

---

## CHANGES TO UNSW RESEARCH SERVICES

---

### 1. ISSUE

To advise staff of important changes being made to UNSW Research Services.

### 2. BACKGROUND

The University engaged the North Shore Partners to review and develop recommendations focused on streamlining governance and management structures, clarifying accountabilities and interfaces, ensuring processes that support continuous improvement and developing uniform, simplified, responsive and effective operating models. Research Services is one of the seven core projects identified as part of the North Shore Partner Review which recommended that:

- Researchers be provided with more support in identifying and pursuing funding opportunities, particularly from “Category 3” [ie not Australian Competitive Grants] sources;
- Research Services develops a stronger client and compliance focus, using staff and systems more effectively; and
- Turnaround times, particularly in relation to contractual negotiations, be shortened.

The Division of Research is now in the process of implementing the North Shore Partners recommendations as part of the OneUNSW Strategy. To achieve these objectives, Research Services is being restructured to form two new Offices, the Grants Management Office and the Research Strategy Office.

### 3. DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. RESEARCH SERVICES RESTRUCTURE

Research Services is currently undergoing a formal Change Management Process, which will see the name and structure of Research Services changed to a new “Grants Management Office” to better reflect the new focus.

The Grants Management Office will concentrate on the management of research grants, with a view to reducing the cost and complexity of grants administration. It will be responsible for:

- Application compliance including “full read for style and readability”;
- Ethics approval and monitoring; and
- Grant management and monitoring.

Key Changes include:

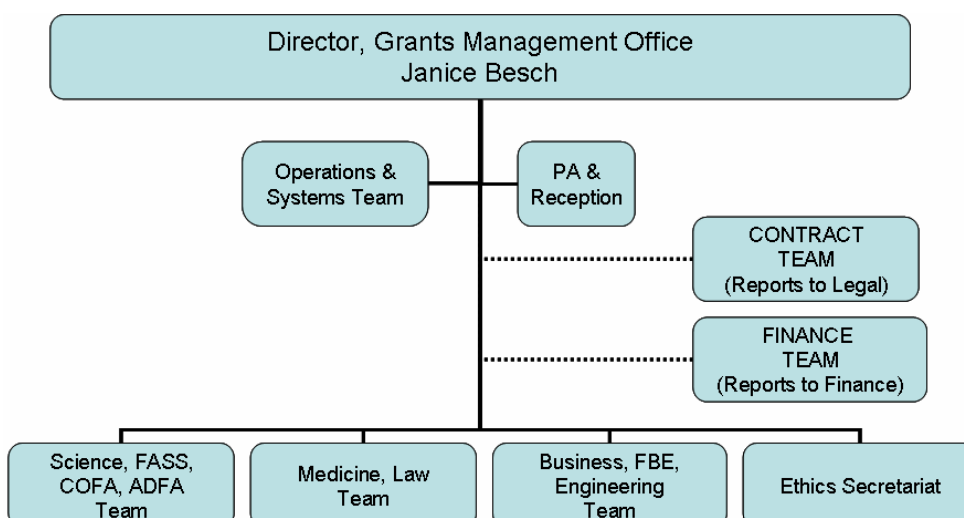
- The current Director, Mr James Walsh, has taken up the position of Strategic Development Manager (Industry) in the new Research Strategy Office. This will allow him to focus on the development of ARC Linkage grants, for which his skills are highly regarded and well recognised;
- Ms Janice Besch, previously Acting Director of Research Services, has become the Director of the new Grants Management Office. Janice has been Deputy Director in Research Services for the past 6 months, and has come from Macquarie University where she was the Manager of the Research Office;

- There will no longer be pre-award and post-award teams. Each Team will be responsible for the whole-of-life-cycle for grants in its area. Each member of the Team will have expertise in both pre- and post-award grant management;
- The Contracts Team, while still located in the Grants Management Office, will now formally report to the UNSW Legal Office, through Carol Kirby. The Contracts Team will coordinate the contact research effort of UNSW. This includes providing a front office for all contract research and the allocation of contracts to the responsible Office to handle (either Grants Management Office, or NewSouth Innovations, or NewSouth Global);
- The Data Analyst position has been moved to Institutional Analysis and Reporting Office, and will remain dedicated to the analysis and interpretation of research data. This will allow all data requests to be centralised and coordinated; and
- The Publications Officer position has been transferred to the Library to be more closely integrated with the ARROW Repository.

The Grants Management Office will consist of:

- A **Director's Office** comprising the **Director, an Operations Manager, a Business Analyst and data entry, reception and basic administrative support**. The Director's Office will maintain an overview of all grants under management, ensuring optimal business processes and systems are in place and full compliance with external funding agency requirements is achieved. As part of this, the Director's Office will assume principal responsibility for maintaining and developing the University's electronic research grants information and management system [MyR@];
- **Three teams** of four grants administration staff with roughly equal [discipline-related] client bases devoted to 'whole of life cycle' grants management;
  - **Business, Engineering and the Built Environment** [34% of the client base of active researchers as reflected in accounts under management, with a concentration on Australian Research Council applications and Category 3 funding [including contracts]];
  - **Medicine and Law** [33% of the client base, with a concentration on medical funding and Category 3 funding [including contracts]];
  - **Science, Arts and Social Sciences [including Fine Arts] and ADFA** [32% of the client base, with a concentration on Australian Research Council applications and Category 3 funding [including contracts]];
- The **Ethics Secretariat**, comprising four staff and covering human and ethics compliance.

Below is the new organisational chart.



### ***What are the key benefits of the new Grants Management Office arrangements?***

The Grants Management Office will be able to concentrate on quality grants administration services in a delivery framework that:

- Provides clarity to clients about ‘who does what’ for them by providing clients with a dedicated team looking after all aspects of their grant;
- Responds to a customer service charter and performance measures, endorsed by all stakeholders, that ensures delivery against realistic expectations;
- Irons out the peaks and troughs in grants administration, by having all staff deal with the large volume of applications that come in early in the year, for example, or the major exercise of reporting on grants under management at end of year [rather than just the few who were in the past appointed for pre- or post-award tasks];
- Ensures that legal advice is provided within a consistent framework University-wide, under the management of the University solicitor; and
- Continues to maintain a centralized approach to the financial management of grants.

A Business process Mapping exercise has begun to:

- Provide and communicate clear accountabilities both within the Grants Management Office and between the Grants Management Office and its external stakeholders including the Legal Office, Financial Services, Research Strategy Office and the Faculties; and
- Streamline and improve the effectiveness of grants management processes to make it easier for researchers to access funds and easier for funders to deal with UNSW.

### ***Where do I get more information about the new Grants Management Office?***

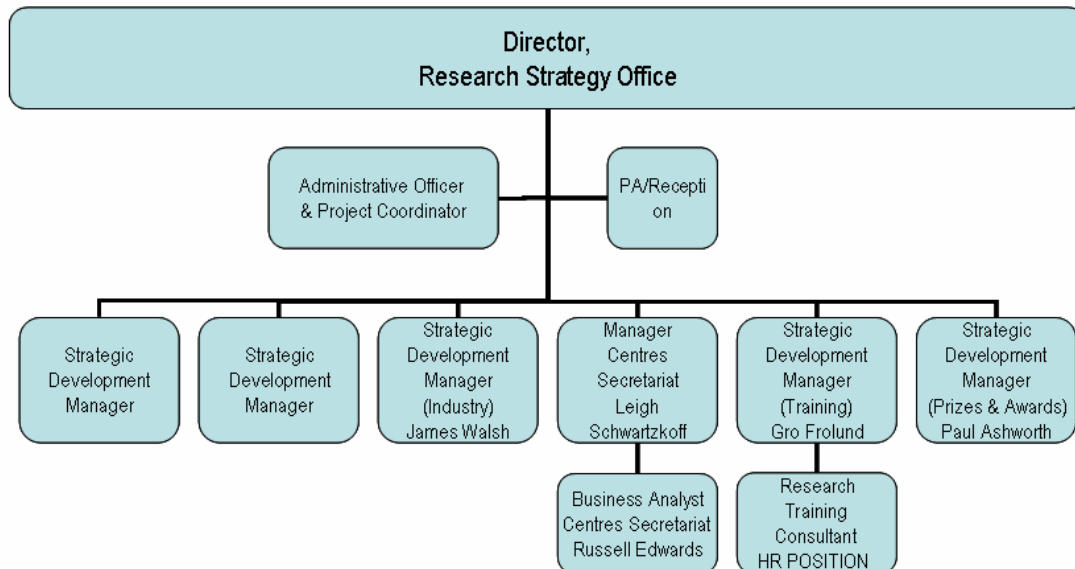
More detail on the changes to Research Services will be provided as the Change Management process continues.

While the restructure of research services is taking place, there should be no reduction of the level of service provided. That being said, I ask that you be patient as we transition to the new structure. Any questions, concerns or comments regarding the new Grants Management Office should be directed to either Janice Besch (x 54569, [j.besch@unsw.edu.au](mailto:j.besch@unsw.edu.au), or Bronwyn Greene, x 52983, [b.greene@unsw.edu.au](mailto:b.greene@unsw.edu.au)).

## **3.2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RESEARCH STRATEGY OFFICE**

The Research Strategy Office will provide strategic research grant development [grantsmanship] with a view to raising the number, value, quality and variety of research grants won by UNSW. The Research Strategy Office will be staffed by key ongoing staff in the areas of industry partnerships and Research Centre development as well as new, discipline-specific senior appointments with a strong research background who will assist academics to develop proposals and teams.

A new Office will be established, on Level 4 of the Rupert Myers Building, which will have a small, high calibre team to initiate, facilitate and mount significant new national and international research funding bids, establishment and management of major research centres, and identify, mentor and assist researcher development, and provide assistance in obtaining prestigious awards and prizes. Below is the new organisational Chart for the Research Strategy Office.



Key features of the new Research Strategy Office includes:

- Three new senior positions will be created to fulfil the role of Strategic Development Manager and they will ideally hold research degrees, and will have a research grant track record. Each of these three positions will focus on either (i) Science, Engineering & Technology, (ii) Medicine, (iii) Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences and one will also fulfil the role of Director;
- The remainder of the Office will be made up of existing staff from Research Services (Industry, Centres, and Training Manager), and our Prizes and Awards Officer will transfer from the DVC (Research) Office; and
- The Research Strategy Office will also take over responsibility for the GrantNews distribution of research funding opportunities.

### **What are the benefits of the new Research Strategy Office?**

The Research Strategy Office will be the provision of unprecedented support and assistance to the development of researchers and research proposals at UNSW. A key benefit will include the enhancement of the University's research performance and profile by working more closely (one-on-one) with researchers and research teams to identify new opportunities for funding, prizes and awards, improving research grant application quality and act as a source of expertise through support for UNSW researchers.

### **Improved researcher development training**

A new focus of the Research Strategy Office will be on providing a range of researcher development programs designed to provide improved support for early career and established researchers at UNSW and will include:

- The review, development and launch of an improved researcher development program support including improved workshops around grant funding opportunities (ARC/NHRMC and other funding agencies). The structure of information sessions/workshops will be discipline specific and will focus more on grant development from the perspective of academics with established strong track records in obtaining research funding, as well as from panel members and assessors;
- A launch of the revitalised Early Career Research@UNSW program (previously known as the Women in Research program). This program is designed to assist researchers at UNSW starting, or re-starting their careers to improve their research effectiveness, confidence and productivity. The

Program includes a core set of seminars specifically targeted for starting or re-starting researchers. Seminar topics such as: an understanding of the research infrastructure at UNSW, preparing a research grant application, getting published, planning and developing a research career, applying for academic promotion, and developing research networks and contacts. All seminar topics will be presented around the question of gender and its impact on research cultures. Matching up of participants with a Research Advisor willing to support and assist with their development throughout the program; and

- The develop and launch of a user-friendly researcher training program website which provides researchers with the necessary information, tools and resources for the development of their research careers at UNSW.

### **Where do I get more information about the new Research Strategy Office?**

Any questions, concerns or comments regarding the new Research Strategy Office should be directed to Bronwyn Greene, x 52983, [b.greene@unsw.edu.au](mailto:b.greene@unsw.edu.au)).

### **3.3. REVIEW OF INTERNAL GRANTS SCHEMES**

A comprehensive review with a view to streamlining all internally managed research grant schemes is currently underway. There are really 7 schemes embraced here: Goldstar Grants; VC's Postdoctoral Fellowships; Faculty Research Grants, ECR Grants; VC Childcare Support for Women Researchers; International Fellowships (Anthony Mason, John Yu, Gordon Samuels); ECR (Soft Dollars Travel Scheme) (for 2007 only).

The Faculty Research Grant Scheme has already been reviewed and this scheme will be disestablished as a centrally administered scheme and that Faculties will be provided with complete flexibility on how to allocate budgets to support smaller research programs within UNSW from 2008.

Early Career Research Grants and VC Postdoctoral Research Fellowship are currently under review, and all others will follow.

### **What are the benefits of reviewing the internal grants schemes?**

We have a very significant administrative overhead in simply running these schemes – sometimes out of proportion with the amount of support that we distribute. Reviewing all the internal research grant schemes with a view to streamlining the administrative workload that these internal schemes present will result in some of the following benefits:

- Recognition that a one-site-fits all approach to internal research grants may not be appropriate across all faculties;
- Faculties will be provided with greater flexibility about how to allocate budgets to support smaller research programs within their Faculties;
- Frees up researchers valuable time to prepare external grant applications; and
- Reduces the administrative overheads for the Grants Management Office, and faculties in the development of guidelines, development of proposals, assessing proposals, and awarding and managing internal research grants.

### **3.4. WHEN WILL THE RESEARCH STRATEGY OFFICE BE ESTABLISHED AND WHEN WILL THE RESEARCH SERVICES RESTRUCTURE BE COMPLETE?**

The Change Management Process for Research Services staff is currently underway and is expected to be completed by late August/early September.

The current tenants of Level 4, Rupert Myers Building are expected to move out in Mid August, which will allow the establishment of the Research Strategy Office from late August. This should coincide with the recruitment of the three new positions in the Research Strategy Office, including the Director's position.

The newly named Grants Management Office, and the newly created Research Strategy Office will be formally launched late August/early September.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

That you note the changes being made to UNSW Research Services and the establishment of the Research Strategy Office.

**Les Field**  
**Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research**