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RESEARCH DIVISION NEWSLETTER

RESEARCH GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

The Research Office is part of Research Services, and offers a range of services in relation to external and internal grant opportunities.

Staff in the area are involved in the entire grant process. This starts with advertising opportunities via our various mailing lists and making available a database of funding opportunities which you can explore.

Once you decide to submit an application Research Office staff will review the funding guidelines to ensure you are eligible to apply. We will help you to complete the application and provide feedback on your approach. If your application has been provided in sufficient time, a full review will be undertaken to ensure you meet the requirements of each section. If required, we also assist in negotiations with other researchers, institutions or grant bodies. Where relevant, applications can also be forwarded for internal statistical review.

Once all issues have been resolved and the application is completed correctly, Research Office staff will obtain university signatures and ensure the application is submitted to the funding body by the due date.

When grants are successful, Research Office staff will establish the grant. This involves liaising with Finance, Legal Services, Office of Graduate Studies and HR, as well as ensuring that human ethics, animal ethics, and safety approvals have been obtained. Subsequent grant maintenance involves liaison with the grant body as required and attending to any amendments or variations. We also ensure that researchers are aware of their reporting obligations and will submit reports to the funding body with any required University signature.

You should always submit your grant applications through the Research Office. Not only can we assist you in this process, but we will make sure necessary approvals are obtained and the grant will be established much more quickly if it is successful.

The Research Office also does much more than just process grant applications. Research Office staff are directly involved with faculties. Senior staff attend Faculty Research Committee meetings to provide information on Research Services activities, and to provide advice and act as an independent observer if required.

Research Office staff also coordinate, present and prepare seminars on a range of topics, including the Early Career Researcher series. Occasional visits by personnel from the major funding bodies are also organised for the benefit of staff.

The Research Grants and Contracts website <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/grants/index.html> provides more information on our activities. Please join our online mailing lists to keep informed of grant opportunities and developments.

IMPORTANT DATES

- The closing date for the ARC Indigenous Researchers Development scheme is Tuesday 1 May 2007.
- The University Pilot Research scheme round for 2007 is now open and the closing date for the submission of applications is 5.00 pm Monday 7 May 2007.

Other internal grants can be found at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/grants/int/university-grants.html>

HIGHLIGHTS

We are delighted to announce a record 202 Research Higher Degree completions for the last 12 months which is a 31% increase on the previous period. Many congratulations to all the candidates on their success. The hard work on the part of our Thesis Examination Officer, Roslin Baldock, is also recognised and in fact anyone who has visited us recently could not fail to have noticed the gold statue standing proudly in our foyer. The statue was created by our own fine artist, Hayley McEwan, in recognition of Roslin's efforts.

STAFF CHANGES

We are very pleased to welcome **Neroli Finlay**, Admin Officer, Animal Ethics and Grants, **Sue Halliday**, Customer Service Assistant, **Ali Norman**, Graduate Studies Officer and **Sophie Percival**, Senior Graduate Studies Officer. Sophie has replaced Alan Hales for a 13 month period while he is on secondment to the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

RESEARCH ETHICS AND SYSTEMS

Animal Ethics

The University has received the report from the Animal Research Review Panel for a site inspection of the University of Newcastle animal research facilities, conducted on 22 and 23 November 2006 and the Animal Care and Ethics Committee conducted on 24 November 2006. The report was generally excellent, with the commendations including “the high standard of care and husbandry provided to the animals and the comprehensive monitoring and record keeping by the animal care staff and researchers at all facilities inspected”. A copy of the report will soon be available on the animal ethics website (intranet only). The training program for researchers (Research Animal Training Scheme) has now concluded with good attendance by honours and post-graduate students. Appropriate workplace training in specific procedures, as a follow-up to the practical training sessions, is strongly recommended so that skills in these procedures can be reinforced and improved.

Human Ethics

A further stage of the NUHREP (Newcastle University Human Research Ethics Processes) project has been launched to provide for Course Related Ethics Approvals. These are available for situations where all students enrolled in a course are required to conduct the same, or similar, minor research project. This will most commonly apply to situations where students undertake minor research projects during teaching or clinical placements, practicums or other types of professional experience. Strict eligibility criteria apply and the research must not present any appreciable risk to participants. Further information available from <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/human/applications.html>.

Data Management

The Publication Entry System (PES) is open for the collection of 2006 publications until the end of April 2007. Researchers are encouraged to ensure their 2006 Newcastle Publications are entered as soon as possible.

Phase 2 of the Portfolio Manager project is nearing completion. The system is currently undergoing several stages of testing.

The Implementation of the new Research Management System is well under way. The Project is currently in the requirements gathering and analysis stage. Both the Human Ethics and Animal Ethics teams are working to ensure the Ethics component of the Research Management System is as effective and streamlined as possible.

RESEARCH SERVICES UNIT

The Electron Microscope and X-Ray (EMX) and the Analytical and Biomolecular Research Facility (ABRF) Advisory Groups have now been formed. Membership of both Advisory Groups can be viewed at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/support-units.html>. Researchers not on these Advisory Groups who have an interest in the equipment located in the Research Support Units are encouraged to contact members of the Advisory Group to provide input into this process.

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Confirmation of Candidature

A reminder that Research Higher Degree candidates who commenced candidature from 2006 onwards are required to undertake a formal confirmation process within 12 months of commencement of candidature on a full time basis (or part-time equivalent). The purpose is to support candidates in the early stages of their candidature. It will allow candidates to receive objective confirmation that their research direction is sound, the methodologies appropriate and the standard of writing satisfactory. Candidates and their supervisors should be factoring this process into the first year of candidature.

Full details are available at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/rhd/confirmationyear.html>. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to the Office of Graduate Studies, research@newcastle.edu.au.

IT enhancements

Preparations have been underway in Office of Graduate Studies since June 2006 to implement an upgraded version of Nustar in September 2007. We have also requested a significant number of enhancements that will automate much of the work currently undertaken manually, allow for improved management of scholarships, thesis examination and candidature, and introduce some self service functionality for Research Higher Degree candidates.

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RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK

The RQF Support Group has moved into office space in Building EF, and its first priority at present is assisting academic staff to check and update their research data in the Portfolio Manager database.

All researchers need to log in to the Portfolio Manager system to check their data and enter some essential information. The Quick Start Guide gives a step-by-step description of the basic requirements:

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/researchperformance/rqf/portfolio-manager.html>

The closing date for data entry has been extended to 30 April to bring it into line with the closing date for the 2006 publications collection in the Publications Entry System. While over 200 researchers have entered data, we know that many more have not yet looked at the system. Please don't leave it to the last minute!

The research impact section of Portfolio Manager is in the final stages of testing and will be released soon. The impact section allows groups to compose an impact statement with supporting case studies to demonstrate the benefits arising from the application of their research. The RQF Support Group will be running workshops and demonstrations of the new system to assist groups with preparation of impact statements.

On Monday 23 April, the University will host a visit by Ms Leanne Harvey, the Chair of the RQF Reference Committee. Ms Harvey is the Branch Manager of the Research Quality Branch of DEST, which includes the Research Quality Framework Taskforce, was a member of the RQF Development Advisory Group and has been closely involved in the development of the RQF.

An open forum will be held at which Ms Harvey will give a presentation on the RQF and answer questions. Staff will also be invited to nominate to attend smaller informal group sessions for the Humanities/Social Sciences/Creative and Performing Arts, and for Engineering/Science/Health.

STATISTICS CORNER – MARCH 2007

Human Ethics	March	2007	Animal Ethics	March (policy meeting)	2007	Grants	March	2007	Graduate Studies	Total
Human Ethics Total Initial Applications Processed	38	57	Animal Ethics Initial Applications Processed	0	8	External grant applications processed	99	247	RHD completions since 1 April 2006	202
Expedited	36	51								
Full Review	2	6								
Human Ethics Project Variation Applications	16	34	Animal Ethics Variation Applications Processed	8	25	External grant awards processed	13	58		
Human Ethics Approval Renewal Applications	2	4	Animal Ethics Application Renewals Processed	5	9	Value of external grant awards processed	\$2.14M	\$8.59M		
Human Ethics Registration of HNEH approvals	5	27	Animal Ethics Variation Applications (Personnel) Processed	6	34					
			Inspections Performed	2	8					

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