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## REVIEW OF UNSW CENTRES POLICY

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### ISSUE

To consult the on the proposed revised UNSW Centres Policy (attached).

### BACKGROUND

The UNSW Centres Policy was initially approved by Academic Board on 1 July 2003 (Resolution AB03/24), and was revised on 1 November 2005 (Resolution AB05/117).

### COMMENTS

Key changes to the attached Policy are marked up using “Track Changes”. A number of minor changes including edits for grammatical, formatting consistency, and updates on factual matters such as phone numbers and titles have not been highlighted for ease of reading the document.

The proposed modifications reflect experience in managing centres over the last 3 years, including a recent analysis of weaknesses identified in the 25 performance reviews of UNSW centres undertaken since the policy was approved by the Academic Board in November 2005.

The key changes proposed are:

- The policy now integrates the previously separate “Guidelines for UNSW Involvement in Externally Funded Centres” (8.3). The information in the Guidelines which related specifically to 10th round CRC applications will be updated and placed on the web as new guidelines for major government centre schemes are released (8.5).
- The term ‘management committee’ to be replaced by ‘management board’ (5.2) to clarify the nature of this strategic / financial oversight role, and distinguish it from that of the team of senior centre managers who typically run day-to-day operations.
- Foreshadow possible assistance in areas recommended for improvement by review panels, including strategic planning (6.3).
- Emphasis on the need to consider funding of support staff (5.4): many centre directors currently struggle to achieve impact (or comply with basic University governance requirements) in the absence of adequate finance /admin support, with increasing ARC grant success only exacerbating the problem.
- Responsibilities of directors on the boards of external centres have been clarified, and training mandated, consistent with the recommendations of the Deloitte Audit report earlier this year.
- Minor edits and removal of duplication in the templates, to make them more useable; also clarification re budget requirements and risk mitigation in new centre proposals, and deletion of anachronisms (eg references to centres paying rent for space).
- Deans encouraged to evaluate the strategic need for retaining a centre if the director’s other responsibilities do not allow sufficient time for ensuring that the centre has a significant impact (5.1).
- Provision is made for case-by-case review of centres established jointly with other universities (3.6) where there is no existing arrangement.

Feedback on the proposed changes should be sent to Bronwyn Greene ([b.greene@unsw.edu.au](mailto:b.greene@unsw.edu.au)) by no later than **18 September 2008**.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That you consider the proposed revisions to the Centres Policy and provide any feedback to Bronwyn ([b.greene@unsw.edu.au](mailto:b.greene@unsw.edu.au)) by **19 September 2008**.

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