



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE  
AUSTRALIA

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## OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

### Mid-Year Progress Reports for RHD Candidates

The Office of Graduate Studies has received a number of enquiries about mid-year progress reporting requirements and we would like to take this opportunity to provide some background information and clarify the requirements

Mid-year progress reports are required from particular cohorts of students. The categories are:

Where concerns have been expressed with regard to progress in the preceding

- Annual Progress Report
- Research Training Scheme (RTS) entitlement has expired
- All international students

A complete Annual Progress Report for the preceding year was not received by the Office of Graduate Studies

Leave of Absence is approved for semester 2, 2007 (the Mid-Year Progress Report will replace the requirement for an Annual Progress Report).

Report forms have been despatched to all students who are required to produce a mid-year report. The blank mid-year report form can also be accessed via our website: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/rhd/forms.html>

### Background on the new requirement for all international students:

The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training for Overseas students has recently been revised and the new code will come into effect on 1 July 2007.

The new National Code of Practice 2007 requires that we monitor, record and assess the course progress of each international student at the end point of every study period. A study period must not exceed 6 months; therefore progress reports are now required towards the end of each semester. Mid-Year Academic Progress Reports are generally sought in May/June and Annual Academic Progress Reports in October/November each year.

Email correspondence explaining these changes has previously been sent to all students and supervisors. Further information about the National Code of Practice 2007 is available via the following website:

<http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/ESOS/NationalCodeOfPractice2007/Default.htm>. Our office will also provide further details over the coming weeks.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Graduate Studies if you have any questions or concerns.

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JUNE  
2007  
RESEARCH  
DIVISION  
NEWSLETTER

### WHAT'S ON

**Conference:** The NHMRC is holding its third conference on ethics in human research in Melbourne from 16-18 October 2007 and will explore:

Ways in which researchers can integrate an ethical framework into the design, conduct and publication of their research;

How engaging with the broader Australian community, including research participants themselves, can deliver better research with more relevant outcomes for all Australians; and

How institutions and those responsible for the conduct of the research may enhance

research endeavours through sound research governance frameworks.

The call for abstracts is now open (closing 18 July 2007). For further information please refer to

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/ethics/conference.htm>.

## RESEARCH ETHICS AND SYSTEMS

### Animal Ethics

To facilitate provision of additional support to researchers (eg. during preparation of ACEC applications, development of SOPs etc), the Animal Welfare Officer is available at the Life sciences Building on Tuesdays (Room LS348) and the David Maddison Building on Wednesdays (Room 440). The new versions of the ACEC applications forms are currently being prepared for uploading to the animal ethics website. Background work for the implementation of InfoEd is proceeding. This system will provide an on-line system for ACEC applications. Information regarding updates and changes in animal ethics is distributed via the research-animal email list. All animal-based researchers, including honours and post-graduate students are encouraged to subscribe to this list (for instructions, see <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/animal//docs/faq.html#information>).

### Human Ethics

**New:** The HREC *Register of Approved Tests and Procedures* is now available. For tests and procedures listed in the *Register* it is not necessary for researchers to provide copies with an application to the HREC for ethics approval. For further details please refer to <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/human/register-app-procedures.html>.

**National Ethics Application Form (NEAF):** The NEAF is new to Australia and was developed by the National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to provide for consistency in review of human research. The University of Newcastle introduced it concurrently with the new human research ethics processes implemented in February 2007. It is being increasingly adopted by other Australian Universities and human research ethics committees in the health sector.

All users will be aware it has some problems, and we are happy to co-ordinate feedback to the NHMRC on these. However, although it has scope for improvement it is still a major advance, particularly for multicentre research when the same form can be submitted to multiple organisations. Please direct comments on the NEAF to [Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au)

### Data Management

To support the RQF Trial with Macquarie University the Data Management unit has been working closely with the RQF team to produce individual Researcher reports. Each of the individual reports has been designed to highlight elements from the Portfolio Manager system that are critical to the RQF Trial. To identify errors in our data and ensure data quality the reports have been distributed to research staff throughout the University. All corrections identified on the returned reports has been entered into the Portfolio Manager system. The final phase of the RQF Trial with Macquarie University is well underway. Information collected from the Portfolio Manager system has been assembled into worksheets and distributed to panels of assessors.

The Portfolio Manager system has proven to be a valuable source of information and a good tool for managing information that is critical to our participation in the RQF Trials. The processes developed and the information captured by the RQF Trial are very valuable and will save time and effort when it is time to work through the real RQF.

## ANIMAL SERVICES UNIT

The 2007 Animal Services Unit Client Satisfaction Survey was forwarded to 122 research staff who use animals at the University of Newcastle. Recipients included Chief Investigators, research assistants and post graduate students. The aim of the survey was to gather information to enable the Animal Services Unit to improve the quality of the services and facilities provided to the research community.

Only 16 responses were received. In general the level of satisfaction with the Animal Services Unit facilities, staff and services was quite high. Some valuable comments and suggestion of ways to improve the ASU were received and will be implemented over the next six months.

A detailed analysis of the results of the survey can be obtained from Robyn Gentle, Veterinary Manager, Animal Services (email [Robyn.Gentle@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Robyn.Gentle@newcastle.edu.au))

## RESEARCH GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

The ARC rejoinder period for the 2008 Discovery Projects opened in GAMS on Monday 18th June 2007 and will close at 5:00pm (AEST) Monday 2 July 2007. Please ensure your rejoinder has been locally submitted by 10am Monday 2nd July 2007 to ensure submission.

The NHMRC 2008 Project Grant rejoinder period has also opened and applicants will be provided with 2 weeks from emailed notification in which they can submit their responses directly to the NHMRC via [applicant\\_response@nhmrc.gov.au](mailto:applicant_response@nhmrc.gov.au).

Information on this process is available from the Research Services website: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/grants/apply.html> ARC and NHMRC applicants should subscribe to the research-arc and what's new email lists to receive announcements from these granting bodies

# RESEARCH DIVISION NEWSLETTER – June 2007

## RESEARCH QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Researcher portfolios have been sent to the assessors for the Newcastle/Macquarie RQF Trial, and the RQF team is breathing a sigh of relief. The technical problem with esteem factors has been solved, along with some less significant issues which affected a small number of researchers, and we much appreciated the time and effort researchers put into checking the portfolios for us. Thanks also to the Assistant Deans, Research and the senior academics who have agreed to act as moderators, who assisted with the allocation of researchers to trial assessment panels.

Meanwhile we are continuing to explore ways of presenting research impact. There is widespread confusion among researchers (across the whole sector) about the concept of research impact. For the RQF, research impact does not refer to academic impact (as indicated, for example, by citation rates), but to the impact the research has on the wider community, in terms of social, economic, environmental or cultural benefit.

The external consultant involved in the research impact trial has produced impact statements for the three groups involved, which include case studies of particular examples of how each group's research has produced benefits for the community. We feel that the experiment has been a success - to the extent that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) has now invited another 6 groups to participate in a further round of impact workshops, to be held in early August.

We are only too well aware that the RQF places additional demands on academics who already feel overburdened with administrative requirements. We can, however, assure you that thanks to all your work on this, the University is well ahead of the field in its RQF preparations. We believe that the inconvenience and annoyance will be repaid further down the track, when we have accessible, high quality data and a good understanding of our research profile to assist in developing our RQF submissions.

## STATISTICS CORNER – May 2007

Human Ethics	April	2007	Animal Ethics	During May	2007	Grants	April	2007	Graduate Studies	Total
Human Ethics Total Initial Applications Processed	41	136	Animal Ethics Initial Applications managed	9	40	External grant applications processed	18	247	RHD completions since 1 April 2006	202
Expedited	37	118								
Full Review	4	18								
Human Ethics Project Variation Applications	18	62	Animal Ethics Renewal Applications managed	5	21	External grant awards processed	13	58		
Human Ethics Approval Renewal Applications	1	5	Animal Ethics Variation Applications managed	17	101	Value of external grant awards processed	\$2.14M	\$8.59M		
Human Ethics Registration of HNEH approvals	10	43	On-site inspections: facilities/procedures/animals/records	10	63					

[www.newcastle.edu.au/research](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research)

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