

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH)

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UNSW



PROFESSOR LES FIELD

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
(RESEARCH)

Dear Colleagues,

This is DVC(R) Bulletin #5 to provide an update on important issues affecting researchers at UNSW. If you missed the previous bulletins – the contents are available at <http://www.dvcresearch.unsw.edu.au/newsletter.html>

1. 2009 ARC Guidelines released

The ARC has just released the guidelines for Discovery Projects for the 2009 application round. These are available on the Grants Management Office website at <http://www.gmo.unsw.edu.au/ApplyingForFunds/ARC/Discovery2009.html>. Note that the internal closing date of Friday 8 February 2008 for the application to be reviewed with feedback. Note that there have been some significant changes compared to the previous years and these are detailed in Section 5.1 of the new guidelines. Note in particular that: (i) applicants cannot now “re-submit” applications which were poorly ranked (ranked in band “E”) in the last round – this acts as an incentive not to put in poorly developed proposals since this may impact on the ability to submit applications in the future; (ii) changes to the eligibility of applicants who apply for APF’s as either 50% or 100% options; (iii) removal of restrictions around what can be done with the residual 25% of the time for APD’s who take up the option for a 75% APD; (iv) some clarification of the limit of the number of DP applications that can be submitted by applicants who are associated with Commonwealth-funded Centres.

NHMRC guidelines have yet to be released however there will be an internal deadline in February 2009.

2. Shared Grants Protocols

A number of UNSW staff are involved as collaborators and co-CI’s on grants that have been submitted through other institutions or conversely where we host grants that have participants at other institutions. It is important that grants which are shared across multiple institutions are properly identified and that we have formal arrangements in place to track and transfer funding and to clearly specify roles and responsibilities. If you are in this position please contact the Grants Management Office by email at arc_applications.gmo@unsw.edu.au for ARC projects or nhmrc_applications.gmo@unsw.edu.au for NHMRC Projects.

3. PhD student transfers to UNSW

Heads of School should notify the Dean of Graduate Research if new staff hires have current or potential PhD students, who hold APA scholarships, wishing to transfer candidature to UNSW.

While APA scholarships cannot be transferred, we have the capacity to offer equivalent UNSW APA scholarships or UPA scholarships when students transfer from other Go8 Universities. For further information contact enquiries.grs@unsw.edu.au

4. New Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research

Last month, the NHMRC, ARC and Universities Australia jointly released a new Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. The full document is available at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/r39syn.htm>. We will be required to bring our various Codes of Conduct and University Policies in line with the new Code as a precondition for UNSW accepting ARC and NHMRC funding in the future. We will review and revise the relevant UNSW policies over the next few months. Most of the changes to the Code are “common sense” and our policies will require only minor changes. However, there are some important points that will have a significant impact: (i) there will be changes to guidelines for the criteria defining who can or cannot be considered as an author on a publication; (ii) we will need to formally nominate and train “advisors on research integrity”; (iii) we will have to establish an “independent external review process” to consider all matters of serious research misconduct; and (iv) we will have to incorporate changes into our employment contracts and into our next Enterprise Bargaining Agreement to accommodate how we will be required to deal with instances of research misconduct – our current EB still has more than 12 months to run so this will probably not happen at UNSW until 2009. I would anticipate that we will roll out other changes to our main policies progressively starting early in 2008.

5. LIEF Grant successes

Embedded within the announcement of ARC was the announcement of ARC LIEF grants which support major equipment and infrastructure. The LIEF program is an important avenue for us to obtain and maintain the cutting edge equipment and facilities essential in a research-intensive university. UNSW was the lead institution for 20 LIEF applications and we were successful with 10. This will physically bring to UNSW equipment valued at more than \$8.5M in 2008. UNSW was also a supporting partner on 14 successful applications where other universities were the host institution.

All of the successful require considerable co-investment from UNSW and we will invest more than \$2M in equipment supported by the LIEF program in 2008. As in previous years, if the ARC has fully funded (or substantially funded) the LIEF application as submitted, UNSW will provide the full support that was committed to the application. If the ARC significantly scaled back their support and did not fully fund the application, UNSW support was also scaled back *pro rata*.

6. Update on RQF

It is difficult to give a precise update on the RQF. The RQF is squarely a Federal Government initiative and we are in that pre-election limbo “lame-duck” period where the Federal Government (or the “alternative” Government) really are saying little of substance. We are still working to a deadline which has UNSW submitting its complete RQF portfolio to DEST on April 30th 2008 and, unless we receive instructions to the contrary, we must work to that deadline. We are currently at the stage where we have a draft set of research groups (about 130), each of which has a person identified as a coordinator and the groups are ready to assemble portfolios and in particular “context statements” and “case studies” to demonstrate the impact of their research.

While this is a good starting point, we do anticipate some re-positioning and re-structuring of groups as the portfolios come together and we welcome changes as members change groups, some groups may merge or morph to build a stronger research portfolio. Please contact the RQF team at rjf@unsw.edu.au to propose any changes to groups.

For the RQF, DEST has also approached many organisations (learned academies, professional societies etc etc.....but not the Universities!) asking them to rank research outlets where Australian researchers publish their work. If you have the opportunity to contribute to this process, please do so. There is some concern that this process may be skewed by various interest groups and it is in our interest to have a robust system for ranking outlets in each discipline area.

7. Go8 Future Research Leaders Program

UNSW is one of the Go8 Universities involved in the trial of a research training development program. This program is designed to improve researcher capability in managing research programs from managing budgets, finance and human resources to planning, managing performance and research teams etc etc. The program will kick-off early in 2008 and we are looking for representatives from across all parts of the University. If you are interested in participating in the program, please contact Wanda Jackson (Wanda.Jackson@unsw.edu.au) in the Research Strategy Office.

Les Field
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