



Protocol to govern the Allocation of Research Support provided to Heads and Deputy Heads of Departments

1. Background and rationale

It is recognised that the managerial and administrative responsibilities associated with being a Head of Department are significant. For some Heads of Departments (HoDs), this may negatively impact the research output of that an individual. Maintaining a research profile is clearly of benefit to the individual. Equally important is maintaining the research output at institutional level as this is vital to the reputation of the University, the attraction of post-graduate students as well as the financial sustainability of the institution.

It is also recognised that in some departments, the portfolio of Deputy HoD is significant and that this too may impact the research output of this individual. This only applies to large and complex departments which have formally appointed Deputy HoDs.

The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidelines as regards the allocation of “research support” in order to minimise the impact of these HoD and Deputy HoD responsibilities or at best, assist the individual in maintain or improve their research output.

Factors that may impact an individual’s ability to maintain the same level of research output as that prior to appointment as Head of Department or Deputy HoD would include (but may not be limited to):

- (i) That the role of Head of Department or Deputy HoD has been assumed for the first time;
- (ii) The size of the department in terms of staff and/or students;
- (iii) The complexity of the department which may include the number of courses and offerings, nature and volume of equipment and facilities, the scope of its research projects;
- (iv) Developments within the department that may be particular to a specific time-frame e.g. external audits;
- (v) Inheriting a department that is functioning poorly and needs redirection or which has been experiencing conflict; and
- (vi) Being obliged to carry a full load of teaching and marking.

Within this context, research support is seen to signify providing additional assistance such that the HoD or Deputy HoD (hereafter only referred to as HoD but assumed to be inclusive of Deputy HoDs) has more time to spend on research for the purpose of retaining a high level of research productivity.

2. Application Process

In November of each year, the HR Division will call for applications from current or prospective Heads of Departments. In these applications, individuals are asked to briefly outline:

- (i) A list of research outputs for the last five years. Research outputs should be clearly differentiated between those which are subsidy bearing and those which are not;
- (ii) Professional involvements beyond the department (whether at University, local, national or international level) from the last three years;
- (iii) Research plans for the forthcoming year if you are given assistance. Please note: this is seen to constitute a commitment to this level of research from the individual’s point of view and future allocation of funds will be contingent on this commitment being met (taking into account any mitigating circumstances);
- (iv) Assistance required in terms of teaching/research assistance in order to achieve your research plans. You are asked to indicate this in terms of hours needed e.g. .a research assistant to work 10 hours per week for 52 week of the year;
- (v) Given this assistance, the commitment that can be made as regards research output;
- (vi) An identification of particular dynamics of the department that will negatively impact the individual’s ability to continue with their current research output;
- (vii) Your teaching load relative to others in the department e.g. if there is a lesser teaching load, given the HoD responsibilities. Please note that you should attach a schedule that clearly outlines your work load

relative to that of the each of the other staff in your department. Please also be clear on what a “course” is e.g. 10 lectures; and

- (viii) Any other relevant information that will give insight into their contribution to the University and how this may be compromised by the new HoD responsibilities.

Where circumstances require it, usually due to the nature of the research, an application can be made for funds for up to a three year period (the length of tenure for the HoD). However, the continuance of such funds would be subject to an annual review and that the research plans outlined have been achieved.

While it is acknowledged that all HoDs as senior academics are likely to be doing research, in the short-term, there will not be sufficient funds to provide assistance to all HoDs. Priority will be given to supporting HoDs where the need at the individual and institutional level is greatest. In time, this support will bear benefits in terms of sustained if not improved research output, allowing for more funds to be allocated.

3. Decision-making process

The Research Office shall make an annual budget provision for this support. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor: R&D, Director: HR and relevant¹ Deans shall convene to make a decision regarding the allocation of funds.

While all applications may be worthy of consideration, it may be necessary to rank and approve applications according to the following:

- (i) Research track record of the individual;
- (ii) Teaching responsibilities in the department;
- (iii) Involvement in other institutional or national projects;
- (iv) Whether or not the individual engages in private consulting work;
- (v) Particular departmental dynamics; and
- (vi) Whether this is the first time the person has assumed the Headship of the department.

The committee may make a contingency allocation in instances where an HOD has not yet been formally appointed or where a deserving current HOD had legitimate reasons for not submitting an application. The HOD or incoming HOD, as applicable, is invited to submit a motivation to the DVC: Research & Innovation, for a suitable allocation from the provision made by the committee.

4. Use of funds

Funds may only be used to buy in assistance in order to provide the HoD with more time for his/her research. This assistance takes the form of research or teaching assistance by registered students of Rhodes University. The student/s will be contracted for the proposed hours of work, in line with relevant legislation and in accordance with HR requirements. Funds may not be used for payment of conference fees, travel, accommodation or purchase of equipment or computers etc.

**Written by Director: HR with input from the HoD Task Team, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation, Deans
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¹ Deans will be involved if departments in their Faculties have made an application. One department Faculties will not be involved as already these part-time Deans are given an allowance for temporary assistance.