

## ***GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH***

This Good Practice Guide has been developed taking into account the HEQC's audit framework and criteria. However, it does not introduce an additional layer of minimum standards against which institutions will be evaluated. This Guide presents a comprehensive inventory of good practice for quality management of research, providing institutions with indicators of quality that may be used for their own purposes.

In the context of the preparation for an institutional audit, this Guide can help institutions to think through various aspects of their system for the management of research and to identify strengths and weaknesses in a self-evaluation process. Outside the audit context the Guide's contents can be used, depending on institutional circumstances, as maps to support the construction of a quality management system for research or as checklists against which to test existing systems.

It is hoped that all higher education institutions will benefit from using this Good Practice Guide in whichever ways they see fit, according to their individual missions and institutional identities.

The management of research consists of the planning, resourcing, implementation and assessment of initiatives, actions and programmes geared towards achieving an institution's research aims. From the point of view of quality, a quality management system for research should be geared to the quality assurance, support, development and monitoring of the institution's full spectrum of research activities.

**Appendix A** presents the quality management systems for research in relation to the different phases and processes of the institutional audit, and shows the various resources institutions will have available to draw on. These resources include this Good Practice Guide for Quality Management of Research, the Framework for Institutional Audits, the Criteria for Institutional Audits, and the Institutional Audit Manual.

## 2.1 PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

This Guide sets out basic definitions of, and a model for, quality management of research at an institutional level. It has been developed as a resource for higher education institutions, to be used at various stages in the development of internal quality management systems for research. Its purpose is to focus on the policies, structures and data that can facilitate the support, development, enhancement, monitoring and review of the quality of their research and research education activities.

## 2.2. USING THE GUIDE

There are three main sections to this Guide:

**Section 3** sets out basic definitions and conventions relating to quality management of research. These draw on international standards of practice and aim to develop a common understanding of research and research management-related terms as they pertain to higher education. They should be used to interpret the model and its implementation in the later sections.

**Section 4** describes the model and the mechanisms of quality management of research at the institutional level, in relation to the research process and to various levels of research performance within institutions. The Guide does not pretend to be fully comprehensive or exhaustive. It is important that users understand that the Guide should be interpreted flexibly and sensitively, with due regard for the institution's mission and the context in which a particular institution operates. The 'reflection questions' and recommendations set out in this section are not prescriptive. In setting up their internal systems for the quality management of research, users are encouraged not to follow these recommendations rigidly but rather to use them as conceptual resources and heuristic tools to assist in identifying and prioritising key quality concerns that arise from the users' own contexts.

**Section 5** provides a step-by-step guide to how an institution can assess the effectiveness of its quality management systems for research and report on its successes or failures. This section describes what information should be gathered as evidence to support claims made by an institution and how this information should be reported on.

Since the focus of the Guide is on mechanisms for quality management of research, it does not consider research management in general. For example, the Guide does not include all the functions of an institutional research office or how it is managed. Similarly, it does not include suggestions for the quality assessment of the actual research outputs of an institution.

Different institutions may use the Guide differently, as follows:

- (i) Institutions that already have an established and functional quality management system for research can use the Guide to check and validate their system.
- (ii) Institutions that do not yet have a quality management system for research in place can use the Guide as a resource that provides guidelines for establishing such a system.