Appendix 5

**GUIDELINES FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INSTITUTES**

UCT has, over the last several years, established a number of large interdisciplinary research initiatives and institutes. These groupings are called “University Institutes or University Initiatives” to distinguish them from other recognised research groupings[[1]](#footnote-1) as having either gone through a competitive selection process for prioritisation or having been put in place for strategic purposes. These include the Institute of Infectious Disease & Molecular Medicine (IDM); the Vice Chancellor’s Strategic Initiatives;[[2]](#footnote-2) and five interdisciplinary institutes[[3]](#footnote-3) that were established as the result of a competitive process. All of these have membership from multiple faculties – both individual staff members and from recognised and informal research groupings, and most have external adjunct and honorary members as well. As such they require governance arrangements that support and facilitate membership and operation across traditional departmental, faculty and other university structures.

Currently, the University Research Committee (URC) has three categories of recognised research groupings, which are - at least in theory - differentiated by size, breadth of research enquiry and degree of interdisciplinarity:

* Research Unit - A focused research mandate that may span across disciplines or rest with one discipline.
* Research Centre - A broad research mandate that may span across disciplines or rest with one discipline.
* Research Institute - A broad research mandate (with wide ranging research questions) that spans across disciplines.

The key differentiation between these entities relates to the breadth of research enquiry, where at one extreme a Unit will have a focused research question, and at the other an Institute works in a broad domain, with multiple research questions. Research of Units and Centres *may* cross disciplines, while Institutes *must* span disciplines. An institute will necessarily draw on expertise from multiple departments and (likely) research groupings, but may be wholly situated within a faculty, or may span faculties. This document is specifically for *University Institutes and Initiatives* that span faculties, but many of the principles may be applicable to recognised groupings that do not span faculties, but do span departments.

*Overarching Principle: University Institutes are hosted by a faculty, but governed by the university.*

A **host faculty** will be one in which a significant proportion of the critical mass of membership of the Institute lies. The relationship between the host Faculty and the institute will be articulated by a MoU. In general, the host faculty will offer the following support:

* Provide space for the Institute
* Provides administrative support not available within the Institute – HR, Finance,
* Provide academic support to the Institute – e.g. approval and administration of academic programmes
* Will, through the Dean and their alternates, act on the Institute’s behalf within existing university structures - such as in central budget, space, equipment and building requests.

The **university governance** aims to ensure cross faculty and university level support, guidance and evaluation of the Institute, and through these governance arrangements, have clear agreements with each faculty, their departments, on the “rules of engagement” of individuals and research groupings that make up the Institute membership.

In general, governance arrangements will include:

* A clear statement of purpose for the Institute – as might be expected when applying for URC accreditation – supported by all faculties from which membership of the Institute will be drawn.
* A constitution that formalises the purpose, governance, financial and other institutional arrangements, types of membership, etc.
* A governing board – typically chaired by the DVC for Research, and with senior representation from all supporting faculties (the Dean, or their nominated deputy Dean, senior members of the Institute, and external advisors). The Board acts to provide strategic advice on the direction and management of the Institute, as well acting as advocates for the Institute in external settings.
* A management or leadership committee – typically led by the director, along with a leadership team drawn from the Institute membership. The management committee is responsible for delivery of strategic and operational decision making of the Institute.
* Operational staff – support the Director and Management Committee in implementing the Institutes activities.
* Rules of engagement:
  + MoUs between individual faculties and Institute that describe the ways in which the faculty will support and engage with the Institute – for example, in registration and examination of graduate students, on the attribution of research outputs, on cost recovery and GOB salaries covered by research proposals, and on the principles by which departments within the faculty should approach academic and research staff affiliation / membership of the Institute
  + MoUs between each accredited research group (that forms part of the Institute), and the Institute
  + MoUs between individual members and the Institute

1. Other institutes may develop bottom up (there is no competition), might be more focused, can apply for accreditation, and require different governance arrangements and levels of central funding not discussed here. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI); The Safety & Violence Initiative (SaVI); The Poverty & Inequality Initiative (PII). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Future Water; Neuroscience Institute; Institute for Communities and Wildlife in Africa; Institute for Democracy, Citizenship and Public Policy In Africa; Institute for Safety Governance and Criminology. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)