

UWS Guide to Expenditure of DIISR Performance Funding Schemes

This paper provides guidance to UWS Colleges on the broad expenditure framework covering the three Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) performance-funding schemes through which UWS receives over \$12.6 million annually in support of its research development and consolidation. The performance mechanisms of each scheme are briefly outlined and followed by an overview of how the University intends these funds to be employed, recognising the importance the University places in using these funds flexibly but with strategic intent. UWS is required to report annually to DIISR on the expenditure of these funds and how they support both researchers and research students in achieving the University's research goals.

1. Research Training Scheme

The Research Training Scheme (RTS) aims to recognise and reward those institutions that provide high-quality research training environments and support excellent and diverse research activities. Funds are provided to eligible institutions based on a formula that reflects each institution's research performance. The formula takes into account HDR completions (50%), research income (40%) and research publications (10%).

The objectives of the RTS are to:

- enhance the quality of research training provision in Australia
- improve the responsiveness of institutions to the needs of their students
- encourage institutions to develop their own research training profiles
- ensure the relevance of research degree programmes to labour market requirements and
- improve the efficiency and effectiveness of research training.

At UWS, RTS funding is allocated as direct financial support to Colleges for:

- support of all higher degree research students program of research study
- academic units supporting research students and successfully supervising to completion

RTS funding is allocated to Colleges on the basis of two equal measures - one input and one output.

Input – HDR Load

This involves a performance return to academic units (the location of the principal supervisor) on the basis of student load, moderated by high cost/low cost discipline weighting (1.00 to 2.35).

Output – HDR Completions

This involves a performance return to academic units (the location of the principal supervisor) on the basis of completions data, with PhD completions weighted at 2.00 and Masters Honours weighted at 1.00.

Colleges can flexibly employ these funds to ensure that UWS:

- builds an attractive research environment founded on dedicated funding for research students
- overcomes research infrastructure deficiencies
- rewards academic units within UWS that are successfully completing research students
- research students are linked to areas of research strength.

As a guide to actual expenditure within Colleges, it is expected that much of the RTS is spent directly on higher degree research students. UWS is keen to ensure that individual candidature resourcing needs are met and that the University actively develops and maintains an attractive research training environment. To this effect, UWS has promulgated the essential resources to be provided to research students (see Research Higher Degree Candidature Essential Resources Policy - <http://policies.uws.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00183>)

It is expected that all research students have access to Candidature Project Funds (CPF). Such funds are to be accessed by individual students to support their program of research and are specifically related to individual candidature needs. Part time students will also be eligible for such project support though normally at less than the maximum allocation.

Research students will normally outline project needs as part of their Measures of Achievement (MOA), Thesis Proposal and the annual Progress Report process. Colleges should oversight expenditure against project needs. Such funding should be available for all research students (fee-paying excluded) though access may be considered in relation to rate and stage of progress. A maximum allocation in the humanities and social sciences should be \$2,000 per annum. In consumable-intensive areas such as the sciences, and where extensive fieldwork is undertaken, it is expected that the maximum annual allocation would be \$3,000. **These are maximums and the actual allocation will vary from student to student and year to year. These funds are not a direct payment to students on the basis of their enrolment/candidature, but should be carefully argued and agreed to by the supervisory panel as part of the agreed thesis proposal and its progress.**

Expenditure of such funding might include:

- travel
- consumables
- skills development training
- research materials
- photocopying
- transcription
- access to external facilities
- access to vehicles for field trips
- minor equipment
- conference attendance
- specialist software

This list is not exhaustive.

RTS is also designed to support the broader infrastructure research training needs of UWS.

RTS can be used to fund:

- a portion of the salary of research intensive staff who supervise significant numbers of research students. In general, the RTS should be used to support a percentage of salary costs within schools relative to the HDR load undertaken by supervisors
- broad computing and information technology
- major equipment supporting a range of research students.
- networking activity– i.e. workshops, symposia, guest speakers, conferences.

RTS **cannot** be used to fund scholarships.

RTS should be expended in the calendar year.

2. Institutional Grants Scheme (IGS)

The IGS was introduced in 2002, as the replacement scheme for the Research Quantum (RQ). It combines funding from the old RQ, as well as the funding for the abandoned ARC Small Grants Scheme. It comprises one input measure and two output measures

- share of research income – all income equally weighted (60%)
- research student load [operating grant load] (30%), weighted by high cost/low cost disciplines.
- research publications – the categories of authored book, chapter, refereed journal articles, and refereed conference proceedings (10%).

The objectives of the IGS are to:

- support the general fabric of institutions' research and research training activities
- allow institutions to manage their own research activities and set their own priorities
- assist institutions to respond flexibly to their research environment in accordance with their own strategies, and
- enhance support for areas of research strength.

IGS is a lagging indicator i.e. the 2007 quantum reflects achievement averaged over the years 2004 and 2005.

In 2007, 20% of IGS will be reserved for strategic research initiatives, recommended by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research). Of the remaining 80% of IGS funding, Colleges will receive an allocation based on the actual performance of:

- their University Research Centres (URC) – based on the actual funding generation by individual researchers formally associated with each centre [100% return]
- other Research Groups hosted by the College [80% return]
- individual researchers within the College not formally associated with a URC [80% return].

IGS may be used for a wide range of development and consolidation activity. It is the most discretionary of these performance based funding sources. IGS may be used for:

- broad research infrastructure needs
- the consolidation of existing areas of strength to build critical mass
- the identification and development of new research areas that provide niche and developmental possibilities
- the identification of research themes and/or groups that might promote interdisciplinary collaboration and research grant submissions
- the support of nationally competitive researchers, particularly mid-career researchers
- the identification and development of emerging researchers
- research support that links in with academic programs i.e. to support the move of honours students into a postgraduate program.

Broad categories of support that might be considered:

- developing research facilities
- scholarships and top-ups
- postdoctoral positions
- Visiting Fellows e.g. bringing academics in from other institutions who are on study leave
- intensive internal secondments to University Research Centres for competitive researchers, particularly mid-career academics
- support for external research applications *in collaboration with industry partners*, for example reimbursement of funds expended to attend meetings with potential external partners.
- conferences/symposia/forums/summits to be held at UWS, raising both the profile of the research and the University
- invited public lectures by key researchers both external and internal
- postgraduate symposiums
- school seminars
- publications time release - i.e. support for the writing up of *near complete* data with *imminent* publication
- three month writing scholarships, following submission of a thesis
- support for research areas that directly foster links with existing undergraduate and postgraduate academic programs
- summer/winter research programs for honours/masters/phd students
- re-entry programs for researchers who have either had time out of academia in industry or because of family obligations which have impacted on their research track record
- mentoring for newer staff
- annual research lecture series

Other activities might include research training and professional development initiatives where external (paid) and internal speakers or short courses are run, for example:

- research methodologies
- discipline specific research supervision
- grantmanship, writing grant proposals, costing projects and writing a meaningful budget justification

- writing CVs and demonstrating track records particularly important for the identification and categorisation of research outputs and outcomes for a range of scenarios, research submissions and promotion applications
- statistical analysis
- publishing e.g. converting thesis into publication, writing book proposals, peer review and critique processes
- project management, which might also include people management skills
- research partnerships and external collaboration
- commercialisation in its broadest sense
- visits from ARC panelists
- establishing writing groups which might also look at supporting the induction of honours/postgraduate students into a writing culture as well as staff in general.

This is not an exhaustive list, but meant to provide broad guidance. IGS monies may be used to fund any activity relating to research.

IGS should be expended in the calendar year.

3. Research Infrastructure Block Grant

The Research Infrastructure Block Grant (RIBG) aims to support high quality research by:

- meeting project related infrastructure costs associated with Australian Competitive Grants
- ensuring that areas of recognised research potential have access to the support necessary for their development
- enhancing support for areas of existing research strength, and
- remedying deficiencies in research infrastructure

Performance is based on an institution's share of [Australian Competitive Grants](#) income. RIBG is wholly allocated to Colleges and their University supported Research Centres, on the basis of performance in generating such income.

Expenditure of RIBG may involve:

- non-capital aspects of facilities such as libraries, laboratories, computing centres, animal houses, herbaria, experimental farms
- equipment purchase, installation, maintenance, hire and lease, and
- salaries of research support staff (including research assistants, accounting and administrative staff, and technicians) employed to provide general support for activity in a given area eg. a research assistant who is providing assistance for a number of research projects but not a research assistant dedicated to a particular project.

Items not regarded as elements of research infrastructure, for the purpose of RIBG, and which cannot be funded, include:

- capital works (i.e. construction of buildings), as institutions receive operating grant funding for capital works
- rental of accommodation
- salaries of teaching and research, and research-only academic staff (including the cost of 'buying time' to free such staff to do more research)

- salaries of staff supporting research at the institutional level eg. Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Research Grants Officer)
- stipends of postgraduate research students, and
- travel costs directly associated with individual projects (with the exception of travel costs to allow participation in international consortia).

RIBG is the most constrained of the performance funding schemes and must support researchers and areas of national excellence.

RIBG should be expended in the calendar year.

4. Monitoring Expenditure

The University monitors the expenditure of these specific DIISR performance based funding mechanisms, with the intent of ensuring that carryforwards from year to year are kept to a minimum. Colleges also need to monitor expenditure against these three specific schemes to ensure that such expenditure operates within these broad guidelines and with regard to the strategic intent of both UWS and the College.