

# **UNMC Research and Knowledge Transfer Operational Plan (2012)**

Circulation: All UNMC Staff (this document should not be circulated outside of UNMC)

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## 1. Contents

1.	Contents.....	2
2.	Introduction .....	3
3.	Change Control Record .....	4
4.	Glossary.....	5
5.	Strategic Plan .....	6
5.1.	Establish a Baseline for Research and Knowledge Transfer at UNMC.....	6
5.2.	UNMC Research Quality.....	6
5.3.	Committees.....	6
5.4.	Research Priority Groups (RPGs).....	7
5.5.	Review of PhD Scholarships .....	8
5.6.	(Higher) Centres of Excellence .....	8
5.7.	MyRA.....	8
5.8.	Review of Graduate School.....	8
5.9.	MyRIAD and External Activity .....	9
5.10.	Business Engagement .....	9
5.11.	International Esteem.....	10
5.12.	Key Performance Indicators.....	10
6.	Operational Plan .....	12
6.1.	Standard Operating Procedures .....	12
6.2.	VP Support Office.....	12
6.3.	Staff PhDs .....	12
6.4.	UNMC Web Site .....	13
6.5.	Collection and Maintenance of Data .....	13
6.6.	Review of MOUs and MOAs.....	13

## 2. Introduction

This planning document outlines the major strategic and operational priorities that will be tackled over the next five years, focussing on the next twelve months.

This version will be circulated to all staff at UNMC, as well as key staff at other campuses, for example, it will be presented to the Research and Knowledge Transfer Board (RKTB).

This plan will be updated each year, with a change control record, to reflect the changing priorities at UNMC.

A key element of this plan will be a set of Key Performance Indicators, which have been defined in section 5.12.

Feedback from all staff at UNMC is welcome and any views will be considered for future versions of the plan. Any views should be sent to Professor Graham Kendall ([graham.kendall@nottingham.edu.my](mailto:graham.kendall@nottingham.edu.my)).

### 3. Change Control Record

Version	Date	Notes
1.00	01/08/2011	Initial draft for discussion with UNMC Provost
1.01	10/08/2011	Updated version after discussion with UNMC Provost and Prof. Sayed Azam Ali. Tabled at MG (16 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2011)
1.02	19/09/2011	Updated version for meeting with Richard Masterman, Jerry Roberts, Bob Webb and Hai-Sui Yu
1.03	19/12/2011	Final Version, for MG sign off
1.04	15/12/2011	Final version, to be circulated to all staff
1.05	15/02/2012	Above version was not circulated. This version was changed to Operational Plan (not strategic). This version will be circulated to all staff.

## 4. Glossary

GS	Graduate School
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
MG	Management Group
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MyRA	Malaysian Research Assessment
MyRIAD	Malaysia Research Innovation and Development. This is the company known formally as <i>Nottingham MyRIAD Solutions Sdn Bhd.</i>
R&KT	Research and Knowledge Transfer
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RU	Research University
T&L	Teaching and Learning
THE	Times Higher Education
UNMC	University of Nottingham, Malaysia Campus
VP	Vice-Provost

Note: All the acronyms above may not be used in this document but they are provided for information and for future versions.

## 5. Strategic Plan

### 5.1. Establish a Baseline for Research and Knowledge Transfer at UNMC

In order to measure any improvement (or not), it is important to establish a baseline from which we can measure any change.

We see it as a priority to do this as soon as possible. Various ways to measure research quality are possible but the list below is indicative of some of the areas that we will address.

- We will ask all staff to provide  $n$  ( $n=8$ ) publications they have published AFTER 2007.
- We will gauge how we compare with our UK colleagues (possibly with their assistance).
- We will ask for evidence of impact; possibly by using case studies to gauge the impact of the research undertaken in recent years.
- We will carry out the same exercise in 2013 (the same time as the UK REF) to ascertain how UNMC has changed.
- We may invite an international delegation (either from the UK/China campus or from the international community) to visit UNMC in 2013 in order to provide an independent report as to the status of UNMC when compared to the international community.

We envisage working alongside counter-parts in Ningbo as, we believe, that they have similar aspirations in these areas.

### 5.2. UNMC Research Quality

By 2015 it is an aim of the University, and UNMC, to have some of its research operating at the same level as that in Nottingham. This raises three questions:

- What areas should we be addressing?
- What proportion of the research at UNMC should be operating at the same level as the UK?
- How do we know when we have achieved this aim?

These questions will be addressed through a newly formed Research Strategy Committee (see section 5.3).

### 5.3. Committees

In order to manage the research and knowledge transfer functions at UNMC I plan to establish three (or reorganise existing) committees.

#### Research Strategy Committee

This committee (chaired by the Vice-Provost (Research and Knowledge Transfer)) will oversee the strategic direction of the research at UNMC. It is envisaged that there will be two representative(s) from each faculty. There will also be an administrative representation.

Terms of Reference for this committee will be drawn up, and will be made available to all staff at UNMC.

### **Knowledge Transfer Committee**

This committee (chaired by the Vice-Provost (Research and Knowledge Transfer)) will oversee the strategic direction of knowledge transfer activity at UNMC. It is envisaged that there will be two representatives from each faculty. There will also be an administrative representation.

Terms of Reference for this committee will be drawn up, and will be made available to all staff at UNMC.

### **Ethics Committee**

This committee will be a new committee at UNMC, although it has existed in the UK for a number of years. To date, members of UNMC have sat on the UK committee but the UK has recently requested that we establish our own committee due to their workload and the different range of issues that we have to address. At the present time, the make-up and structure of this committee is not known although it probably should be chaired, and comprise, members who are directly affected by the ethical issues related to their research

One of the tasks of the committee will be to produce guidelines/procedures that must be adhered to at UNMC.

## **5.4. Research Priority Groups (RPGs)**

Professor Sayed Azam Ali has already established UNMC's thirteen priority groups and provided a mapping to the UK priority groups. This provides an excellent foundation for UNMC and the focus should now be on publicising these (both at UNMC and beyond) and also supporting the RPG *champions* in establishing the groups and maximising their efficiency.

I would envisage that the following immediate actions are required.

- Establish the RPGs as a central element on the UNMC web site.
- Work with each RPG champion in order to form a plan for each RPG which should include a set of KPIs (e.g. amount of external research funding, joint projects with the UK priority groups etc.) for a one year period.
- Each RPG champion will be asked to present their plans to the Research Strategy Committee in order to get feedback on the plans.
- Each RPG will undergo a review to ascertain if they have met their stated KPIs

RPGs will be subject to regular review to ensure that all RPGs are operating at a high level, to refresh the RPGs and also to meet the needs of changing research priorities at UNMC, in Malaysia and internationally. In addition, other RPG proposals will be considered, if there is a strong enough case to establish it.

Thirteen RPGs is probably too many for UNMC (the UK only has nine) and, over time, we should look to consolidate to a smaller number, which will reflect the research strengths at UNMC and also feed into the aim for certain areas of research at UNMC to be operating at the same level as the UK.

### 5.5. Review of PhD Scholarships

As part of the new Research Strategy Committee, I would like to carry out a review of how PhD scholarships are allocated. In general, I believe that there should be three overriding principles.

1. They should be used to support our Research Priority Groups.
2. They should be used to support new/junior members of staff.
3. They should be used to support (and add value) to research proposals.

### 5.6. (Higher) Centres of Excellence

The challenge for UNMC is to be awarded (or be involved in) as many Higher Centres of Excellence as possible (even one would be an achievement). This provides many challenges; not least of all that a Centre of Excellence has to be established for five years before it can apply to become a Higher Centre of Excellence. At the moment, it is open to question as to whether our current research groupings meet this criteria but there might be ways that we are able to convince the relevant bodies that our current centres of excellence have been in existence long enough.

In the longer term, we need to plan how we are able to develop promising research areas to achieve the status of Higher Centre of Excellence.

### 5.7. MyRA

It is important that we adequately prepare for the next MyRA exercise (and then continue to collect data for future exercises). After the 2009 exercise we were invited to apply for Research University status. After the 2010 we had slipped slightly so were not invited again. For the 2011 and 2012 exercises, we should strive to position UNMC so that an application to become an RU is at least possible.

### 5.8. Review of Graduate School

We will carry out a review of the Graduate School. The review will look at what we expect from the Graduate School and plan out how best to resource it to deliver what we require from it. Questions to be raised include:

- What are the key tasks that the GS have to perform?
- How does the GS at UNMC map onto the GS in the UK?
- Should GS be responsible for PG admission?



- Should GS be responsible for PG monitoring?
- What is the role of the GS with regard to MSc's and MRes'?
- How does the GS meet both its research and its T&L objectives?
- Should the GS be responsible for organising research seminars?
- Should the GS be responsible for issuing regular research updates?

### 5.9. MyRIAD and External Activity

The first two board meeting of MyRIAD have taken place (26<sup>th</sup> July 2011 and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011). MyRIAD is the mechanism for the commercialisation of research and consultancy to be delivered by UNMC. It also provides other services such as event management, managing services rendered etc.

Many challenges face us in getting MyRIAD becoming an accepted part of UNMC culture and enable it to be a successful company. These include:

- Informing UNMC staff that it is a requirement that any commercialisation activity is delivered through MyRIAD.
- Staff should be encouraged to use MyRIAD to deliver conferences, workshops, seminars etc.
- MyRIAD should seek out opportunities to commercialise research and help staff to deliver these opportunities. One method that I would like to explore is to re-visit all successful research proposals and identify where the proposer stated that there would be a commercial output from the project. We can then discuss with the project investigator(s) how, and if, this has been delivered.
- Investigate if we can make more use of KLTC, and charge outside agencies to use it during the day, and is MyRIAD the best vehicle to deliver this.

In addition, UNMC should take every opportunity to promote MyRIAD to the UK campus as, as far as I know, this is a unique initiative.

Whether certain activities are channelled through MyRIAD or not, it is important that everybody at UNMC follows the correct requesting/reporting procedures to ensure that they are following university procedures when undertaking work which is external to UNMC (see section 6.1).

### 5.10. Business Engagement

As part of our R&KT strategy, it is important that we engage with businesses in the local area, as well as nationally and internationally; where appropriate.

This area is still being worked upon and will be reported separately (with perhaps an updated version of this plan) but it could include secondment from the UK, an additional appointment being made at UNMC etc.

### 5.11. International Esteem

We should encourage the academic staff at UNMC to raise their international profiles. This not only means aiming for the highest quality outlets but being represented on program committees, editorial board of journals, acting as external examiners etc.

As a starting point, we will carry out an exercise to gauge the level of international esteem present at UNMC.

### 5.12. Key Performance Indicators

To underpin the strategic initiatives presented above, we will have established the following KPIs to underpin this plan. Many of these are *data collection* at the moment and will be used as a basis for future planning as this plan is developed further.

Where appropriate, the KPIs have been linked with the University of Nottingham's *Strategic Plan 2010-2015* (these are indicated with an \* following the title).

Some of the KPI baselines are Not Yet Known (NYK) and once these have been formulated the KPIs may be updated. However, we have included some indicative figures in order to have some immediate targets.

#### Research Awards (\*)

Baseline (2009-2010)	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
RM 5M	RM 7M	RM 9M	RM 10M	RM 12M	RM 15M

#### Notes:

- The figures represent the amount of research funding *each* year.

#### Postgraduate Population (\*)

Baseline (2009-2010)	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
15.3%	16%	17%	18%	19%	20%

#### Number of 4\* publications

Baseline (2010)	2011	2012
NYK	10	20

**Notes:**

- The baseline will not be known until after the research activity exercise (see 5.1) has been completed. Once the baseline is known, the KPI may be adjusted but it would be based on 100% increase year-on-year.
- The currently suggested KPIs are based on about 5% (resp. 10%) of academic staff producing a 4\* paper in 2011 (resp. 2012).
- It is not clear what constitutes a 4\* paper and will be open to some interpretation.
- The figures represent the number of papers each year.

**Number of Spin Out Companies**

<b>Baseline (2010)</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
0	0	1	1	2	2

**Notes:**

- We have projected forward to 2015 to show that we expect growth in this area.
- The figures represent the number of new spin out companies each year.

**Number of MOUs and MOAs**

<b>Baseline (2010)</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
NYK	6	8	10	10	10

**Notes:**

- The figures represent the number of new (or renewed) agreements signed each year.

## 6. Operational Plan

### 6.1. Standard Operating Procedures

We will review and put in place (where necessary) standard operating procedures. A review of all procedures will be undertaken and revised as necessary. The type of areas (but not limited to) that will be addressed include:

- Procedures for PhD supervision monitoring
- Procedures for entering into MOU/MOA agreements
- Procedures for submitting grant proposals
- Procedures for undertaking consultancy
- A campus calendar for Research and Knowledge Transfer activity
- A research handbook covering areas such as Open Access Policy, target publications etc.

Where possible, we will utilise procedures from the staff handbook and quality manual that is maintained in the UK.

### 6.2. VP Support Office

Discussions have started about the best way to provide support for the two Vice-Provosts. These discussions will continue now that the new VP (R&KT) is in place.

### 6.3. Staff PhDs

At the moment it is unclear how many staff are (or have been) currently registered for a PhD.

We would like to establish the following:

- How many staff are currently registered for PhDs at UNMC (or elsewhere)?
- How many staff have been registered for PhDs but have not completed and are no longer registered? Do we want to offer them another opportunity to obtain a PhD?
- Are there any staff who have not previously registered for a PhD? Would they want to register for a PhD?
- For staff that are registered for a PhD, establish the current status of their studies and ascertain whether they can realistically complete in the time available.

It may be the case that there is a one-on-one conversation needed with each *non-PhD* member of staff to establish an individual plan.

We also need to establish whether staff can complete their PhD by publication (rather than thesis/viva). We believe that this is the case, but we should get a definitive answer from Academic Services.

## 6.4.UNMC Web Site

The UNMC web site is currently undergoing a significant update. This is welcomed and we must ensure that these updates are effective in the message that they are trying to get across.

There is a balance to be struck between giving each School, Department and Faculty their own individual look and feel and a corporate feel that makes the visitor feel that they are visiting one coherent web site.

Obvious areas such as ease of navigation, finding the correct person to contact, staff profiles being available etc. should also be reviewed and consistent across the site.

## 6.5.Collection and Maintenance of Data

It is important that we implement procedures where we are collecting key data, across the campus, on a regular basis, in a single repository and which is available to those that need it, at the time they need it.

This issue (I believe) does not just affect R&KT but also extends to T&L and it is something that should, perhaps, be considered at MG level.

## 6.6.Review of MOUs and MOAs

UNMC have entered into a number of MOUs and MOAs. It would be useful to review these to see if there are opportunities to extend (or even terminate) them.