

Classification of Research Outputs Policy

Section 1 - Background Information

(1) Australian Catholic University (ACU) is required by the Commonwealth Government to report on the research outputs of all of its staff and students and to attest to the accuracy of the report, including in relation to how research outputs are classified. The Commonwealth of Australia allocates research funding to ACU based on the data in the report.

(2) Information on research activity is collected and maintained on the University's research information system. Academic staff members report their research activity information to ACU and these data are verified, maintained and monitored for compliance with the [Higher Education Research Data Collection \(HERDC\)](#) specifications. ACU may be subject to audit at any time on the report.

Section 2 - Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Research	<p>Research is defined in accordance with the Government expectations as contained in HERDC specifications and ERA guidelines.</p> <p>The definition of research and how it should be interpreted is provided in documentation provided by the Commonwealth Government in order to ensure accurate reporting through HERDC.</p> <p>The HERDC definition of research and experimental development, abbreviated as R&D, is consistent with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition of research and experimental development set out in the Frascati Manual 2015. R&D is defined as:</p> <p>"creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge – including knowledge of humankind, culture and society – and to devise new applications of available knowledge."</p> <p>For an activity to be an R&D activity it must satisfy five core criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To be aimed at new findings (novel); 2. To be based on original, not obvious, concepts and hypotheses (creative); 3. To be uncertain about the final outcomes (uncertain); 4. To be planned and budgeted (systemic); and 5. To lead to results that could be possibly reproduced (transferable and/or reproducible).

Section 3 - Policy Purpose

(3) This Policy forms part of the University's governance framework for the classification and re-classification of research outputs. It outlines the roles of the author, the Faculty and Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) (ODVCRE) in the finalisation of an output's classification. This policy will ensure that the classification of research outputs meets definitional standards.

Section 4 - Application of Policy

Current staff

(4) Once an output is in its final form and ready to be recorded in the ACU research information system (see [Research Publication Policy](#)), the lead ACU author will complete the [HERDC](#) Research Data Collection Form, providing the specifications of the output. On this form the author will also select the appropriate classification for that output (A1, etc.).

(5) The Research Data Collection Form will be attached to the particular output and forwarded to the Executive Dean of the Faculty (or Associate Dean, Research (ADR)) for endorsement.

(6) Endorsed submissions will be forwarded by the Faculty to the Associate Director, Research Systems and Reporting in the ODVCRE.

(7) Where the Faculty Executive Dean (or ADR) does not endorse the staff member's recommendation on classification the ADR will provide an explanation to the staff member as to the new classification.

(8) Where a dispute arises, or where the ADR is unsure of the classification of a particular output, the following processes will apply:

- a. The Executive Dean (or ADR) will request a written statement (maximum 1 page) from the staff member articulating the rationale for the originally proposed classification.
- b. A Faculty panel (with the Executive Dean or ADR as Chair and members appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) (DVCRE) will review this new information and the research output in question and make a recommendation on the classification of the output.
- c. Following Faculty panel review, the Faculty will forward the output, the outcome of the review, and the staff member's rationale to the ODVCRE for further review. The DVCRE may seek further advice as deemed necessary to determine the final classification of the research output.
- d. The decision of the DVCRE will be final and there will be no further appeal.
- e. Following the review by the ODVCRE the output with its final [HERDC](#) classification will be forwarded to the Associate Director, Research Systems and Reporting, for entry into ACU's research information system. The output will be entered into the [HERDC](#) collection or the University collection.

Newly Appointed Staff

(9) Data will be entered for the preceding six years only.

(10) It is the responsibility of the Faculty to complete publication data entry to a level two verification entry stage including its classification. This should be done within three (3) months of the staff member's appointment.

(11) Where the classification of an output is not clear, or where there is disagreement with the staff member regarding the classification of an output, then the steps described above in clause (8)d. will apply.

Annual Audits

(12) The ODVCRE will conduct a regular audit of the classification of research outputs and may at any time refer a research output to the DVCRE for a review of its classification.

Section 5 - Roles and Responsibilities

(13) It is incumbent on a Faculty to provide information sessions to its staff on how expert peer review panels interpret the definition of “research” as specified by [HERDC](#) and ERA.

(14) The Faculty provides central oversight of the correct classification and submission of all outputs for the [HERDC](#) and University collections.

(15) The Vice-Chancellor and President, on the advice of the DVCRE, provides final confirmation to the Commonwealth Department of the accuracy of ACU’s research data collection.

Section 6 - Review

(16) Unless otherwise indicated, this policy will still apply beyond the review date.

Section 7 - Associated Information

(17) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	19th December 2023
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Approval Authority	
Approval Date	19th December 2023
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Abid Khan Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)
Responsible Manager	Rod Lewis Associate Director, Research Systems and Reporting
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