

Measuring Individual Research Activity Policy

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Policy establishes Victoria University's model for the measurement of individual academic research activity (or MORA). MORA is a mechanism designed to drive institutional research performance and align individual researcher effort with strategic objectives.

(2) The model includes performance benchmarks for academic levels based on external, discipline-specific data sourced from the most recent Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) and/or equivalent national research evaluation system(s).

(3) MORA measurements form a significant input for a number of institutional processes and programs, including: the VU Research Fellowship program, academic performance frameworks and academic promotion processes.

Section 2 - Accountability

Key Decision-making powers under the Policy

(Delegated) Power	Role
1. Power to accept or reject any application to appeal a Mora calculation. 2. Power to assess an appeal of a MORA calculation and approve or reject the request for a recalculation.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Impact

Section 3 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(4) HESF: 4.1 Research; 4.2 Research Training.

Section 4 - Scope

(5) This Policy applies to:

- a. Academic staff of Victoria University employed in Teaching & Research (TRA) and Research Only (ROA) positions.

(6) This Policy does not apply to:

- a. Sessional staff;
- b. Teaching Focused Academics.

(7) Non-TRA and non-ROA staff may choose to opt-in to the MORA process.

Section 5 - Definitions

(8) Fields of Research (FoRs): The Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) code that categorises research and development activity according to the methodology used in the research.

The classification is hierarchical and comprises three levels, namely Divisions (2 digits), Groups (4 digits), and Fields (6 digits). Each level is identified by a unique number.

(9) New Staff: Teaching & Research and Research Only academic staff who have not held an academic position of employment at Victoria University for the full three years immediately prior to the year that the MORA calculation is made.

(10) Reference Period: The most recent multi-year period (defined in the [Measuring Individual Research Activity Procedure](#)) over which research activity will be measured.

(11) Research

(12) Research Income: Income from external sources shown in the University's financial accounts that is eligible for and has been submitted as part of Victoria University's Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC). The net amount will reflect transfers to and from other institutions.

(13) Research Indicators: Core research indicators for MORA comprise research income, research publications, and Higher Degree by Research (HDR) student completions. Additional indicators are used to apply value and strategic weighting across the core indicators (refer to [Measuring Individual Research Activity Procedure](#) for detail).

(14) Research Publications: Research output that meets the definition of research and has been published or made publicly available within the reference period (confidential research reports excepted), submitted and/or claimed in VU Elements, and accepted for the University's annual research publication collection. Research publications include Non-Traditional Research Outputs (NTROs), such as research reports and creative works as research.

(15) Research Student Completions: The reported completion of a Research Doctorate or a Masters by Research program at Victoria University. Completions for a given year are those conferred by Council by 31 December of the same year.

(16) Research Training

(17) Timely Completion: Completion time refers to the time elapsed from a graduate research student's initial enrolment to the date at which their thesis is submitted for examination. Timely completion is as specified by the [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 3 Pre-Candidature and Candidature](#).

Section 6 - Policy Statement

(18) The research productivity of academic staff will be measured annually using the Measure of Research Activity (MORA).

(19) Only activity and outputs which meet the definition of research and arise from Research and Research Training will be recognised for the purposes of MORA.

(20) MORA calculations are based upon recognised and audited research indicators over the reference period as follows:

a. Research income;

- b. Research publications;
- c. Timely research student completions.

(21) Strategic weightings will be assigned to the research indicators.

(22) MORA incorporates nationally-referenced performance benchmarks tailored to specific fields of research. These benchmarks are formulated according to the most recent ERA or equivalent data set. The underlying formulae include calibrations to account for skewness in the data.

(23) Staff will choose their individual field of research profile, subject to approval by relevant academic supervisors and ultimately the Executive Dean or Institute/Centre Director.

(24) Each benchmark will include an expectation ratio per academic level to account for the increased capabilities and expectations associated with higher academic levels.

(25) The impact of extended periods of parental, personal (sick or carer's), and Workcover leave taken by staff during the reference period or in the half-year prior to the reference period, will be taken into consideration in a staff member's MORA score.

(26) For Indigenous staff and consistent with the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy, the impact of additional workload expectations for pastoral care, community engagement and cultural load will be taken into account.

Section 7 - Procedures

(27) The following Procedure is used to support this Policy:

- a. [Measuring Individual Research Activity Procedures](#)

Section 8 - Supporting Documents and Information

(28) The following documents are used to support this Policy:

- a. [Measuring Individual Research Activity – Creative Works as Research Guideline](#)
- b. [Measuring Individual Research Activity - Predatory & Vanity Publishers Guideline](#)
- c. [State of Australian University Research 2018-2019: ERA National Report](#)

Status and Details

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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Research" - The creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include the synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative. This definition of research encompasses pure and oriented basic research, applied research and experimental development. This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development (R&D) comprising creative work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge – including knowledge of humankind, culture and society – and to devise new applications of available knowledge. Activities that do not meet the definition of research include: i. scientific and technical information services ii. general-purpose or routine data collection iii. standardisation and routine testing iv. feasibility studies (except in R&D projects) v. literature reviews that do not include any critical assessment or report any new findings or original experimental work vi. commercial, legal and administrative aspects of patenting, plant breeders rights, copyright, material transfer agreements or intellectual property licensing, option and assignment activities, and royalties vii. routine computer programming, systems work or software maintenance.

"Research Training" - Occurs when an academic staff member has the responsibility as a registered research supervisor for overseeing the development of a researcher who is enrolled in an HDR program of the University (e.g. Research Doctorate or Research Masters).