

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

National Centre for HIV Social Research and Social Policy Research Centre

Specific Guidelines for Promotion

The National Centre in HIV Social Research (NCHSR) and the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) are research centres of significant size, comparable to that of schools, in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Each has its own individual mission, a distinct funding base and a particular pattern of intellectual production and community engagement. Nevertheless, both centres share a number of features that distinguish them, in important ways, from FASS schools. Recruitment reflects each centre's mission, and therefore staff in NCHSR and SPRC have career 'tracks' that are not directly comparable with those of academic staff in the Schools. These unique features, and the forms of academic production they generate, merit consideration by Faculty and University Promotion Committees, when they consider applications for promotion from NCHSR and SPRC.

The fact that staff in these centres do not have regular teaching responsibilities can lead to misleading comparisons with 'research-only' staff in schools, who are supported by ARC or other fellowships. Very few researchers in NCHSR and SPRC have continuing employment. Most fund their salaries through commissioned research.

As with all schools and centres in FASS, the work of the NCHSR and SPRC closely reflects the ideals expressed in *Blueprint to Beyond*, the statement of UNSW's strategic direction. Three aspects of their work are particularly salient:

- the focus on 'contemporary and social issues'
- the team-based nature of much of their research, and so the co-authorship of a high proportion of their outputs
- the close links of their research to 'professions, community organisations, government, academic and international bodies'.

Three areas relevant to promotion merit particular attention: research, teaching, and the supervision of HDR students.

RESEARCH

Because their predominant outputs have to meet the needs and conventions of commissioned research, the performance requirements of staff employed in these centres are significantly different from those of staff employed in FASS schools. Researchers in the NCHSR and SPRC are expected to allocate a comparatively small proportion of their time to research monographs, journal articles, chapters in scholarly books and refereed conference papers. In neither Centre would staff be expected - or permitted - to allocate 40 per cent of their time to these categories of outputs. (Forty percent is an allocation that is approximated by many staff in the FASS Schools). In practice, for Centre staff, as little as 10 per cent of an individual's time may be available for working on the categories of publication listed above.

Given that they routinely work as members of collaborative research teams, Centre staff are likely to report a higher proportion of co-authored and multi-authored reports and journal articles than their peers in social science and humanities Schools.

The scholarly nature of many of the commissioned research outputs should be recognised, even though they may take the form of reports rather than peer-reviewed

articles. Insofar as they generate new knowledge or understanding through original research in response to questions and problems identified by commissioning agencies and/or have an identifiable impact on professional practice or applied policy fields, they can be seen to meet the DVC's guidelines on research, as outlined in the Active Research policy. These recognise the diverse nature of research conducted at UNSW, as a result of the University's focus on applied research.

The DVC's guidelines note that research may be considered scholarly if:

- a. it is the result of substantial scholarly activity
- b. it involves original work (i.e. not a compilation of existing works)
- c. its veracity, validity, or scholarly quality has been tested through a peer review process or similar process involving an assessment or review of the research output in its entirety by an independent qualified expert/s, or by satisfying the commercial publisher processes
- d. it contributes to increasing the stock of knowledge
- e. it is in a form that enables dissemination of knowledge.

Applicants from the SPRC and NCHVR will be expected to demonstrate that their research outputs meet these criteria.

TEACHING

According to the Academic Promotions Policy and Procedures, the teaching contributions of staff applying for promotion are to be considered in the context of 'what would be expected within the School [or Centre]' (p.7). Undergraduate teaching is not part of the regular duties of NCHSR and SPRC staff. The centres have varied levels of engagement with postgraduate coursework teaching, as outlined in the Centre Director's report on each candidate.

Many NCHSR and SPRC staff engage in extensive research training with community organizations, government departments and professional associations. They also undertake careful and structured mentoring of junior colleagues; this is an aspect of the team-based approach to research. They may also participate in internship programs involving senior undergraduates, Honours and HDR students from Australian and overseas universities. In the Centres where such programs exist, staff may offer close guidance of students in order to enhance research capacity and skills. Individuals will outline their contributions.

SUPERVISION OF HDR STUDENTS

Until recently, NCHSR and SPRC did not conduct their own higher degree by research programs. Accordingly, many of their staff will not have been in a position to develop a record of independent HDR research supervision. The absence of such a record should, therefore, be assessed relative to opportunity.