
APPENDIX I

DRUSSA Benchmarking Exercise: Good Practice Statements

The statements below were identified from the pre-event questionnaires supplied by participants, from DRUSSA documentation and past exercises conducted by the Association of Commonwealth Universities in similar areas. They were then the subject of discussion at the Leadership and Benchmarking Event in Johannesburg, in each of the three regional sessions – amendments and revisions to the original Good Practice Statements were then made based on the outcomes of those discussions with DRUSSA members.

It is emphasised that, while the following statements have been revised to reflect the fullness of the three regional discussions, further comment on these statements are welcome, as they are designed to reflect the experiences and aspirations of participating universities. It is hoped that the final outcome will be a set of agreed statements which universities can use to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their current activities, and thus establish priorities for future activity.

Session One: Strategy and Mission

Revised
1. The overall mission and strategy of the University reflect the need to produce research findings for wider use.
2. The University should have a clear research strategy document which explicitly recognises the importance of research for social, economic and development needs.
3. The University research strategy should explicitly recognise the need to support research uptake activity, taking into account available resources, or reasonable aspirations for future resources.
4. Research strategy and research uptake policy documents should be taken into account when allocating internal resources.
5. Progress towards research strategy (including research uptake) should be coordinated by a senior university official (possibly Deputy Vice-Chancellor level), and the strategy should be overseen at regular intervals by a high level committee.
6. Research uptake policies should be developed at operational level by Research Offices (or similar) with input from faculties, academics and where possible, users taking into account the mission and objectives of universities as well as individual research programmes.
7. Detailed research uptake implementation plans/roadmaps/guidelines should be developed at operational level (by Research Office or similar) to facilitate implementation of policies at departmental/faculty level and for individual academics.
8. A Research Committee monitors the progress of the research uptake policies at regular intervals.
9. Research strategy (including research uptake) should be actively communicated to staff.
10. Clear policies should exist for the ownership and management of intellectual property and

publication generated by university staff.

11. Policies should be in place to ensure that ethical issues in research uptake are covered, including any conflict of interest for university staff.

12. The institution should collect sufficient information on research uptake activity to inform future policy.

Session Two: Staffing for Research Uptake

Revised
1. The university should support and facilitate research uptake activities in job descriptions if academic staff and, when appropriate, clearly state the expectations on academic staff to be involved in research uptake activities.
2. Clearly designated professional staff in the University should have responsibility for promoting research uptake amongst staff.
3. Staff/offices with responsibility for research uptake should have access to designated budgets, for both internal and external research uptake activities.
4. Staff with responsibility for research uptake should have access to the most senior level in the University.
5. Staff with responsibility for research uptake should have access to appropriate external expertise where necessary.
6. Staff with research uptake responsibility should be encouraged to network with similar staff at other universities within the region.
7. Staff with research uptake responsibility should be encouraged and assisted to undertake appropriate training in the field.
8. Staff with research uptake responsibility should be at a sufficiently senior level to communicate effectively with academic staff.
9. Where professional staff with research uptake responsibilities are based in different offices, clear mechanisms should exist for them to meet with each other and share information on research activities that the university is engaged in.

Session Three: Internal Organisation and Promotion of Research Uptake

Revised
1. The University should have mechanisms in place to identify research with uptake potential at an early stage.
2. The University should maintain an active database of research activities and the research specialisations of academic staff.
3. Research uptake activity should be embedded in overall research and community service objectives and should be included in relevant staff induction or postgraduate training programmes.
4. Policies should take into account competing demands on academic time and where appropriate, encourage research active academic staff to engage in research uptake activities.
5. Clear processes should exist for decisions to be taken about the level of support available for research uptake in specific cases.
6. Clear processes should exist to determine where responsibility lies for research uptake, between the academic / research team, the University and any external sponsor.
7. Clear processes should exist for determining the nature of research activity in specific cases (for example, the possibility of commercial protection through patents) and the extent to which such decisions are delegated to academic staff.
8. The university should provide assistance to academic staff in approaching and negotiating agreements with external funders of research.
9. Academic staff, departments and faculties should have appropriate incentives to engage in research uptake activity.
10. Clear rules should exist to determine the division of any revenue received in respect of research uptake activity.
11. The university should develop means to quantify and assess the extent of research uptake activity at departmental/faculty and individual staff level.
12. Activity on research uptake should be included in criteria for the promotion and/or re-grading of academic staff where appropriate, taking into account university processes and competing demands on academic time.
13. Central mechanisms should exist to record successful research uptake activity, and to learn from the lessons of previous projects and share success stories.
14. Where professional support is available for research uptake activity, these services should be actively publicised to staff.

Session Four: Support for Externally Facing Activity

Revised
1. The University should keep records of its external contacts and potential research users in

specific fields, and share these internally.
2. Academic staff should be actively encouraged to include Uptake activity in their research proposals to external bodies, and potential users should be involved in project planning from an early stage.
3. Academic staff should be assisted to match specific opportunities to specific potential users.
4. Internal assessment mechanisms should exist to assess the quality and viability of research prior to engagement with external stakeholders and users of research.
5. Mechanisms should exist for potential users of research to be aware of, and where appropriate, involved in, assessing the potential of research at an early stage.
6. The university should provide, or have access to, qualified staff to assist academics in identifying research suitable for research uptake, and advice on the most appropriate time and means to bring research to external stakeholders and users.
7. Academic staff should be provided with assistance in producing and distributing materials about their work to external audiences.
8. Specific routes to promote university research activity should be tailored to key target groups, such as business, government and NGOs.
9. A range of mechanisms should exist to bring the work of the University to external users, such as centrally produced newsletters, open days, research fairs, mailing lists and the university website.
10. Promotional activities should be aimed at a range of levels within external organisations, including senior policy makers and those at operational level, and recognise the different types of approach necessary in each case.
11. The University should maintain regular contact with appropriate media contacts.
12. Mechanisms should exist to review the effectiveness of external communication activities.
13. The University should have clear access points, with the appropriate authority, for external bodies wishing to know more about its work in specific areas.
14. The promotion of University research to external bodies should be recognised, valued and rewarded as key research activity by the University.
15. Staff should be well informed about the research activity throughout the University.