Guidelines for Applying for Funding for the Recruitment of a Senior Proven Researcher Team at Australian Catholic University

1. **Purpose of Program**

The primary aim of this program is to provide funds to recruit excellent researchers. Ideally, recruited researchers will form focused teams to rapidly increase research output. This critical mass of research expertise will increase collaboration and mentoring and provide enhanced research capacity in each faculty.

2. **Funding Available**

The current Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (OPVCR) budget has funding available from June 1 to December 31, 2010 of $200,000 (maximum) per Faculty, and of $500,000 (maximum) per Faculty for 2011. Funds not expended in a timely fashion will not be carried forward and will be used in other research-stimulus programs. The Vice-Chancellor has identified strength in research as a critical requirement for ACU and has indicated that funds for research will be provided in 2012 and beyond.

3. **Use of Funds**

Funds in this program are to be used solely to promote research by recruitment firstly of a Senior Proven Researcher (SPR) and then of up to 4 other research personnel selected in conjunction with the SPR to form an SPR Team (for suggested team members, see appendix 1). The SPR funds are to be used only for recruitment to boost research productivity and are not intended to fund current staff. However, current staff can be recruited to these positions but only when

i) they are identified as the outstanding candidate after the usual competitive process, and
ii) the position they previously held is filled at the same level within 4 months.

Recruited personnel can establish a stand-alone research team, or preferably can be embedded-in or associated with current ACU teams of proven research strength. Recruited researchers will focus on one or more of the strategic areas of research identified in the Australian Catholic University Strategic Plan - *Theology and Philosophy; Health; Education;* and the *Common Good and Social Justice*.

Recruited personnel at E and D level will be research-intensive and should have limited teaching duties. However, they will be contracted to

- Supervise HDR students
- Mentor more junior ACU faculty
- Provide seminars, *inter alia*, on research methodology, research training, grant writing and publication strategy
• Participate in the function of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC), and in the School/Faculty Research Committee as members or as advisors

Funds will be used as follows:

In 2010
i) Block advertising for SPRs and associates (organized through OPVCR, HR and Marketing and External Relations)
ii) Costs of recruitment, start-up package, salaries and on-costs of SPRs and associates
iii) Block advertising for 10 HDRs (2 HDR/SPRT) to start January 1, 2011.

In 2011
i) Continuing costs of the 2010 SPR Team (5 personnel).

4. Eligibility

Each Faculty is eligible for funding in 2010-2011 of up to $700,000 for the period July 1, 2010 to Dec 31, 2011) according to the conditions described.

5. Application

A. Primary Proposal
Each Faculty is invited to prepare a proposal for funding outlining a research plan that describes the contribution that an SPRT would make to maximise research productivity (publications, grants and HDR completions). This proposal is to be described on the SPRT Application Template and should:

• delineate the current research strengths of the Faculty
• describe how the SPRT will enhance the Faculty research productivity
• outline intended synergies between the SPRT and the Faculty research strengths (e.g. current University Priority Research Centres [UPRC])
• focus on projected research outcomes
• estimate a 2010-2011 timeline and a budget
• be discussed with the Associate Dean (Research) (ADR)
• be submitted by the Dean to the RAC for review and discussion.

If the Faculty has current research strengths (e.g. a UPRC) that it is not intending to support, enhance or expand through this funding, it would be helpful if specific reasons could be provided for this approach.

B. Secondary Proposals
Proposals from researchers and research teams within Faculties, from UPRC Directors, and from other University Centres and Institutes will also be accepted by the RAC and reviewed. This latter process is to encourage the development of research plans by Faculty and Centres and to foster the enhancement of these plans by the RAC so that they could be submitted for external funding, and to provide ultimately a file of plans that could be activated rapidly should funds become available. Each Secondary Proposal must be reviewed by the ADR of the respective Faculty and copied to the Dean for comment and confirmation of support. For Centres not aligned with a faculty, proposal should be submitted to the Director of Research Services (anne.thoeming@acu.edu.au).
6. Submission

Applications will be accepted by the Research Advisory Committee from June 15, 2010 to August 31, 2010.

Proposals must be submitted electronically on the template which will be provided to you. It would be helpful if they could be submitted electronically to anne.thoeming@acu.edu.

7. Criteria for Assessment

Each proposal will be reviewed by the RAC solely on criteria relevant to the projected increase in research productivity through the SPRT itself, and of synergies between SPRT and ACU personnel. RAC is specifically instructed to disregard factors not aligned with research outcomes. Faculty issues of teaching load, ethics, credibility, compliance and similar concerns while extremely important are neither within the province nor the expertise of the RAC.

The single issue on which RAC will decide, is whether the proposal is the best project in each Faculty to produce research outcomes for ACU in the next 5 years by

- utilising current in-house research strengths e.g. centres and/or personnel
- substantially increasing research expertise through recruitment
- increasing the pool of senior research mentors
- increasing research outcomes (publications, grants and HDR completions) through the SPR Team and through synergies with current ACU Faculty.

RAC may accept the submitted Primary Proposal or may require clarification and/or revision. RAC will meet every month. A preliminary report will be provided to the applicant within 14 days of the meeting at which the proposal is reviewed.

8. Advertising for Positions

OPVCR with HR and Marketing and External Relations will co-ordinate advertising (“block advertising”). Advertising not approved by OPVCR in writing will not be funded by this program.

9. Contact

Director of Research Services (anne.thoeming@acu.edu.au)
Appendix 1

Suggested SPRT Composition

The Senior Proven Researcher Team (SPRT) could consist of:

- **1 x Senior Proven Researcher: up to Level E:** An outstanding researcher confirmed by a long standing record of quality research publications, prestigious grants (ARC or equivalent) and HDR completions.

- **1 x Early or Mid Career Researcher:** Up to Level D: An outstanding researcher of ability and experience confirmed by a record of quality research publications, prestigious grants (ARC or equivalent) and HDR completions.

- **1 x Post-Doctoral Fellow:** A researcher within 5 years of being awarded a PhD and with outstanding potential and ability confirmed by quality research publications and possibly funding (depending on the time since being awarded a PhD) and HDR supervision.

- **2 x Higher Degree Research Scholars:** Persons of outstanding research potential based on their scholarship.