

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH)

UNSW



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DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
(RESEARCH)

Dear Colleagues,

This is DVC(R) Bulletin #6 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/Bulletin5.pdf>.

1. The New Government and the RQF

So we have a new Government in Canberra and we are in the zone where we are waiting for the dust to settle. It is clear that responsibility for Higher Education and the University sector has been split across multiple portfolios - mainly with Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR under Julia Gillard); Industry; Innovation, Science & Research (DIISR under Kim Carr); and the NHMRC is expected to stay with Health and Aging (under Nicola Roxan). This clearly means big changes within DEST - it looks like RQF, ARC, NCRIS, CRCs will go to DIISR but RTS/IGS will go to DEEWR which is puzzling since one would think that RQF and RTS/IGS should be pretty intimately linked. Contrary to what has been reported in some newspapers, **there has been no announcement yet on the fate of the RQF**. Prior to the election there were mixed messages from Labor ranging from scrapping the RQF, to “refocussing” the RQF to delaying the RQF (from anywhere from 3 months to a year). The only concrete information we have so far from DEST is that the RQF is still on track (unless we hear otherwise) and that means we continue to position ourselves for this. Along with the rest of the Go8, we have sent messages to the new ministers indicating the need to get clarity on where the RQF is going ASAP because we will need to dramatically ramp up our RQF activities in the new year if it stays on its original trajectory.

2. Distribution of income from commercial activities

The University continues to receive significant (and growing) royalty and licensing income from the commercialisation of UNSW-owned IP. The University’s Intellectual Property (IP) Policy sets out that any net returns from IP commercialisation will be split 1/3 to the inventors, 1/3 to support the operation of NewSouth Innovations (NSi) and 1/3 to the ‘University’. The fraction that goes to the inventors is normally straight forward and its disbursement is handled by NSi as it is received. The fraction that goes to support the operations of NSi is also well defined. We have not had a clear protocol for the fate of the fraction that goes to the ‘University’. We have now introduced a set of guidelines for disbursement of the returns from technology transfer within UNSW. The basic principle is that the “University share” of income derived from technology transfer should clearly act as an incentive to the Faculty/School/Unit/Centre in which the IP was developed, to encourage further research and technology transfer activity. The majority of the “university” share of commercialization revenue will be directed as close to the “coal-face” where the activity occurred as possible. A copy of the guidelines is available at http://www.dvcresearch.unsw.edu.au/newsletter/Tech_Transfer_Dec07.pdf

3. Strutting our Successes

One of the planks in our efforts to improve the research profile at UNSW has been to ensure that our best and brightest are properly acknowledged. Over the past 18 months, we have been proactive in making sure that our staff and students are nominated for distinctions, awards, memberships of professional societies, etc. While we have had successes in the past, this is the first time we have coordinated the effort to make sure that our staff and students are nominated for the recognition that

they deserve. Our representation amongst the successful awards and distinctions has increased by about 1000% in 2007 and all of this has given a real boost to the profile of research at UNSW. We all stand in the reflected glory from each success. A brief summary of some of the 2007 achievements is given at http://www.dvcresearch.unsw.edu.au/newsletter/2007_Awards.pdf. Much of this now happens through the Research Strategy Office in The Rupert Meyers Building (and through the work of Paul Ashworth in particular). Please contact Paul (p.ashworth@unsw.edu.au) if you identify awards or distinctions where you think that our staff and students could/should be represented in the future.

5. HDR Scholarships – APAs and UPAs

First round offers for Australian Postgraduate Awards (APAs) and University Postgraduate Awards (UPAs) will be released by email from Monday 10th December. Supervisors and postgraduate coordinators will receive copies of letters of offer. UNSW Research Excellence Scholarships will be released as soon as UNSW Medalists are confirmed. Second round offers (if required) will be released 7 -11 January 2008. Please note that all unsuccessful applicants will be directed to the list of about 50 scholarships currently listed at <http://www.grs.unsw.edu.au/scholarships/localschols/variable.html> in the Faculty in which they applied for admission.

6. New Chair of the Human Ethics Committee for 2008

Handling the ethical dimension of our research effort where this involves work with either animals or with humans is something simply we must do well – we won't (and can't afford) to get this wrong. At the end of 2007, Professor Andrew Lloyd will step down as the senior Presiding Member and chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee at UNSW, a post that he has held for more than 6 years. Firstly, let me personally thank Andrew for the exceptional job that he has done in leading the HREC. At a research-intensive university which is as diverse as UNSW this is an onerous task at the best of times, but in recent years we have had to navigate some difficult ethical questions and the our Ethics Committees have done this in a truly professional fashion. Andrew is also one of our top researchers and he is stepping down from the HREC in order to take up a prestigious NHMRC Fellowship. It is remarkable that Andrew has captained the ethics committee without losing momentum in his other areas of endeavour, and this is service to the University well beyond the call of duty. I sincerely thank him for what he has contributed to the University. Professor Michael Grimm will take over as the Senior Presiding Member and Chair of the committee from the beginning of 2008 and I have every confidence that he will continue to lead the committee in the good work that it does.

7. ARC Australian Professorial Fellowships

The Australian Professorial Fellowships (APFs) are 5-year research Fellowships offered at Level D and Level E. They are available as 100% appointments and also as 50:50 appointments. There have been some changes to guidelines for applicants for funding to commence in 2009. The critical eligibility criteria are in Section 8.5.6 in the funding rules which are available at http://www.arc.gov.au/pdf/DP09_FundingRules.pdf. The APF's are one area where UNSW has not been as active as it might have been in the past. Anybody considering an application for an APF should contact Paul Ashworth (P.Ashworth@unsw.edu.au) in the Research Strategy Office.

Les Field
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