level 4 Centres.**
 - (a) The University provides funding for central administrative functions through annual budgets.
 - (b) The University provides infrastructure support.
 - (c) The centre should seek external funding.

14 Branding

All centres must use the University logo and brand identity.

Note: [See Brand Policy](#)

15 Reporting

- (1) **Level 1 Centres.**
 - (a) Presiding faculties must report annually to the Vice-Provost.
 - (b) The report must list Level 1 Centres opened and closed in the preceding 12 months.
- (2) **Level 2 to 4 Centres** must provide reports and plans as specified in the procedures.

16 Review and reclassification

- (1) Reviews of centres must consider the criteria specified in the procedures for the relevant classification.
- (2) **Level 1 Centres.** The presiding dean:
 - (a) may require a review at any time; and
 - (b) will decide the review process.
- (3) **Levels 2 to 4 Centres** must be reviewed every 5 years.
- (4) For **Level 2 or 3 Centres**, the Vice-Provost may require a review at any other time.
- (5) For **Level 4 Centres**, the Vice-Chancellor may require a review at any other time.

- (6) Completed review reports must be provided for approval:
 - (a) for **Level 1 Centres**: to the presiding Dean;
 - (b) for **Level 2 and Level 3 Centres**: to the Vice-Provost, after endorsement by the presiding dean or supervising Deputy Vice-Chancellor;
 - (c) for **Level 4 Centres**: to the Vice-Chancellor, after endorsement from the Vice-Provost.
- (7) The outcome of a review must be a recommendation that:
 - (a) the centre continues unchanged;
 - (b) the centre continues with changes;
 - (c) the centre continues but is reclassified; or
 - (d) the centre closes.
- (8) The approver of a review report may decide to:
 - (a) continue a centre unchanged;
 - (b) continue a centre with changes; or
 - (c) reclassify it.
- (9) Decisions to close a centre must be made consistently with clause 17.
- (10) Decisions to reclassify a centre must be made on recommendation from a review.

Note: See the procedures for further detail.

17 Closure

- (1) Centres may be closed:
 - (a) when a review recommends closure; or
 - (b) on the grounds that changes in circumstances have made it inappropriate for it to continue.
- (2) **Level 1 Centres** may be closed by decision of the presiding dean.
- (3) **Level 2 or 3 Centres** may be closed by decision of the Vice-Provost, after consultation with the presiding dean or supervising Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- (4) **Level 4 Centres** may be closed by decision of the Vice-Chancellor, after consultation with the University Executive.
- (5) The process for closing centres is set out in the procedures.
- (6) A decision maker may direct that a centre be closed immediately, if they believe a serious breach of policy, regulatory or other requirements may have occurred.

18 Roles and responsibilities

- (1) **Directors** are responsible for:
 - (a) managing the centre consistently with its objectives and University rules, policy and procedures;
 - (b) providing accurate financial reports;
 - (c) providing other reports and plans as required by the procedures; and



- (d) managing any staff directly associated with the centre.
- (2) **Presiding deans** are responsible for:
- (a) establishing and closing Level 1 Centres;
 - (b) approving annual reports of Level 1 and 2 Centres;
 - (c) approving name changes for Level 1 Centres;
 - (d) endorsing reports of other centres as set out in the procedures;
 - (e) overseeing compliance with legislative, regulatory and University requirements by centres over which they preside;
 - (f) providing reports to the Vice-Provost as required;
 - (g) providing support and resources for centres over which they preside;
 - (h) overseeing compliance with University, regulatory and funding body requirements by centres they preside over; and
 - (i) establishing reviews consistently with this policy and the procedures.
- (3) **Deputy Vice-Chancellors who supervise centres** are responsible, for the centres they supervise, for:
- (a) recommending establishment;
 - (b) recommending name changes;
 - (c) recommending management arrangements;
 - (d) overseeing compliance with legislative, regulatory and University requirements;
 - (e) providing support and resources;
 - (f) endorsing reports;
 - (g) endorsing reviews; and
 - (h) recommending closure.
- (4) The **Vice-Provost** is responsible for:
- (a) establishing and closing and review of Level 2 or Level 3 Centres;
 - (b) approving exceptions to the naming requirements of this policy;
 - (c) approving governance arrangements for Level 3 or 4 Centres;
 - (d) approving annual reports of Level 3 centres;
 - (e) endorsing annual and review reports of Level 4 centres; and
 - (f) approving review processes for Level 2 – 4 Centres..
- (5) The **Office of the Provost** is responsible for:
- (a) notifying presiding deans and supervising Deputy Vice-Chancellors of annual report and review deadlines;
 - (b) establishing and maintaining the “centres” website on the University intranet;
 - (c) providing templates and guidance on the Centres website; and
 - (d) providing copies of approved reports as required.
- (6) The **Vice-Chancellor** is responsible for:
- (a) establishing Level 4 Centres;

- (b) approving name changes for Level 4 Centres;
- (c) approving reports from Level 4 Centres; and
- (d) closing Level 4 Centres.

19 Rescissions and replacements

This document replaces the *Centres and Collaborative Networks Policy 2017*, which is rescinded as from the date of commencement of this document.

NOTES

Centres Policy 2023

Date adopted: 12 December 2023

Date commenced: 22 January 2024

Date amended: 5 March 2024 (administrative amendments)
18 April 2024 (administrative amendments)

Document Owner: Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Review date: 22 January 2029

Rescinded documents: *Centres and Collaborative Networks Policy 2017*

Related documents:

[University of Sydney \(Delegations of Authority\) Rule](#)

[Recordkeeping Policy](#)

[Centres Procedures](#)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
12(7)(b)	'They must not:' replaced with 'Advisory committees and their members must not:'	5 March 2024
Throughout	Administrative amendments to remove the year in policy references.	22 April 2024