

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH)

RESEARCH BULLETIN #2 17 August 2007

UNSW



PROFESSOR LES FIELD

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
(RESEARCH)

Dear Colleagues,

This is DVC(R) Bulletin #2 to provide an update on important issues affecting researchers at UNSW. If you missed the previous bulletin – the contents are available at <http://www.dvcresearch.unsw.edu.au/newsletter/Bulletin1.pdf>

1. Go8 Dashboard of Research Performance

The Go8 Universities have just released a website that pulls together longitudinal research performance data for the Go8. This is based on the “research performance” returns that we all make each year to DEST and picks up success in competitive grants, research publications and data on postgraduate students. The data is at an institutional level and more data will be added to this compilation and updated as it becomes available. For more information see <http://www.uq.edu.au/mis/Content/Dashboards/GroupOfEight.aspx>

2. RQF Update

The RQF juggernaut still rolls forward and we are ramping up our efforts to assemble our portfolio for submission at the end of the first quarter in 2008. A brief report and update on the RQF is available at <http://www.dvcresearch.unsw.edu.au/newsletter/RQFupdate0807.pdf>.

3. Update Web Pages for the RQF

Following debrief from those Universities who participated in DEST trials of various parts of the RQF over the last 2 months, it is obvious that an important indirect factor in assessing RQF “performance” is the information that is available on individual websites. When assessors were given RQF portfolios of groups of researchers to assess, the first thing they wanted was to gain more background insight into the individual researchers and they make a beeline for the web. This highlights the fact that, while we will only be asked for quite specific information in our return for the RQF assessment, our individual websites will undoubtedly be used by assessors to provide background supplementary information. This means that it will be important for all of us to review and update the material on our websites. As we pull together the UNSW submission for the RQF we will be looking to ensure that all staff have web pages that are easy to find and informative.

4. 1-Line Research Budgets from ARC/NHMRC

The ARC has been under pressure to verify that the “public money” that it allocates is being used to actually do the research it is funding. So the ARC is currently visiting Universities (institution-by-institution) to audit the use of ARC funds. The critical issue here is to ensure that budgets are being expended on things that were actually proposed, approved and supported in ARC grants. One area of concern is 1-line budgets. The ARC commonly approves a 1-line budget (particularly if the grant awarded is less than what was requested). While the 1-line budget provides some flexibility in using the grant, the grant must still be expended on items that

were approved in the original proposal. If there needs to be new expenditure outside the scope of what was contained in the original budget (say a new piece of equipment previously not forecast) or if there is a significant change of expenditure between heads of expenditure (say more expenditure on travel needed and less staff appointed), then this must have formal approval from the ARC. The staff at the Grants Management Office can assist if you need to seek approval to vary the budget.

5. ARC/NHMRC Outcomes this year

This is one of those years where the timeline for the ARC/NHMRC is very likely to collide with the next Federal Election. The approach of a Federal Election means that the outgoing Government will go into caretaker mode for a few weeks prior to the election and the incoming Government will be unsettled and chaotic for the weeks immediately following the election. It is probable that the announcement of ARC/NHMRC results for the current round may be delayed and this situation always has the potential to cause difficulties. Please be alert to this potential problem this year and identify any issues that might arise and ensure that appropriate contingencies are in place. Please let me know if there are significant matters that cannot be handled at the School/Faculty level.

6. International Research Student Scholarships

We increased the number of **International Research Student Scholarships** available for students wishing to commence in semester 1, 2008 via the award of tuition fee remission scholarships. Please note the closing date for applications is 31st August 2007. Please see <http://www.dvcresearch.unsw.edu.au/newsletter/intHDRschols0807.pdf> for more information. Applications and further information is available at <http://www.grs.unsw.edu.au/scholarships/intschols/unswintschols.html>.

If you have any questions or require further information on any of the above please email enquiries.research@unsw.edu.au

Regards,

Les Field
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