

Guidelines on the Evaluation of Research Entities

1. BACKGROUND

Research entities are evaluated, internally and externally as per the Senate approved schedule. The schedule is approved by Senate 3 years prior to the actual review/evaluation (see Addendum 1). Each research entity is evaluated internally on a three-year cycle and externally on a six-year cycle.

The evaluation of research entities is coordinated by the Research Support Department (RSD).

The internal evaluation of research entities is evaluated by the Research Entity Evaluations Committee (REEC). The REEC is comprised of a chairperson and eight members representative of each faculty. The committee evaluates existing research entities (Niche Area, Focus Area, Unit, Centre of Excellence) and the viability of proposed new research entities with regard to sustainability, innovation and quality of research. The committee is guided by Terms of Reference (ToR).

The external evaluation of research entities follows a different model. All research entities are evaluated externally with the exception of Niche Areas. Each Research Entity (RE) is evaluated by a panel consisting of 4 – 5 members, i.e. research entities are evaluated by different panels. The panel members are individuals who have expertise in the field of research being evaluated. Panel members are from the SADC region and internationally. Each panel has its own chairperson.

Purpose of the Research Entity evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation of research entities is to assess the overall quality, performance, productivity and impact of the researchers and related research programmes. Research entities are evaluated in terms of specific criteria, e.g. scientific quality, scientific productivity, relevance, viability and management.

Evaluation schedule

A schedule for research entity evaluations is submitted to Senate on a three-year cycle for approval. For both internal and external evaluation of research entities, the Research Entity Director and Deputy Dean R&I (or designate) will be reminded of the evaluation in May and November of the year preceding the actual review/evaluation. The reminder in November will be sent out together with the call for reports to be evaluated. The reports should be submitted by the Research Entity Director electronically to Research Support Department.

2. INTERNAL EVALUATION OF RESEARCH ENTITIES

Internal evaluation of entities is conducted twice a year, in March and August. The call for reports is sent out in November of the year preceding the internal review/evaluation.

The Research Entity Director and relevant Dean (usually the DD R&I) participates in the evaluation of the Research Entity along with the REEC. The evaluation for each entity is approximately 1 hour. The proposed dates are sent to entities to save while the specific timeslots are scheduled closer to the evaluation.

For evaluations in March, reports should be submitted in January. For evaluations in August, reports should be submitted June.

The following documentation needs to be submitted by the Research Entity Director:

A **strategic plan** for the next three years, not exceeding 12 pages.

An extensive report for the three-year period (main body of the report not exceeding 5 pages), with the following appendices:

- Appendix A - Administrative Profile and output (Template will be provided).
- Appendix B - Financial Profile (Template will be provided).
- Appendix C – Information regarding Institutes, Centres and Laboratories. You must only refer to these institutes/centres/laboratories and especially highlight the relationship with your research entity. No reports of the institutes/centres/laboratories must be included.

The report should consist of a main portion which contains a self-assessment and interpretation of the data that should not exceed 5 pages, plus appendices which contain the administrative and financial profiles and possibly applications for strategic innovation funding. The emphasis should be on the improvement of quality. The report must cover the work done since the last internal review. If no previous review of the entity was done, the report must cover the period since the approval of the entity.

2.1 FLOW AND STRUCTURE OF ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction: describe what makes the research entity unique or special. This could be the difference it makes to the discipline, to business and industry, or to the lives of communities. Alternatively, it could be the entity's national or international profile, its special skills base, the research breakthroughs it has achieved or its prolific research output. The point is that each entity needs to think about what makes it different.

Research highlights: This would be a brief overview of the entity's main research achievements since the previous review. Note that this is not a list of everything the entity did but the most important things it achieved in the review period.

Staff and students: describe the size of the staff complement and their skills and qualifications (including NRF ratings), as well as student numbers per level and the graduation rate since the previous review. Focus on the special skills that staff has or students acquire and say why these are relevant.

Publication output: Report on overall research output. Where possible, give details on research output per capita and comment on the productivity of researchers in relation to the productivity of the faculty.

Also, break the research output down into categories: articles, book chapters, creative outputs and conference proceedings. List non-subsidy-bearing outputs separately.

Research partnerships and collaboration: Do not just list the important partnerships; also say why they are important and how they add value to the university or to its stakeholders. Include information on the type of partnership – e.g. joint research projects, student exchange, staff exchange and capacity building.

Recognition and awards: Again, do not just list names and awards received; say why these are important or special.

Special projects: Remember to report on long-running projects, as well as projects completed or initiated during the years under review. Steer away from just listing names and try to describe why the project is newsworthy or what results it has achieved.

Conclusion: Talk about what worked well for the entity during the period and what it intends doing in the coming year to produce even better results. Alternatively, if there were challenges during the period, mention them and talk about the entity's plans to overcome these. It is fine to acknowledge specific stakeholders for their contribution but don't just give everyone a blanket thank-you; rather, say how they made a difference.

In the strategic plan for the next three years, the research director/coordinator provides an analysis of the present situation (in view of the administrative and financial profiles), summarizes recommendations of previous reviews and of the Research Entities Evaluation Committee and strategic responses to the recommendations, the prevailing mission statement (including the relationship with the mission of the University, the chosen research area, the relationship with subject fields, broad aims, relationships with other groups and communities, mode of knowledge production, preferred outputs and source of inspiration), weak points, strong points and the strategic, goals and action steps.

Specific information should be given regarding the link between the Research Entity and national strategic priorities/initiatives and the University's plan, as well as the relationship of the Research Entity in terms of internal and/or external partnerships. Specific steps including the way in which these steps will be reached and measured in relation to the improvement of quality of the research (for example, improvement of NRF rating profile, for example the publication policy to publish in high level journals etc.), should be included pertinently.

2.2 APPENDICES IN THE REPORT

Appendix A: Administrative profile and outputs

The Annual report should include statistical information for the period of three years (template attached).

This should include a scorecard indicating the output in relation to the following indicators (estimate from previous report vs. actual and future).

Appendix B: Financial Profile

Provide a summary of the income and expenditure of the Cost Centre(s) of the Research Entity for each income stream (1-5) separately (template attached). You can contact Financial Planning Department for enquiries in this regard. It will be important to indicate in which way the funding is aligned with the plan in terms of a percentage of the total budget. Please include the Cost Centre number in the financial report.

Appendix C: Information in terms of associated Institutes, Centres and Laboratories

List all officially recognized institutes, centres and laboratories (if any), which are associated with the Research Entity. Specifically indicate the relationship between the associated institute/centre/laboratory and the Research Entity.

New Research Entities

Indications of Intent for the establishment of research entities and proposals for upgrading of existing research entities can be submitted to Research Support, once approved by the relevant Faculty. Applicable documents (e.g. Criteria and Development Trajectory, Indication of Intent Template, Guidelines for submitting an Indication of Intent) are available on request.

3. EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF RESEARCH ENTITIES

External evaluation of research entities is conducted annually by external evaluation panels supported by the RSD. The call for reports is sent out in November of the year preceding the external review/evaluation.

3.1 REPORTS/DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation needs to be submitted by Research Entity Director:

Self-evaluation/Reflection Report

A report focusing on the reflection on the annual reports of the previous 3 to 5 years. Research entities are to reflect on this (i.e. do an in-depth analysis/self-evaluation of those 3 years). In the report, the Research Entity should identify highlights/achievements/commendable areas and gaps/areas needing improvement/interventions. Overall, the report should be a reflection on all activities and outputs with regards to productivity, viability, impact and quality. Further, in the reflection, the RE should provide a detailed description of how processes are handled, e.g. how projects and research ethics approvals are handled in the entity; research running costs/publishing fees; financial support for student research; and bursaries. Also indicate how the entity relates with faculty management in terms of reporting lines, sharing of resources (equipment, consumables) and equity of provision. Annexures to the report should be limited to those that are essential for a comprehensible reading of the report. Supplementary documentation should be made available during the site visit itself.

Narrative cohesion, succinctness of argument, and accurate referencing to relevant documentation and data are important. Duplication of content and padding with extraneous detail, data or diversion, anecdotal or otherwise, should be avoided.

Where claims made require reference to institutional policies, protocols and procedures or other relevant documentation such as internal review reports, minutes of meetings or publications addressing aspects of institutional praxis, such reference should be made preferably in footnotes. The footnote should identify the document and indicate where it will be located in the documentary display prepared for the site visit.

Evidence files

Provide evidence of the most important observation/s from the report (including links to evidence files) and thorough analysis of data (this includes graphs, etc.). The general principle is to provide sufficient evidence referred to. The evidence file should include a map of a portfolio of documentary evidence supporting claims made in the self-evaluation/reflection report that will be made available during the site visit.

Improvement plan

An improvement plan and how the entity is addressing the matters raised in the previous internal evaluations should be included in the documentation.

3.2 BRIEFING SESSION WITH ENTITY DIRECTORS AND OTHER ROLE PLAYERS

The Research Support Department will conduct briefing sessions with the Research Entity Directors and role players as suggested by the Research Entity Director prior to the evaluation in July. The Research Entity (RE) is informed of the site visit, reminded of the date and duration of the evaluation, and notified of the composition of the review panel.

3.3 PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

Process and schedule for the external evaluation of research entities:

Activity	Proposed date
Reminder for the external evaluation	May (year preceding the actual review/evaluation)
Call for submission of reports	November
Due date for reports from Research Entities to be submitted to Research Support	April
Briefing sessions for entities to be evaluated	July
Evaluation panels will be set up for each Research Entity	May
Submission of reports to critical readers. Readers will be given 6 weeks to review. The proposed period will also allow for interaction with the Research Support Department.	May – June
Critical readers' comments will be submitted to Research Entities. Research Entities will have 3 weeks to work on the comments and submit back to Research Support	June – July
Final reports for the evaluation to be submitted to panel members	July/August

3.4 THE REVIEW PANEL AND CRITICAL READERS

3.4.1 Appointment of critical readers

Critical readers are selected internally, i.e. from the NWU. In cases, the Research Support Department cannot find available readers within the institution, extraordinary professors are approached. Research Support also selects critical readers from other institutions of higher education within South Africa.

Critical readers go through the documents submitted for the review/evaluation focusing on the following guiding questions may be used:

- What goals are the Research Entity trying to achieve?
- How is it trying to achieve these goals?
- What plans, procedures and resources are in place to achieve these goals?
- How does the Entity know that it has achieved its goals?
- Can you identify any best practices or areas of improvement?

The critical readers are also expected to comment on the narrative cohesion, succinctness of argument, and accurate referencing to relevant documentation and the data provided.

3.4.2 Selection of the review panel

A panel of reviewers is selected to review the entity evaluation report and evidence, and conduct the site visit to the Research Entity.

Panel reviewers are required to possess professional and personal credibility, being leaders in the specific field. The criteria for the selection of potential panellists are thus based on a combination of knowledge and skills based on education and work experience. Appropriate scholarly expertise and reputation in a discipline will be important considerations.

The panel typically comprises a minimum of four people, one of whom serves as chairperson. The chairperson, among other things, acts as the official conduit between the panel and the Research Entity during the site visit.

The review panel members are drawn from a list of nominations received from Research Entities, to which the RSD may add candidates based on their experience in the related quality assurance processes. The suggested names include senior researchers and research directors/managers/leaders who are running a similar entity or playing a significant role in a similar entity or expertise in the industry or the higher education sector. The Research Entity should not make any contact with the suggested panellist prior and during the evaluation. The Research Support Department is responsible for all communication with the suggested panel member. The proposed panel members will be requested to provide evidence of their expertise.

A condition for appointment to a review panel is that the candidate has not had any recent involvement with the Research Entity concerned. The candidate has not been in the employment of the institution for the past five years, and has not been involved as supervisor or co-supervisor of a masters and/or doctoral candidates from the institution for three years prior to the review.

Involvement as external examiner will not disqualify a candidate. A nominated panel member is required, before appointment, to sign a declaration confirming the absence of any other form of conflict of interest.

The suggested individual must attest that he/she:

- Will submit a CV and any other relevant details required to make an informed decision on his/her suitability to participate in the evaluation.
- Would be willing and able to complete and sign a 'Declaration of Interest' form and a 'Confidentiality Agreement'.
- Would be willing and able to abide by NWU policies, procedures and regulations in respect of all aspects of the external evaluation.
- Would be willing and able to work in a team, to act collegially, and with authority and integrity, and to express views independently.
- Would be willing and able to abide by the ethical guidelines, confidentiality agreement and to observe the level of discretion necessary.
- Has the necessary personal credibility, diligence and commitment.
- Possesses good listening skills and can communicate effectively.

Right of objection

The Research Entity has the right to object to the composition of the panel and to communicate the objection with reason to RSD. As a general rule, a demonstrable conflict of interest is the only valid ground for objection. RSD deals with any adjustments made to the composition of the panel resulting from an objection by the Research Entity, or from a reviewer withdrawing from the panel and being substituted, and notifies the Research Entity accordingly. While consultation with the Research Entity will take place throughout this process, a final decision on the panel composition rests with RSD.

3.5 THE SITE VISIT

The purpose of the site visit is to validate the statements/claims made in the reports and verify the accuracy, completeness and reliability of the information provided by the research entity in their submission. The panel will fulfil this purpose through the review of the supporting documentation and by conducting interviews with the relevant stakeholders.

Before the start of the evaluation, a short orientation session will take place during which the chair and Director of Research Support will provide the background and inform the panel members and report writer of their responsibilities and the course of the programme.

The Research Entities under evaluation and Research Support coordinate the logistics and the proceedings to ensure that the evaluation goes smoothly. RSD will maintain ongoing liaison between the RE and panel members.

A schedule for the site visit is developed by RSD in consultation with the RE. Adherence to the site visit schedule is important to prevent unnecessary disruption of the entity activities. The site visit is conducted by the panel, accompanied by a representative of RSD, who has observer status and does not participate in the interviews and/or panel discussions leading to the findings.

The interaction with interviewees is planned to last for a minimum of three days. Activities of the review panel will be scheduled between 9 am and 4 pm. The site-visit panel may require additional time earlier or later for its private deliberations.

Research Support and the Research Entity Director will decide whether visits to more than one campus, or site of provision, should be undertaken.

3.5.1 Programme for the site visit

Research Support will compile the programme in consultation with the Research Entity Director. The programme will be sent to all relevant persons for comments and inputs before it is finalised.

The site visit will include the following components:

- An introduction and word of welcome by the DVC Research & Innovation or Executive Dean.
- Presentation by the Deputy Dean R&I (or designate) and the Research Entity Director to focusing on overview of the context, structure, objectives, activities, quality assurance, etc. of the Research Entity.
- Viewing of documents and items on exhibition.
- Opportunity to request additional proof or information.
- A visit to the different sections and facilities of the relevant Faculty/School/Department.
- Interviews with the selected relevant stakeholders.
- Closed sessions during which panel members reflect and finalise their findings.
- Refreshment breaks.

3.5.2 Logistical arrangements

The Research Support Department will ensure that logistical arrangements are in place for the panel to proceed with its deliberations in as convenient a manner as possible. RSD will be responsible for the following:

- A map of campus, indicating the venue.
- Desktop name labels for panel members
- Venue (s) suitable for the panel's activities. Ideally, the same venue is suitable for further meetings/interviews, confidential panel discussion, and a document display
- Honorarium and gifts of external panel members
- Travel and accommodation expenses of external panel members and ensuring these are scheduled appropriately
- All catering and refreshments for panel members during the site visit
- Costs related to the printing costs of portfolio and the evaluation report

3.5.3 Preparations by the Research Entity

The Research Entity and Director will be responsible for the following:

- Clear readable name cards for the evaluation panel and interviewees.

- Parking for panel members.
- Transport costs (if any) for interviewees.
- Inform all staff members about the planned evaluation and schedule dates.
- Appoint a convener and task team, representative of all sites and do planning in collaboration with the Research Support Department.
- Appoint person(s) to be responsible for determining, scheduling, communication and orientation of interviewees. The Research Support Department will provide guidance on the list of interviewees.
- Determine suitable documentation for Portfolio and send to the Research Support Department.
- Tables for a well-categorised and -indexed document display.
- Plan and prepare for exhibition during site visit – identify suitable items and documentation.
- Plan sightseeing tour for panel members.
- Appoint a contact with the Research Support Department.

3.5.4 Document display

In general, documentation is limited to matters relevant to the evaluation of the RE and that elaborates on matters contained in the SER. The document display should be well arranged and categorised, so that the panel is easily able to access information that has been referred to in the SER.

Of fundamental importance is the documentary display map, indicating the source of each documentary item. Access to online items should be available to the panel at all times. The panel may need to print certain online items. The document display should, as far as possible, be aligned with references made in the SER.

The panel may also need to have access to certain documents after conclusion of the site visit, as part of its report drafting. If that is the case, the RE will have to upload additional documentation.

3.5.5 Interviews and interviewees

A key element in a site-visit schedule is the interviewing of personnel from the different relevant parts of the RE. RSD in consultation with the RE will provide guidance on the category of relevant persons to be interviewed. The RE is responsible for contacting the interviewees and logistical arrangements. The RE should share the final list of interviewees with RSD.

Apart from the initial meeting with senior management, interviews do not include formal presentations by the interviewees. The panel pursues lines of enquiry, and interviewees respond accordingly. The panel will assume that the interview groups have been adequately informed of the purpose and scope of the site visit. Discussion in interviews is confidential; the panel's reporting on any statement made during an interview will cite the group category (for example, faculty deans, library staff), but not an individual respondent.

3.5.6 Roles and responsibilities: panel chairperson, panel members and RSD observer

Chairperson

The chairperson is the senior trustee of the review process for the duration of the panel's mandate. As such, the chairperson is responsible for maintaining contact with RSD before, during and after the site visit. During the site visit, the chairperson is the official conduit for all communication between RSD and the panel, including requests for and submission of any additional documentation. Any problems or uncertainties encountered by the institution during the site visit should be brought directly to the attention of the chairperson.

Panel members report directly to the chairperson and, outside of scheduled meetings and interviews. Should any conflicts arise during panel deliberations that cannot be resolved through consultation aimed at consensus, the chairperson's decision on any conflictual matter will be final. A panel member who has reasonable grounds for feeling aggrieved by such decision may refer the grievance to RSD.

The chairperson presides over the site visit meetings and interviews, ensuring that all proceedings are conducted in a fair and courteous manner. During the interviews, the chairperson will ensure that panel members and respondents restrict themselves to matters that are within the scope of the review process. It is within the chairperson's discretion to rule a particular question or response out of order, or to re-direct it appropriately. Out-of-order contributions by the panel would include opinionated or advisory statements, or judgements based on comparisons with different non-applicable institutional contexts and practices within NWU and other institutions.

In order to manage time effectively, the chairperson ensures members stick to the agreed time slots. The chairperson should ensure that discussion is focused and appropriately sequenced, that facts are distinguished from opinions and feelings, that questions posed by the panel are pertinent and clearly expressed, and that important verbal evidence is accurately captured. S/he should also ensure that time is well managed, allowing for an appropriate balance between the range and number of questions posed by the panel and opportunity for adequate response by the institution. Another responsibility of the chairperson is to ensure that all aspects on which the panel's findings and recommendations pertain to all research and related activities and postgraduate programmes connected to the entity are adequately covered, not just separately but with a composite overview as well.

Panel members

Each panel member contributes to the proceedings, helping the panel achieve its objectives. Panel members must accept the coordinating authority of the chairperson, and be guided by her/him with regard to the institution and tenor of each site visit interview session. Panel members should ensure that any enquiry or request they may wish to make to the institution is conveyed to the institutional site-visit coordinator (RSD) solely by the chairperson. Each panel member should make a summary record of proceedings so that, when a report is drafted, points made can be justified by reference to specific documentary or verbal evidence.

RSD observer

The RSD representative has observer status throughout the site visit, but does not participate in the panel's process of arriving at findings and recommendations, nor in the writing of the site visit report. Her/his role is to provide administrative support to the panel, to liaise on logistical matters with the institution, to monitor the panel's adherence to the NWU guidelines/policy on site visit protocols and, should the protocols be breached, to bring the matter to the attention of the chairperson, in the first instance and, should it remain unresolved, to the attention of RSD Director.

Another responsibility of the RSD representative is ensuring that travel and accommodation arrangements for panel members are completed and communicated to them in good time.

3.6 POST-SITE VISIT ARRANGEMENTS

On conclusion of the site visit, RSD will ensure that a post-site visit evaluation form is completed by the Research Entity and the evaluation panel. Any requests by the panel for post-site visit documentation are addressed.

3.6.1 The site-visit report

The site-visit/review panel report is an important element of the evaluation/review process. The evaluation report together with the Research Entity's report provides the NWU with a holistic qualitative judgement on the evaluation of the Research Entity. The writing of this report and the submission thereof to RSD signals the conclusion of the site visit for the review panel.

Typically, the chairperson will assign, after consultation, specific sections of the report to different members of the panel. This would be to ensure that all aspects of the evaluation/review are adequately addressed during the site visit. A draft report is normally compiled before the review panel disbands at the end of the site visit. The evaluation report template will be discussed with the panel members before the visit to help shape the line of enquiry should be followed. The template does, at the same time, provide sufficient discretion for each panel report fairly to represent the distinctive character of each Research Entity.

Ideally, all the key elements that inform the report should have been agreed on by panel members during face-to-face discussion. The chairperson strives to achieve consensus in the panel on all matters included in the report. In cases where there are unresolved but significant differences of opinion between panel members on substantive matters, the chairperson may decide to include the conflicting points of view as part of the report.

The panel report is then completed within 6 weeks after the evaluation. The chairperson should scrutinise the final version to ensure consistency, accuracy, even-handedness, stylistic and tonal suitability, and linguistic precision. The chairperson is responsible for the completion and submission of the final report to RSD.

Once the reports are received from the respective panels. The RSD will send to the Research Entities that were evaluated. The reports will also be tabled at SCRI and Senate for final approval and endorsement.

3.6.2 Improvement plan and progress report

Three months after the receipt of the final report, the Research Entity should submit an improvement plan (action plan with indication of functionaries and timelines) to the Director: Research Support, Executive Dean and Deputy Dean: R&I. The document needs to be language-edited and signed.

Six months after submission of the improvement plan, the Research Entity should submit a progress report, based on this improvement plan, to the Director of Research Support, Dean and DD: R&I. The document needs to be language-edited and signed.

3.7 CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

3.7.1 Guidelines on professional conduct during the site visit: panel members

Research Entity reviews, including site visits, provide review panels with much institutional information. All material, including institutional submissions and documentation provided as evidence, is treated as confidential and may only be used for the purpose for which it was obtained.

Review panel members are required to sign an undertaking that they will treat all information as such and agree to destroy any documentation taken off site or return it to RSD by a specified date.

Panel members should strive to ensure that all engagement with members of the institution is objective, impartial, and conducted in a professional manner.

During the site visit itself, panel members may not divulge to any member of the institution, or by allusion hint at, the findings and recommendations the panel will make.

Panel members should ensure that all notes, comments and recommendations are secure, and that nothing is left in institutional spaces (or in institutional documents) that could be accessed by non-members.

Reviewers are, in particular, prohibited from disclosing the contents of the panel report submitted to RSD to anyone and may not contact the institution or other parties to discuss matters relating to the site visit. The panel report is the exclusive property of the NWU. Any attempt by a member of the institution to elicit information that is confidential to the panel must be reported immediately to RSD.

3.7.2 Guidelines on professional conduct during site visit: members of the institution

In addition to the required compliance by reviewers with the ethical and confidentiality requirements, refer to a list of professional guidelines, related to site visits, for which it seeks compliance by the Research Entities.

These guidelines are as follows:

The Research Entity is not permitted to make contact with review panel members prior to or after the site visit on issues related to the review process. Any attempt outside of the site visit schedule to influence the outcome of the site visit must be avoided.

It is the responsibility of the Research Entity to ensure that personnel required to be present for the site visit are available at the appointed times and are properly informed of the purpose and scope of the visit.

The institution recognises the need for the panel to hear evidence, during interviews, representing the full spectrum of the evaluation.

The institution should ensure the review panel, is afforded, on request; access to all facilities and resources relevant to the review.

No audio-visual recording of formal site visit proceedings (video, photograph, audio) may be made without expressing permission from RSD and those participating in the review. Unless by prior agreement, the panel does not make audio-visual records of proceedings.

No gifts, rewards or financial incentives may be offered to panel members prior or during and after the site visit.

Addendum 1. SCHEDULE: 2020 – 2024 EVALUATION OF RESEARCH ENTITIES

(No external evaluation for Niche Areas)

Internal 2020 External 2022	Internal 2021 External 2023	Internal 2022 External 2024	Internal 2023
Centre of Excellence for Pharmaceutical Sciences(PharMaCen) <i>HEALTH SCIENCES</i>	Centre of Excellence in CarbonBased Fuels <i>ENGINEERING</i>	Centre of Excellence: SpaceResearch <i>FNAS</i>	NICHE AREA: Musical Arts in SA: Resources and Applications (MASARA) <i>HUMANITIES</i>
Unit for Energy and TechnologySystems <i>ENGINEERING</i>	Centre of Excellence for Nutrition(CEN) <i>HEALTH SCIENCES</i>	Centre of Excellence: Hypertension in Africa ResearchTeam (HART) <i>HEALTH SCIENCES</i>	NICHE AREA: Medicine Use in SA (MUSA) <i>HEALTH SCIENCES</i>
Unit for Environmental Sciencesand Management <i>FNAS</i>	UNIT: Research Unit for Law, Justice and Sustainability <i>LAW</i>	Unit for Language and Literature in the SA context <i>HUMANITIES</i>	NICHE AREA: Multilingual Speech Technologies (MuST) <i>ENGINEERING</i>
UNIT: Workwell: Research Unit for Economic and ManagementSciences <i>FEMS</i>	Unit for Reformed Theology and the Development of the SA Society <i>THEOLOGY</i>	UNIT: Tourism Research in Economic Environs and Society(TREES) <i>FEMS</i>	NICHE AREA: Visual Narratives & Creative Outputs through Interdisciplinary & Practice- led Research (VINCO) <i>HUMANITIES</i>
UNIT: Education and Human Rights in diversity (Edu-HRight) <i>EDUCATION</i>	UNIT: Africa Unit for Trans- Disciplinary Health Research(AUTHeR) <i>HEALTH SCIENCES</i>	UNIT: Self-directed Learning(SDL) <i>EDUCATION</i>	NICHE AREA: Lifestyle Diseases <i>HEALTH SCIENCES</i>
Unit for Business Mathematicsand Informatics <i>FNAS</i>	FOCUS AREA: Enabling optimal expression of individual, social and institutional potential (OPTENTIA) <i>HUMANITIES</i>	FOCUS AREA: Ancient Texts: Text, Context and Reception <i>THEOLOGY</i>	
FOCUS AREA: Population andHealth <i>HUMANITIES</i>	FOCUS AREA: Social Transformation <i>HUMANITIES</i>	FOCUS AREA: Community Psychosocial Research (COMPRES) <i>HEALTH SCIENCES</i>	
FOCUS AREA: Material Science Innovation and Modeling (MaSIM) <i>FNAS</i>	FOCUS AREA: Understanding and Processing Language in Complex Settings (UPSET) <i>HUMANITIES</i>	FOCUS AREA: Human Metabolomics <i>FNAS</i>	
FOCUS AREA: Quality in Nursing and Midwifery (INSINQ) <i>HEALTH SCIENCES</i>	FOCUS AREA: Physical activity, sport and recreation (PhASRec) <i>HEALTH SCIENCES</i>	FOCUS AREA: Occupational Hygiene and Health ResearchInitiative (OHHRI) <i>HEALTH SCIENCES</i>	
FOCUS AREA: Trade and Development (TRADE) <i>FEMS</i>	FOCUS AREA: Chemical Resource Beneficiation (CRB) <i>FNAS</i>	FOCUS AREA: Pure and AppliedAnalytics <i>FNAS</i>	

NICHE AREA: Global Innovative Focused Talent (GIFT) <i>FEMS</i>	NICHE AREA: Food security and safety in the North-West Province <i>FNAS</i>	NICHE AREA: Applied Research in Management Cybernetics <i>FEMS</i>	
NICHE AREA: Indigenous Language Media in Africa (ILMA) <i>HUMANITIES</i>	NICHE AREA: Community-based Educational Research (COMBER) <i>EDUCATION</i>		

Addendum 2. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following five aspects should be addressed in the evaluation; scientific quality, productivity, relevance, management and long term viability:

1.1 Scientific and/or artistic quality

The NWU is committed to a high quality of its research endeavours and has stated explicitly that it wants to have its research quality assessed from an internationally comparative perspective. The following five criteria should be used in the evaluation:

- Quality and scientific relevance of the research
- Leadership of the research entity, including research policy and research management
- The academic reputation of the researchers
- Organisational aspects of the entity, such as the human and financial resources
- Masters and PhD training in the entity (Focus on aspects such as success rates, supervision and organisational embedment of the programme in the research entity, research activities involved in the training, and the availability of educational resources, such as courses and resources for conference attendance.)

The reviewers may use the typology and scores in the table below as the frame of reference for the assessment of the scientific quality of the focus area.

Categories of assessment of scientific and artistic quality

Rating	Category
5	Research and/or artistic quality that equates to levels of international excellence in some sub-areas of activity and to levels of national excellence in virtually all others
4	Research and/or artistic quality that equates to levels of national excellence in virtually all sub-areas of activity, possibly showing some evidence of international excellence, or to international level in some and at least national level in a majority of sub-areas
3	Research and/or artistic quality that equates to levels of national excellence in a majority of the sub-areas of activity, or to international level in some sub-areas
2	Research and/or artistic quality that equates to levels of national excellence in up to half the sub-areas of activity
1	Research and/or artistic quality that equates to levels of national excellence in none, or virtually none, of the sub-areas of activity

1.2 Scientific and/or artistic productivity

The assessments of scientific and/or artistic productivity are based on a general impression of the production of a research group with references to its mission, size and resources. All forms of outputs relevant for the specific field (e.g. patents, protocols, policy documents and creative outputs) should be taken into account, and not only the formalised outputs as reported for subsidy purposes. Hence, the report on scientific productivity should be more a reflection of the sub-panel's perception, rather than a simple reporting of quantitative input and output measurements.

Taking into account the mission, size and the resources of the group, the rating and categories used are:

Categories of assessment of scientific productivity

Rating	Category
5	The scientific and/or artistic output in highly regarded media is outstanding. The qualitative and/or quantitative output of PhD theses, master's dissertations and creative coursework is of special note. The group contributes regularly to international and national conferences and other events (such as concerts and art exhibitions). There is a steady stream of scholarly and/or artistic products of the kind to be expected from a highly ranked group in this field.
4	The number of scientific publications and other scholarly and/or artistic products are above what may be expected from comparable groups in South Africa. PhD theses, master's dissertations and creative coursework are produced regularly. Clear visibility is achieved through frequent contributions to national and international conferences and other events (such as concerts and art exhibitions).
3	Productivity is reasonable, also compared to average amounts of contributions in the same field by groups in similar positions.
2	There has been some scientific and/or artistic output but as a whole the group's performance is below the standard of other research groups in similar fields
1	The output of the research and creative outputs done is far below standard.

1.3 Relevance

The South African Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and other policy documents strongly emphasise the central position and relevance of research for South Africa, indicating various aspects that are regarded by the policymakers to be of special importance. Amongst these is that:

- It must redress past inequities and strengthen and diversify research capacity.
- There must be sufficient articulation between the different elements of the research and creative outputs system, and between the research and creative outputs system and national needs for social, economic, cultural and intellectual reconstruction.
- It must also keep abreast of the emerging global trends, especially the development of participatory and applications-driven research, addressing critical national needs, something that requires collaboration between various knowledge producers, knowledge interpreters and knowledge managers.

This has far-reaching implications for higher education. It needs to broaden its capacity to undertake research across the full spectrum, that is, traditional or basic research, applications research and participation-based research.

This broad framework is defined on a national level and formulates intentions for the higher education system as a whole. It does appear that a single research entity – which per definition determined its

unique and focused niche – cannot cover the broad spectrum envisaged above. However, every research entity should have clarity on the relevance of its research and/or creative outputs programme and on the character and impact of the outputs and outcomes of its research, creative outputs and education.

It should further be noted that the objectives of the NRF (National Research Foundation of South Africa) clearly direct its role of promoting excellence in research, while simultaneously being firmly devoted to the relevance with regard to the South African context:

“The objective of the NRF is to support and promote research through funding, human resource development and the provision of the necessary research facilities, in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development in all fields of the natural and social sciences, humanities and technology. In so doing, it contributes to the improvement of the quality of life of all the people of the country.”

In general, it is internationally accepted that assessment of relevance can be separated into four domains:

- Scientific and/or artistic relevance, related to demonstrable contributions by the group to scientific progress in its field or to other (trans-disciplinary) fields of research
- Societal relevance, related to a demonstrable impact on short-term and long-term societal problems
- Institutional relevance, related to the mission of the University.
- Relevance of the research for educational purposes.

The success of research (including creative outputs), and its relevance in the case of each research entity within these four domains, is unique in its own right. Moreover, almost all relevant fields of research and/or artistic practice may overlap with more if not all of these domains. It is therefore difficult to give scores or to define specific categories of relevance. It can be expected, however, that the members of each of the research entities should have a clear understanding of the relevance of their scientific and/or artistic endeavour and of the impact thereof, and this can be evaluated externally.

Evaluating the relevance of the research entity starts with a clear understanding of the mission of the entity as a point of departure. Based on the previous experience it is recommended to the research groups that they specify their view on the relevance of their research and creative outputs and that they underpin their view with reference to facts and evidence. The external evaluation should critically scrutinise the relevance of the field of research and/or creative work under consideration, as claimed by the entity. It should furthermore be verified what the real impact is of the outcomes and outputs of the entity. Based on such an evaluation, the relevance of the entity can be placed in one of five categories.

Categories of assessment of relevance

Rating	Category
5	There is a clear understanding within the research group of the relevance of the research entity, based on their mission statement and an integrated approach to achieving the mission, as well as its translation into performance and outputs. / Its impact can be regarded as influential and highly relevant to its clientele (whether it is the scientific community, societal and public structures, external funding agencies or the institutional realm).
4	The group reflected more than adequately on the relevance of the research entity. / Limited but distinct contributions are made to prominent fields, and influential contributions are made by one or a few of the subsections of the research and/or artistic focus.
3	The group reflected adequately on the relevance of the research entity. / The outcomes of the entity can still be recognised as sufficient to deserve the institutional support and to qualify for the minimum requirements needed for advanced education up to doctoral level.
2	The context of relevance as proposed by the research group seems to be ill-defined, incoherent or over-ambitious and unachievable, given the critical mass of the group. / The real and potential impact of the research entity appears to be only peripheral.
1	The research group did not convincingly convey the relevance of their entity nor did they present demonstrable outcomes to support their claims.

1.4 Management

One of the core aspects of the research environment of the NWU is that research management in the form of Research Directors is based on scientific and/or artistic leadership, the capacity to manage highly professional individuals and the ability for innovative and strategic development of the research entities. The NWU regards this as a competitive advantage in the South African higher education landscape.

Aspects to be considered in assessing the quality of the management are as follows:

- An adequate management structure for the entity
- The capacity of the leadership to direct the scholarly and/or artistic development of the entity
- The presence of innovative and strategic leadership
- Effective management practice in general

The categorisation of the quality of the management should be made in one of five categories.

Categories of assessment of management of the focus area

Rating	Category
5	The entity is very well managed and therefore deserves a substantial degree of autonomy within the university.
4	The entity is managed adequately but may need some additional support in order to improve its ability to cope with changing circumstances.
3	The management of the entity is capable of handling ongoing business but there are some doubts about its capacity to innovate.
2	The management of the entity is weak and needs strengthening.
1	The entity is poorly managed. Change of leadership is needed in order to make this entity viable.

1.5 Long-term viability

The time horizon for assessment of the viability of the research entity is 5-10 years from the present date, depending on the level of the entity. Regarding future viability, two dimensions are of importance:

Demonstrable progress made over the period since the previous peer review, and prospects for the research entity with regard to the future.

The following aspects of viability will be taken into account:

- Whether it is worthwhile to continue the research topics and creative foci – based on the actual relevance of the field of expertise chosen for the research entity (scientific and/or artistic viability) and the ideas and plans of the group for the future
- The group's ability to define its future strategy based on aspects like strategic planning, requirements for increased effectiveness, conceptual emphasis on openness of analysis and self-reflection
- Availability of qualified staff in the future to ensure that a critical mass of expertise is maintained, including continuity of scientific and/or artistic leadership
 - Suitability of the field of the research entity as well as its research focus, to serve as a basis for advanced education as would typically be required for students who wish to enrol for master's and doctoral studies to become responsive and empowered for the intellectual and competency requirements of the coming era
 - Prospects of adequate future funding of personnel and infrastructure, especially from external funding sources (2nd, 3rd and 5th income streams¹), where relevant

¹ The different income streams have been defined as follows:

Stream 1: Combined government subsidy and student fee income

Stream 2: Funds from South African research agencies

Stream 3: Financial support for contract research from the public and private sectors

Stream 4: Directed strategic funds from the innovation fund of the University

- An adequate management structure.

Five ratings for long-time viability are indicated in the table below.

Categories of assessment of viability

Rating	Category
5	The entity is judged to have a clear and coherent grasp of their field of research and creative work to remain innovative with regard to the continuation of their expertise. It is likely to improve its position in national and international scholarly and/or professional networks. Continuity of funding is assured. Highly qualified staff will continue to be available. The entity continues to be attractive to masters and doctoral students.
4	The entity is seen as competent to address crucial issues in its field of expertise with fruitful ideas. The entity's position in the field seems to be assured. There may be a few doubts about aspects like the refinement of its future strategy, future funding or the availability of competent staff needed to maintain the research and creative programme or the attractiveness for masters and doctoral students, but as a whole the entity seems to be viable.
3	There are some reservations about the future viability of the entity, but if proper measures are taken in time, there is a good chance that the entity will contribute adequately to its field.
2	Based on the plans presented, there are serious doubts about the viability of the entity. Without additional measures for strengthening the entity, it will not function adequately.
1	For one or more of a number of reasons the research entity is judged to be non-viable and it is recommended that it should not be continued in the present form.

Addendum 3. RESEARCH ENTITIES TRAJECTORY

Changes to the Research Entity Trajectory Document

This document contains the Research Support Committee's proposed amendments to the Research Entity Trajectory document.

All reference to "**campus**" was removed since it is no longer relevant in the unitary NWU.

We propose to change some of the names of headings to reflect the topic better

Focus
Plans
Resources
Outputs
Entity leader
Team members
Post graduate research and education
Time frames

Niche Areas proposal

Over the last couple of years, we have seen a proliferation of Niche Areas. A number of these Niche Areas are struggling with sustainability and growth to develop into a Focus Area as is intended. Another consequence of too many small entities is that it does not allow for progression to higher levels due to small size. Against this background, we propose some changes to the trajectory that we believe will ensure a higher proportion of Niche Areas that develop into independent Focus Areas. The proposal we believe will also assist in the growth trajectory and align it better with existing Faculty management processes.

We propose that Niche Areas do not become formal independent entities but that they remain a grouping within a mother/hosting entity. The establishment of a Niche Area is a formal strategic decision taken by the relevant research group, Research Director/s and the relevant Dean/s of a Faculty who have the mandate and responsibility to support, manage and develop the Niche Area. This proposed structure does not require the creation of new positions and utilises existing support structures. A Niche Area indicates its intention to grow into a Focus Area and develops a strategic plan with an action plan and reports to the Director and relevant Dean/s. Functionally they are independent but organisationally they are still part of an existing entity until such time that they have grown to the level of a Focus Area.

A Niche Area shows clear intent of growing into a Focus Area within 6 years, has the support of the current research director/s and dean/s, operates based on an approved strategic and action plan and, performs an annual evaluation of performance and adjustment of actions to be taken to achieve its development goals. This helps to achieve focus in activities, ensures that individuals can work together, helps build systems and empowers the Niche Area Leader and the group as a whole to develop the required skills to lead such a group beyond the level of a Niche Area. It leads to a more purposeful growth and development trajectory.

Niche Area cycle

A typical Niche Area evaluation cycle will look as follows:

Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Planning and setup of Niche. Strategic plan with Action Plan. Internal application and approval by relevant Director/s and Dean/s Letter of "registration" to Faculty Management Board, Research Support and Research Evaluation Committee	Annual Report with evaluation of Strategic and Action plan to Dean/s	Annual Report with evaluation of Strategic and Action plan to Dean/s	Annual Report with evaluation of Strategic and Action plan to Dean/s	Annual Report with evaluation of Strategic and Action plan to Dean/s	Annual Report with evaluation of Strategic and Action plan to Dean/s. Preparation to apply for independent entity.	Internal Evaluation by Research Evaluation Committee together with originating Research Entity

If, by the time of internal evaluation, a Niche Area does not perform to the minimum standard of a FA then it simply remains a sub-programme within its originating research entity. It is removed from the list of developing research entities and is no longer part of the trajectory. This approach solves several problems and ensures sustainability by keeping the responsibility for the growth within the faculty and originating entity. It allows for enough time to build the relevant capacity in a purposeful way, to develop supporting systems and structures. Right from the onset of the trajectory it also provides clarity on exactly what happens when benchmarks are not achieved after 6 years while at the same time ensuring continuous formal monitoring and evaluation of progress.

Focus

Focus	Level 1 Niche Area	Level 2 Focus Area	Level 3 Unit	Level 4 Centre of Excellence
Focus	A clear focus which is part of the overall strategic plan of the university a with national • research impact	A clear focus which is part of the overall strategic plan of the university linked to national priorities with national research impact and appropriate • international impact	A clear focus which is part of the overall strategic plan of the university linked to national priorities with national research impact and appropriate international research impact	A clear focus which is part of the overall strategic plan of the university and linked to national priorities with appropriate national and international research impact
	•	•	• Where multiple disciplines are involved research should be at least inter- disciplinary	• Where multiple disciplines are involved research should be trans-disciplinary in nature
	A Niche Area may consist of coherent constituent sub-areas	A Focus Area may consist of coherent constituent sub-areas	A Unit should consist of constituent sub-areas	A Centre must consist of constituent sub-areas
Comments/rationale	Coherence in Niche Area is important to ensure critical mass	Coherence is important for critical mass and quality.	For Units coherence is not required for subprogrammes since it could be part of a growth of an entity which is expected	

Plans

	Level 1 Niche Area	Level 2 Focus Area	Level 3 Unit	Level 4 Centre of Excellence
Plans	Institutionally approved strategic and action plan •	Institutionally approved strategic plan which includes a clear strategy and capacity development action plan for succession •	Institutionally approved and externally reviewed strategic plan which includes a clear strategy and capacity development action plan for succession •	Institutionally approved and internationally recommended strategic plan which includes a clear strategy and capacity development action plan for succession •
Comments/rationale		There are many problems with the idea of “assistant leader” and succession planning Here we also tried to solve the build broad capacity in entities in a purposeful manner.		

Resources

	Level 1 Niche Area	Level 2 Focus Area	Level 3 Unit	Level 4 Centre of Excellence
Resources	Primarily dependent on institutional start-up/core funding for research activities	Some funding for research activities from external sources of funding	A substantial amount of funding for research activities from external sources of funding	The majority of funding for research activities from external sources
	•	•	Multiple national or international grant holders in relation to size of • entity (1 grant : 5 academic participants)	Multiple national and international grant holders in relation to size of • entity (1 grant : 3 academic participants)
	•	•	•	• History of international funding for research purposes from a variety of sources in the preceding 5 years
Comments/rationale	Research activities: <i>activities related to the generation and analysis of data and the dissemination or commercialisation of results</i>		We also added an expectation for the number of grantholders to ensure a sustainable future	

Current definition of NWU income only includes strategic funding from Campus, Faculty, School and/or Institutional Research Support Office

Outputs

There have been many arguments against the use of a single AE target for all research entities. We propose a different approach to assess outputs of entities.

	Level 1 Niche Area	Level 2 Focus Area	Level 3 Unit	Level 4 Centre of Excellence
Outputs	Average Research publication output equal to expectations as per Faculty's Research Annual Performance Plan.	Average Research publication output 120% of expectations as per Faculty's Research Annual Performance Plan in the preceding 2 years.	Average Research publication output 150% of expectations as per Faculty's Research Annual Performance Plan in the preceding 3 years. • ACROSS FACULTIES??	Average Research publication output 200% of expectations as per Faculty's Research Annual Performance Plan in the preceding 3 years. •
	100% DHET More than 50% of publications in internationally accredited (ISI & Scopus) journals. •	100 DHET More than 75% of publications in internationally accredited (ISI & Scopus) journals in the preceding 2 years. •	100 DHET More than 85% of publications in internationally accredited (ISI & Scopus) journals in the preceding 3 years. •	100 DHET More than 90% of publications in internationally accredited (ISI & Scopus) journals in the preceding 3 years. •
	At least some papers in ISI & Scopus Q1 journals •	At least 25% of papers in ISI & Scopus Q1 journals in the preceding 2 years. •	At least 50% of papers in ISI & Scopus Q1 journals in the preceding 3 years. •	At least 75% of papers in ISI & Scopus Q1 journals in the preceding 3 years. •
	Average Post graduate delivery equal to expectations as per Faculty's Research Annual Performance Plan •	Average Post graduate delivery 120% of expectations as per Faculty's Research Annual Performance Plan in the preceding 2 years. ACROSS FACULTIES??	Average Post graduate delivery 150% of expectations as per Faculty's Research Annual Performance Plan in the preceding 3 years. ACROSS FACULTIES?	Average Post graduate delivery 200% of expectations as per Faculty's Research Annual Performance Plan in the preceding 3 years. ACROSS FACULTIES??
			• A substantial number of participants have been 1 st author or senior in the preceding 3 years	• Majority of participants have been 1 st or senior author in the preceding 3 years
Comments/rationale	The AE and PG output guideline hinges on the assumption that Faculty Plans are well thought through and are realistic (not stretch goals). Using Faculty expectations also respects Faculty Plans in evaluating work that is done in entities in Faculties.	Using the journal ranking quartile system enables us to compare across disciplines and is arguably more fair than looking at journal impact factors alone. This is only intended to replace the metrics involving impact factors that is being increasingly used in inappropriate ways	To establish a realistic benchmark for percentages of papers in Q1 we will analyse the current performance of the Centres of Excellence at the NWU and use that as a benchmark to work from.	

On total research outputs NWU was below the sector average for 2018 (1.75 vs 1.91 sector average) in 10th position out of 25¹ In 2018 we were also below the average in terms of proportion doctoral graduates per doctorate staff member²

¹ DHET. Report on the evaluation of the 2018 universities' research output. Table 14 p36. https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/1/2020/May%202020/report-on-the-evaluation-of-the-2018-universities-research-output_april_2020.doc.zp189504.pdf

² DHET. Report on the evaluation of the 2018 universities' research output. Table 16 p41. https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/1/2020/May%202020/report-on-the-evaluation-of-the-2018-universities-research-output_april_2020.doc.zp189504.pdf

Entity Leader

	Level 1 Niche Area	Level 2 Focus Area	Level 3 Unit	Level 4 Centre of Excellence
Entity Leader	A leader who has a minimum of PhD (or equivalent) and a research track record which includes publishing, funding and post grad student delivery.	A leader who is an established researcher with standing within and outside NWU, as evidenced by a valid NRF rating (or equivalent)	•A leader who is an established researcher with standing within and outside NWU, as evidenced by a valid NRF rating	•A leader with substantial international recognition and standing, as evidenced by a valid NRF rating
	The leader must be a full-time academic staff member of the NWU	The leader must be a full-time academic staff member of the NWU.	The leader must be a full-time academic staff member of the NWU.	The leader must be a full-time academic staff member of NWU
	The leader will hold the title of Niche Area Leader OR COORDINATOR? Tasks must be stated more explicitly Tasks of Deputy Deans	The leader will hold the title of 'Director'	The leader will hold the title of 'Director'	The leader will hold the title of 'Director'
Comments/rationale		Succession planning now dealt under "plans"		

“

Team Members

	Level 1 Niche Area	Level 2 Focus Area	Level 3 Unit	Level 4 Centre of Excellence
Team members	At least 6 additional team members who are full time staff members of the NWU Leader should be full professor?	At least 6 additional team members who are full time staff members of the NWU Leader should be full professor?	At least 6 additional team members who are full time staff members of the NWU Leader should be full professor?	At least 6 additional team members who are full time staff members of the NWU Leader should be full professor?
	These team members must all be active in research and will conduct individual research projects within the overall theme of the Niche Area	These team members must all be active in research and will conduct individual research projects within the overall theme of the Focus Area	These team members must all be active in research and will conduct individual research projects within the overall theme of the Unit	The team members must all be active in research and lead individual research projects within the theme of the Centre
	•	At least half of the participating members must have completed a doctoral qualification	At least 65% of participating staff members must have completed a doctoral qualification	Almost all participating members have a doctoral qualification and there should be members who are internationally acclaimed (e.g. with a NRF B-ratings)
	•	There should be members with NRF ratings	There should be members with at least NRF C-ratings	There must be evidence of Post-doctoral Fellow involvement (typically a ratio of 1 Post-doctoral Fellow for 4 participating staff with PhDs)
	•	•	• Participation of at least one Post-doctoral Fellow within the Unit. (typically a ratio of 1 Post-doctoral Fellow for 6 participating staff with PhDs)	• Some of the Post-doctoral Fellows • should have been funded from external sources in the preceding 3 years.
		•	•	• Some staff members are active in leadership structures of international professional, academic and policy making bodies
Comments/rationale		50% PhD requirement might also assist in getting more staff members to PhD level. <i>We should however figure out why we have relative to others fewer PhD graduates per doctorate staff member (2018).</i>	65% PhD is above NWU average which is 52% ³	

³ DHET. Report on the evaluation of the 2018 universities' research output. Table 17 p42. https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/1/2020/May%202020/report-on-the-evaluation-of-the-2018-universities-research-output_april_2020.doc.zp189504.pdf

Post graduate research and education

	Level 1 Niche Area	Level 2 Focus Area	Level 3 Unit	Level 4 Centre of Excellence
Post graduate research and education	Members should be actively involved in the supervision of M and D students (typically 1 PGE per participating staff member). Supervision requirements? How does this align with regards to requirements regarding doctoral qualifications?	Postgraduate (M and D) students must be trained through involvement in the Focus Area (typically 2 PGE per participating staff member)	There must be a history of postgraduate student (M and D) training by individual members and collectively in the Unit (typically 3 PGE per participating researcher with PhD)	There must be a history of postgraduate student (M and D) training by individual members and collectively (typically 4 PGE per participating staff member with a PhD)
Comments/rationale	We have removed the requirement that an entity should have a degree to solve problems where postgrad students are either in a post grad school or where faculties require post grads to be in the normal undergrad schools.	The PGE involvement is not about outputs but about inputs Directors at least need to report on their contribution to post graduate student input this is still something we need to solve at the moment the assumption and report structure assumes all entities have their own post grad students	The PGE involvement is not about outputs but about inputs	The PGE involvement is not about outputs but about inputs

Time frames

	Level 1 Niche Area	Level 2 Focus Area	Level 3 Unit	Level 4 Centre of Excellence
Time frames	•A Niche Area should must meet the criteria for a next level within 6 years	•A Focus Area should apply for entity status change when it meets the criteria for the next level	•A Unit should apply for entity status change when it meets the criteria for the next level	•In order to remain a Centre of Excellence, the entity should continue to meet the criteria for a Centre of Excellence
		In order to remain a Focus Area, the entity should continue to meet the criteria for a Focus Area	In order to remain a Unit, the entity should continue to meet the criteria for a Unit	
Comments/rationale				

Reporting and review

	Level 1 Niche Area	Level 2 Focus Area	Level 3 Unit	Level 4 Centre of Excellence
Reporting and review	•Annual reporting within the faculty structure is required - six-year cycle of internal review will be implemented	•Annual reporting within the faculty is required - A six year cycle of external review review with a mid-term review with a mid-term internal annual review will be implemented	•Annual reporting within the faculty is required •A six year cycle of external review with a mid-term internal review will be implemented	•Annual reporting within the faculty is required •A six year cycle of external review with a mid-term internal review will be implemented
Comments/rationale				