

Fact Sheet

WHO DEFINES RESEARCH?

The Department of Education defines research in their annual Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) Specifications.

The annual HERDC Specifications include:

- a definition of research
- research categories
- activities and income that are INCLUDED and EXCLUDED

Data is collected annually from all Australian universities by the Department. This information is used to calculate the amount of research block grant (RBG) funding provided to universities. This income is vital to the operations of the James Cook University.

DEFINITION OF RESEARCH 2020:

Research and experimental development (R&D) is defined as:

"...creative and systematic 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" (1)

R&D encompasses pure and oriented basic research, applied research, and experimental development research. R&D activity must satisfy all 5 core criteria:

- be aimed at new findings (novel),
- be based on original, not obvious, concepts and hypotheses (creative),
- be uncertain about the final outcomes (uncertain),
- be planned and budgeted (systemic), and
- lead to results that could be possibly reproduced (transferable and/or reproducible).

(1) 2020 Higher Education Research Data Collection Specifications

ACTIVITIES AND INCOME THAT CAN BE INCLUDED WITHIN R&D:

R&D activities include:

1. professional, technical, administrative or clerical support staff directly engaged in activities essential to the conduct of R&D
2. the activities of HDR students enrolled at the Higher Education Provider (HEP)
3. the development of HDR training and courses
4. the supervision of HDR students enrolled at the HEP
5. R&D into applications software, new programming languages and new operating systems
6. prototype development and testing
7. construction and operation of a pilot plant where the primary objective is to make further improvements
8. trial production where there is full scale testing and subsequent further design and engineering
9. phases I to III of clinical trials. (Section 3)
10. non-traditional research creative arts including original creative works, live performance of creative works, recorded or rendered works, and curated exhibitions or events.

WHY IS CORRECTLY DEFINING RESEARCH IMPORTANT?

- If your research complies with the HERDC definition, income generated can be counted as research income
- Eligible research income is a core component of academic Research Performance Expectations
- The more research income reported, the greater the amount of RBG funding the University receives. RBG funds are proportionally distributed back to Colleges, based on what they earn in research income, and support research staffing, projects, materials, equipment and infrastructure.

For support and advice:

Contact the JCU Connect team via jcuconnect@jcu.edu.au