

1990

Research management plan 1991

Western Australian College of Advanced Education

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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

RESEARCH MANAGEMENT PLAN

1991

June 1990

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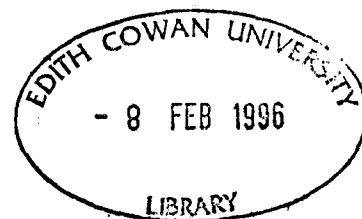
RESEARCH MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOREWARD

This management plan (June 1990) sets out the place of research in the spectrum of activities of the College and the state-wide responsibilities of WACAE.

The College has a positive, unambiguous attitude to the promotion of research of high quality and has allocated funds and resources to that end.

The College Research Committee is charged with the management of this rapidly developing research capacity. In discharging this function the Committee will review its Research Management Plan regularly and welcomes constructive input at any time.



RESEARCH MANAGEMENT PLAN 1991

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RESEARCH MANAGEMENT PLAN 1991

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. MISSION

The general mission of the College is to gather, store and disseminate knowledge in the tradition of academic freedom within an open and democratic society. It fulfills this through a commitment to provide high quality education and training and to further the pursuit of knowledge through research.

This research is expected to be of relevance and value, particularly to the people of Western Australia, to assist in the social, cultural and economic development of the State and where appropriate, to involve collaboration with industry, government, the community and other educational institutions.

1.2. GOALS

The College's research enterprise is directed towards the realization of four broad goals:

- 1.2.1. The creation of an organizational environment within which worthwhile and high quality research is carried out.
- 1.2.2. The development within the college, of a research ethos that supports and complements the undergraduate and postgraduate teaching program.
- 1.2.3. The consolidation of the College's research profile upon a range of research priority areas that reflect the academic expertise of the institution and its relationship to the community which it serves.
- 1.2.4. The expansion of significant inter-disciplinary team-based research programs that
 - relate to identified community and industry needs
 - contribute to the development of substantial post-graduate research activity.

1.3. OBJECTIVES

The research goals provide a frame of reference within which to pursue a series of related objectives. These may be summarized as follows:

- 1.3.1. To increase the commitment to research for the advancement of knowledge.
- 1.3.2. To encourage and foster the development of post-graduate research training.
- 1.3.3. To expand the pool of research competence and expertise within the college through the provision of opportunities for new and inexperienced researchers to develop their skills.
- 1.3.4. To foster the development of research institutes and centres.
- 1.3.5. To consolidate the College's research initiatives in identified areas that reflect existing strengths and fields of emerging significance.
- 1.3.6. To facilitate inter-disciplinary and inter-School research projects that draw upon the related expertise of experienced and committed staff members.
- 1.3.7. To promote the development of collaborative projects involving researchers from other tertiary institutions and relevant public and private agencies.
- 1.3.8. To undertake applied research and development projects and consultancies related to identified needs of external clients/agencies at local, State and national levels.

2. RESEARCH PROFILE

2.1. CURRENT RESEARCH ACTIVITY

2.1.1. In the period Jan 1989 to April 1990, the College has directly funded some sixty research projects, at a cost of approximately \$315,000. These projects, the outcome of a competitive grant allocation process, span all six teaching schools(*) and reflect an emphasis upon Curriculum and Learning, Human Services Evaluation, Policy and Studies, and Environmental Management. In addition, each school has a small number of research projects sponsored either directly by the School (or Department within a School), or in collaboration with external agencies (such as the Ministry of Education, the Department of Community Services).

**NB: The six Schools of Study comprise Arts & Applied Sciences, Business, Community and Language Studies, Education, Nursing and the Academy of Performing Arts. All references to "Schools" are to be taken as including the Academy of Performing Arts.*

2.1.2. In the same period (Jan 1989-April 1990), the total number of research projects being conducted by staff increased by 48%, while the number of research staff involved in these projects increased by 44%. A comprehensive listing of the details of projects completed or in progress as at April 1990 is provided in the publication *Research Briefs 1989*.

2.1.3. In May 1990 the College Research Committee approved a further nineteen internal research grant applications, totaling \$218,000. School Research Committees are currently (June 1990) finalizing School-level grants valued at approximately \$100,000.

2.1.4. The College Research Committee has identified (in June 1990) three Key Projects in the Schools of Arts & Applied Sciences, Community and Language Studies and Education. These projects (initially the recipients of School or College Research Committee funds under the competitive grants process) will receive additional funding from College Research Committee resources, in recognition of their significance as substantial, long-term investigations within a priority area. This additional funding amounted to \$71,000 in 1990.

2.1.5. Research-based Post-Graduate education and training continues to expand across all teaching Schools. As at June 1990, 105 students were enrolled in Masters programs and 8 in Doctoral programs. Honours courses were introduced in 1988, and current enrolments number 91. Enrolments in research-based honours, post-graduate diplomas, masters and doctoral programs constitute 2.6% of total enrolments as at June 1990.

2.1.6. In 1990 the College Research Committee initiated a substantial Visiting Research Fellow program, with the allocation of \$160,000 for this purpose. As at June 1990, twelve Visiting Research Fellows have been confirmed, to work in various Schools for periods ranging from two to twelve months.

2.1.7. The College, through its research staff working within Schools and Institutes, has continued a vigorous policy of seeking external grants to augment its research profile. In the period from Jan 1989 to June 1990, grant funds totaling \$1.2 million dollars have been attracted from approximately thirty external agencies.

2.2. INSTITUTES AND CENTRES

- 2.2.1. The College has established four Institutes and one Centre, each operating under the aegis of the relevant School. These were originally oriented towards teaching, scholarship and research, with a major focus on the development of new knowledge and its application to the solution of problems. They also carried out contractual and consultative work with external agencies, from which they derived part of their funds. Researchers working within the Institutes/Centres also maintain a teaching role within their School, thus ensuring that the substance and direction of research projects are linked back to the teaching programme, especially with regard to post-graduate students.
- 2.2.2. The role and function of Institutes and centres are currently under review. Interim findings suggest increasing emphasis on the specific research role, with augmentation from College funds. The relationship of these redefined Research Institutes to the College Research Committee, and the role of research within Institutes are current matters of policy review. Additionally, proposals to establish an Institute of Nursing Research and a Centre for Asian Communication and Media Studies are under consideration.
- 2.2.3. The Institutes and Centres currently operating are:
 - Institute for Applied Aboriginal Studies (School of Community and Language Studies).
 - Institute for Applied Language Studies (School of Community and Language Studies).
 - International Institute for Policy and Administrative Studies (School of Education).
 - Institute for Security Studies (School of Arts and Applied Sciences).
 - Mathematics, Science and Technology Education Centre (School of Education).

2.3. RESEARCH PRIORITIES 1991

2.3.1. Guidelines for Determining Priority Research Areas

1. Compatibility with specific major areas of interest as identified by the Australian Research Council, viz:
 - Well-being and harmony of Australian society
 - Understanding and managing the environment
 - Furthering the contribution of research and education to society.
2. Compatibility with the teaching profile of the institution, in particular its higher degree profile.
3. Demonstrable evidence of a well developed research commitment and competence by individual staff members.
4. Quality and significance of previously undertaken research in the area.

2.3.2. Priority Areas

On the basis of the above guidelines, the College has identified five principal areas that will form the substance of its research endeavours in 1990-1991. They encompass the observed strengths of the institution and will provide the focus for the development of Key Projects within and across Schools.

- Curriculum and Learning
- Human Services Evaluation
- Policy and Administrative Studies
- Environmental Management Studies
- Computing and Information Technology

3. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

3.1. KEY ELEMENTS OF RESEARCH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

To achieve the objectives of the research management plan, the following key strategies will be progressively implemented.

- 3.1.1. Devolution of responsibility for the initiation, implementation and monitoring of research to each School, operating through its School Research Committee.
- 3.1.2. Coordination of School-based initiatives through the College Research Committee.
- 3.1.3. Provision of sufficient funds for staff to undertake approved research projects in identified priority areas.
- 3.1.4. Progressive involvement of new researchers in team research projects.
- 3.1.5. Progressive development of integrated School-based research initiatives related to appropriate priority areas.
- 3.1.6. Continuing encouragement of inter-disciplinary, inter-School and inter-institutional research projects focused on selected priority areas.
- 3.1.7. College Research Committee based sponsorship of "Key Projects" through central funding to supplement competitive grant allocations awarded to substantial projects.
- 3.1.8. Continuing development of research infrastructure to support all levels of research activity.
- 3.1.9. Increased provision of advisory and support services through the Division of Research.
- 3.1.10. Development of an integrated database management system incorporating an inventory of funding sources, staff expertise and internal research grant data.
- 3.1.11. Regular dissemination of research-in-progress reports, advisory and support services information, grants funding sources, research contracts and consultancies, research policy developments, and other research-related material, via a range of in-house publications comprising newsletters, research bulletins, monographs and quarterly reports.

3.2. ORGANIZATION

3.2.1. Organizational Structure

1. The management of research activities is the responsibility of the College Research Committee, chaired by the Head of Research. The Committee has links to other relevant committees concerned with, for example, Publications, Post-Graduate Scholarships, Research Ethics, and Institutes and Centres.
2. The College Research Committee reports to the College Board which in turn is responsible to the governing College Council
3. The administration of College Research Committee activities and other research related matters is carried out by staff within the Division of Research.
4. The responsibility for school-level research initiatives lies with each School Research Committee, the Chairperson in each case also being a member of the College Research Committee.

3.2.2. Committee Structure and Responsibilities

1. College Research Committee

The College Research Committee comprises the Head of Research (Chairman), the Dean of each School, one experienced researcher from each School, three community members with research management experience and an Executive Officer from within the staff of the Division of Research.

The College Research Committee is responsible for the:

- promotion and development of quality research.
- allocation of research funds to School Research Committees.
- overview and coordination of research activities of Schools, Institutes and Centres and monitoring adherence to the College's research goals and policies.
- evaluation of research effectiveness.

The Committee also has links, through the Head of Research, to other germane committees such as Publications and Post-Graduate Scholarships.

2. School Research Committees

Each School elects its own Research Committee, with one member also holding a place on the College Research Committee.

The School Research Committee is responsible for the promotion, development and monitoring of research activity within the School. It also allocates research grants to staff within the school and makes recommendations concerning large scale grant allocations to the College Research Committee.

3.3. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

3.3.1. Funding Sources

The College Council has adopted two strategies for the internal funding of research, one indirect through the College Foundation and the other by direct grants.

1. The first of these involves the College Foundation into which community contributions and part of the College investment income can be channeled. The sums involved have been

1988	1989	1990
\$62,500	\$250,000	\$750,000

2. Income from the College Foundation portfolio has been augmented directly from the College's investment income such that the funds at the Research Committee's disposal have grown as follows:

1988	1989	1990
\$31,500	\$385,750	\$645,000

3. Additionally, the college has attracted external research funding to the value of some \$1.2 million in the period Jan 1989-June 1990.

3.3.2. Disbursement of Funds

1. For 1990, approximately half the funds available were spent on College-based research, a quarter on Visiting Research Fellows and a quarter on Post-Graduate Research Scholarships.
2. Of the \$350,000 budgeted for internal research grant allocations in 1990, two-thirds were allocated to the College Research Committee, with the remainder being disbursed amongst School Research Committees on a pro-rata basis.
3. School Research Committees balance the distribution of their grant funds between School-sponsored projects and individual projects applied for on a competitive basis. They also recommend to the College Research Committee, individual applications for larger-scale grants that receive funding from the resources of the College Committee.
4. While budgets for 1991 have yet to be finalized, it is anticipated that a similar level of contribution to Visiting Research Fellows and Post-Graduate Research Scholarships will obtain, with an enhanced level of funding provided for research projects.

3.4. INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

- 3.4.1. The College is committed to the development of its research infrastructure, through the deployment of internal funds together with income generated from contract work and externally funded research.
- 3.4.2. The College is a member of the Australian Academic and Research Network (AARNet) and has been approved by the Industrial Research and Development Board as a Registered Research Agency.
- 3.4.3. A powerful internal communications network, utilizing fibre optic linkages to all six campuses is currently being established.
- 3.4.4. As part of the Research Committee's role in the promotion and development of quality research, it provides, through the Division of Research, a range of expert services, including courses and seminars on research design and methodology, grant application procedures, proposal writing, intellectual property; and individual assistance with the progress of investigations and the publication of findings.
- 3.4.5. The Division of Research also collates and disseminates research-related news and information through the publication of a series of in-house newsletters, reports-in-progress, and specific monographs.
- 3.4.6. The College library now exceeds 400,000 volumes, with one-fifth of its annual budget designated for research support.

3.5. STAFF

- 3.5.1. The development of the College's research profile is to a large part dependent upon the number of researchers available for long-term involvement in projects. Deans of Schools are involved in the task of optimizing the balance between teaching and research within their Schools, such that key research staff have sufficient time available to carry out their work. In addition, Schools give consideration to facilitating the progressive involvement of less experienced researchers. Research funds allocated to individual Schools are used in part to release particular staff from a proportion of their teaching responsibilities.
- 3.5.2. A vigorous advisory and support services program is conducted by the Division of Research, to enable staff to develop and refine research-related skills. These workshops, symposia, and short courses constitute approximately 400 staff-hours participation per month in 1990.

3.6. EVALUATION

The goals and objectives of the College are subject to annual review as part of the regular updating of the Corporate Plan. This includes the identification of strategies to be adopted for the component objectives and the relevant performance indicators. The Annual Report to Parliament includes a statement of these indicators and commentary on the extent to which the objectives have been fulfilled. Consistent with this, and part of its annual report to the Council, the College Research Committee will undertake an annual update of the Research Management Plan and of the various activities under its aegis.

Grants made by the College and School Research Committees will be conditional upon agreement being reached with the applicants on the objectives of the research project and performance indicators appropriate to the field of study. The College Research Committee aims for an open and explicit system of initial and renewed fund allocation.

3.6.1. Performance Indicators

1. Evaluation of research performance will be based on a set of input and output indicators. These include:
 - Evidence of sustained activity in research and writing.
 - Number and value of research grants received.
 - Consultancies carried out for government and private agencies.
 - Publications of research significance
 - Award of fellowships, prizes and honours.
 - Presentation of keynote/invited papers at significant national and international conferences.
 - Postgraduate and honours students enrolled and theses submitted.
2. Whilst the progressive introduction of weighted performance indicators provide a generally acceptable evaluation procedure, the College recognizes that there is a qualitative aspect to research evaluation that needs to be addressed, particularly in areas such as the visual and performing arts. The College Research Committee will establish a peer review process, drawing on the academic and wider community for assistance in the task of evaluating the relevance and quality of research conducted in these areas.

3.6.2. Review Process

1. Grant recipients are required to :
 1. submit an annual progress report on continuing projects to the School and College Research Committees, with provision for external expert referees to be consulted by the committees.
 2. submit a final report to the College Research Committee within one month of the completion of their project.

3.7. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- 3.7.1. The College is developing institutional policy concerning the recognition, protection and exploitation of all aspects of its intellectual property.
- 3.7.2. The Division of Research conducts regular seminars on specific aspects of intellectual property, such as copyright, patents, registered designs and the legal implications of the protection of intellectual property rights.

3.8. RESEARCH ETHICS

- 3.8.1. In recognition of the significance of ethical considerations in research, teaching and experimentation, the College has established a Committee for the Ethical Conduct of Research to implement policy in this area.
- 3.8.2. The research ethics policy reflects the principles defined by the National Medical and Health Research Council.
- 3.8.3. The policy places the onus of responsibility on the individual researcher, to have considered and resolved, any ethical issues related to a project, prior to approval being granted by the appropriate Research Committee to commence the project

4. CONCLUSION

4.1. ACHIEVEMENTS

- 4.1.1. The steps taken in 1990 have increased dramatically the awareness of the place of quality research activity within the College. Staff with interest and ability to conduct research have responded positively and the volume of activity and of publications has grown significantly.
- 4.1.2. The developments foreshadowed for 1991 are intended to accelerate the process and at the same time to provide a coherence and cohesion to research overall. Thereby research centres of national importance can be created while still providing the individual scholar with the opportunity for initiatives in new fields.

4.2. CHALLENGES

- 4.2.1. The major focus for the period 1990-1991 will be on the establishment and development of Key Projects, involving supplementary funding for research teams working on long-term projects in identified priority areas.
- 4.2.2. The College Research Committee recognizes the importance of an appropriate planning process which can promote flexibility and adaptability. The Committee will continue to carry out annual reviews of the the Research Management Plan, with research priority areas subject to review every two years. The process will involve college-wide consultation and commitment to the goals, objectives, strategies and indicators of performance of research.
- 4.2.3. In this way, research priorities will be regularly assessed such that a significant and worthwhile research activity will be integrated into the work of the College and hence be of benefit to the people of Western Australia and of Australia.