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JULY 2007 RESEARCH DIVISION NEWSLETTER

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The Role of the Office of Graduate Studies

The Office of Graduate Studies provides a consolidated university focus on postgraduate research studies, in order to support the delivery of quality programs and services to research higher degree candidates.

One of our goals is to develop initiatives to support and improve the research experience for students.

With regard to candidature, the Office of Graduate Studies is responsible for:

- applications for admission (domestic applicants);
- enrolment and re-enrolment;
- applications for and administration of research scholarships (domestic and international)
- academic progress reporting coordination;
- degree rules and policies;
- the Research Training Scheme;
- variations to candidature (eg, leave of absence, transfer of program, topic, supervisor or School); and
- thesis submission and examination.

RHD Information Session for Honours Students

We encourage staff to promote and discuss this opportunity with current Honours students.

The Office of Graduate studies invites all current Honours students, and anyone who is considering commencing a Research Higher Degree in 2008, to attend an information session on the application and admission process for Research Higher Degrees and Scholarships.

When: Wednesday 25 July 2007
From: 10am - 12pm
Where: The Purdue Room, Callaghan Campus

Morning tea will be provided.

Please RSVP to Susan.Halliday@newcastle.edu.au by Friday 20 July 2007.

For further information or any queries please contact Anna Carlstrom on 4921 6829 or Anna.Carlstrom@newcastle.edu.au

EQUITY RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Applications are now invited for The University of Newcastle **EQUITY RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS** 2008 round. Equity Research Fellowship are available to assist eligible woman and indigenous academics (Level A or B) to develop their research profile, for example, by progressing their Research Higher Degree, writing publications, applying for external grants and/or working on a research project. **CLOSING DATE is 5.00 pm MONDAY 27 AUGUST 2007.** Applications must be delivered to the Research Office by 5pm. Application forms and guidelines can be found on the Research Services website <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/grants/equity-research-fellowships.html>.

HUNTER MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (HMRI)

Applications are now invited for the **HMRI and HCRF 2008 Project Grants**. The power of these grants is best explained with an example. In 2006, Researchers from the University of Newcastle and Hunter New England Health were awarded \$9 million in competitive NHMRC funding for projects beginning in 2007. Of this, \$5.2 million can be directly linked to \$696,000 of seed funding from corporate and community donations, which are distributed via the HMRI Grants Round. HMRI does make a real difference to researchers! Applications forms and additional information is available at the HMRI website www.hmri.net.au under Research and Awards and Grants, or by phoning HMRI on 02 4921 4030. The closing date for Grants and Awards and Prizes is **Friday 31 August 2007**.

RESEARCH ETHICS AND SYSTEMS

Data Management

The Data Management Unit in conjunction with IT services, Health Safety & Environment, Human Ethics and Animal Ethics are working together to implement the Human Ethics, Animal Ethics and Safety modules of the new Research Management System. These three modules make up the first phase of the Research Management System project and are expected to be implemented by the end of 2007. The remaining modules of the Research Management System will be implemented throughout 2008. One of the goals of the Research Management System is to integrate and streamline research administration within the University. Upon completion of the Research Management System project the University will have an integrated online system for managing research administration.

The shift from a mostly paper driven administration process to a digital solution will change how research administration is undertaken and also change how the Research Office and academic staff work together. Over the coming months training and information sessions will be held at various locations throughout the University. The training & information sessions will provide an overview of the new electronic Research Management System, detail the gradual implementation and provide system specific training. The Research Office will also be seeking academic staff to participate in pilot/trial groups to test components of the new Research Management System. The pilot groups will be an excellent opportunity to view the system ahead of time, assist in finding any bugs and provide some feedback. The pilot groups are expected to be formed during September/October 2007, with ongoing training and information sessions starting in September.

Animal Ethics

The application forms for the Animal Care and Ethics Committee have been substantially revised, and will be available from the animal ethics website from 20 July 2007. The new versions of the forms should be used after this date, and must be used for any applications submitted after 1 September 2007.

The requirement for provision of the full training course for animal-based researchers ("Research Animal Training Scheme") during August is now being evaluated. The theory-based modules are available online at any time. The full course however includes the practical modules, and will be offered if sufficient numbers of animal-based researchers (including honours and post-graduate students) indicate their interest.

Human Ethics

Progress with NUHREP: Feedback from researchers suggests that the new human research ethics processes introduced in February 2007 have been well received. Some unexpected staff vacancies combined with a 136% increase in business through the human ethics unit mean our present turnaround time on expedited applications may be a little slower than predicted. However, we expect to improve on this with the launch of the online components as part of a new Research Management System, now scheduled for the latter part of 2007. Both applications and ethics reviews will be online. This is a significant development that will benefit both researchers and the human ethics unit. Announcements will appear within the next weeks about information sessions and testing opportunities.

Correction: In the last newsletter the launch of the *Register of Approved Tests and Procedures* was announced, however there was an error in the URL given. It should have been <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/human/register-app-procedures.html>.

RESEARCH GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

The Research Office has undergone several staff changes recently and we have used this opportunity to review workloads, service needs and staff portfolios. The revised Senior Grants Officers' portfolios are listed below:

Jennifer Saunders (ext. 16482):
Faculty of Education and Arts
Faculty of Science and IT
ARC Linkage schemes
Assisting with internal grants

Elianne (Ellie) Renaud (ext. 15944):
Faculty of Health
NHMRC

Caroline Fairhurst (Mon-Tue),
Megan Stephenson (Wed-Fri) (ext. 17188)
Faculty of Business and Law
Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment
ARC Discovery schemes

RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Draft RQF Specifications

On 29 June DEST released the Draft RQF Submission Specifications for public consultation. DEST has requested feedback by 13 July. The University will make an individual submission and will contribute to a joint response by the IRUA group. DEST are still working to develop the *Panel Specific Requirements*, *RQF Technical Specifications* and *Guidance Material for Assessment Panels and Advisors*, all of which will be relevant to the University's RQF preparations.

Visit from Leanne Harvey Friday 10 August

Ms Leanne Harvey, the senior DEST officer responsible for the implementation of the RQF, was scheduled to visit the University on Monday 23 April, but had to postpone this visit. Her visit has been re-scheduled for 10 August and researchers will be advised of the proposed program shortly.

Next steps

When the assessor reports have been received from the Newcastle/Macquarie RQF quality trial (due at the end of July), the next stage will be formation of RQF groupings, and appointment of group coordinators. By early September the groups will have been identified, and the RQF Support Group can begin working with them on preparing evidence portfolios, including impact statements and supporting case studies. Given the heavy demands on researchers in terms of grant preparation during January/March, it is essential that the evidence portfolios be largely completed by the end of 2007, which will allow time to review and improve presentations. Information on the finer detail of the evidence portfolios and the required content will be passed on as it becomes available.

RESEARCH SUPPORT UNIT

Upgrade of EM & X-Ray Unit Facilities

In recent months the unit has had upgrades to the SEM, TEM and XRD systems. The Philips XL30 SEM has a new software and hardware interface allowing easier image capture, annotation and measurement of images. The TEM now has digital image capture allowing 11 megapixel 16 bit images to be saved instead of using film which required manual processing. The Philips Xpert XRD now has a monochromator attachment which reduces background and enhances resolution. All X-Ray equipment now runs via uninterrupted power supplies preventing shutdown and damage due to power fluctuations. Contact unit staff for further information and bookings.

STATISTICS CORNER – June 2007

Human Ethics	June	2007	Animal Ethics	During June	2007	Grants	June	2007	Graduate Studies	Total
Human Ethics Total Initial Applications Processed	25	161	Animal Ethics Initial Applications managed	14	54	External grant applications processed	9	316	RHD completions since 1 Jan 2007	66
Expedited	24	142							New enrolments (Semester 1, 2007)	161
Full Review	1	19							Domestic	135
Human Ethics Project Variation Applications	11	73	Animal Ethics Renewal Applications managed	7	28	External grant awards processed	31	132	International	26
									PhD candidates	101
									MPhil candidates	60
									Scholarships offered (2007) round	144
Human Ethics Approval Renewal Applications	-	5	Animal Ethics Variation Applications managed	13	114	Value of external grant awards processed	\$1.84 M	\$18.38M		
Human Ethics Registration of HNEH approvals	11	54	On-site inspections: facilities/procedures/animals/records	15	78					

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For newsletter enquiries, contact: Rebecca Palmer on ext 17739 or Rebecca.Palmer@newcastle.edu.au