

DASSH Satellite Event – ADR Network Meeting

University of New South Wales

Venue: UNSW Business School Lounge

Friday 11th May 2018

Discussion Session 1: Alternative sources of research funding

This session will focus on the challenges and the possibilities of securing alternative sources of funding for researchers in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Could each participant bring along a successful example of a researcher (or research team) in their faculty who has secured an alternative source of funding (i.e., non-Category 1 funding) as a basis for the discussion?

- Several discussants noted that the situation is different for different disciplines, with some suggesting that it is easier for Social Science researchers to secure Cat 2/3 funding than Humanities and Arts Researchers.
- One solution discussed was for Humanities researchers to build skill and capacity through cashless Linkage projects that evolve into further projects with the potential to attract Category 2-3 funding.
- There are notable examples of Humanities and Arts researchers successfully winning funding from sources such as the Smith Foundation and government funding, the challenge is to move beyond Foundations and Government to relevant industry partners.
- The precarious nature of community funding bodies was noted, particularly in regional areas, which can increase the difficulty of HCA researchers finding community/government partners.
- Does it make more sense to focus our strategy on growing those areas that more easily win Cat 2/3 research? This can be challenging in institutional contexts where researchers are being encouraged to perform across Cat1,2, and 3.
- Does bringing in more Cast 2/3 income risk negative impact on academic research outputs? There's a finite amount of time for research writing.
- Academics who are appointed after previous lives in industry/government have proved to be particularly successful in getting Cat 2/3 research, bringing "field intelligence"
- How do we reward staff who focus on Cat 2/3 research?
- The European model requires research funding applications to include ethical accountability, sometimes to the extent of including an ethics specialist (philosopher) on the research team, and a gender statement – often written by a specialist in gender studies who

has reviewed the application. Should we propose introducing these expectations in Australia along with a statement about Indigenous relevance/impact on all applications or even the need to include an Indigenous researcher/consultant in every study. Does that risk us becoming “handmaidens” within other disciplines, or does the strategic advantage of having a seat at the table outweigh this risk?

- Many academics don't use their 20% service/engagement workload allocations for external research – could we point them towards, eg, sitting on Industry/NGO Boards?
- Support of Business Development Managers – maybe academics aren't the best “outward facing” people to be the first point of contact with end users? Again, there are structural variations across the sector, within some institutions members are dealing with the challenges of working with newly established Enterprise/Knowledge Exchange Divisions, in others, KE officers or BDM officers are embedded in Faculties/Colleges/Divisions.
- Challenges: a small number of national research priorities mean everyone is chasing the same end users.
- Challenges: creative arts have high overheads, but end users are reluctant to fund them, and unlike, eg, Engineering, universities may not see the value of funding this infrastructure ...
- ... although LIEF grants may help with this ...
- ... and Digital Humanities research with IT end users.
- University partnership schemes have been successful – providing feedback to researchers on proposals for projects with end users, including feedback on viability and budget.

Discussion Session 2: “Should every researcher be doing impact-driven research?”

This session changed focus on the day and was structured around providing constructive feedback to the ARC on the Engagement and Impact Assessment.

- The ADRs present support the rationale behind the Engagement and Impact Assessment. They agree that it has provided a useful prompt for universities to attend to impactful research and in many cases made visible the work of researchers that is having a profound impact for good but which may not be rewarded under current university protocols. The ADRs also strongly support the Indigenous case study.
- ADRs present suggested a variety of improvements for the next round of Engagement and Impact Assessment. These were presented for discussion and there was no attempt to reach consensus at this stage. Suggestions included:

- Move to five years rather than three years – for both ERA and EIA.
- Run the ERA and EIA in different years.
- Remove quantitative indicators for peer review disciplines.
- Move to a submission with two elements, with two scores:
 - i. an impact case study for each 2 digit FoR (there was disagreement on this with some ADRs preferring more case studies including a proposal for a case study for each 4 digit FoR; other ADRs strongly opposed this idea)
 - ii. and a narrative about engagement and approach to impact.
- The FoR system needs to be reviewed in order to ensure that both ERA and EIA are comparing like with like (currently there is too much variation between universities about what kinds of research sit under any given FoR code).
- If quantitative indicators are to be retained, several ADRs are keen for in-kind to be a compulsory indicator.
- Several ADRs noted the need in future iterations to provide clearer directions based on this round – including guidelines about what should be included in the engagement narrative; and a sense of what is seen to be the “correct” balance of Cat 1/Cat 2-3 research.

Discussion Session 3: HDR and end-user links

Some of us will have experiences to share on this topic and others will be struggling to understand how this will work in their faculties. Both perspectives will assist this discussion. If you do have an example of an HDR co-supervision with an end-user that would be great.

- Experience varied significantly from institution to institution – some had not pursued this model of supervision, others had well established processes in place.
- In some Faculties up to 4% of HDRs have an end user supervisor. In these contexts, the most successful co-supervisions had been with government end-users with academic experience (either PhDs themselves, or in the process of being so). Industry partner selecting student has also worked well in some cases. There were also instances of candidates pre-negotiating 50% of PhD funding from their employer, & people running their own businesses self-funding their PhDs. The risk with the latter is that candidates often enrol part time and fail to complete.
- One is trialling a cohort model with CSIRO under the aegis of a research centre, and a Graduate research fellowship programme based on the Stanford model involving a 30-day industry placement that aligns with career development and skills training priorities.

- The need for clear guidelines to identify who an end-user is, and the need for a university wide systematic approach was discussed. This included the need for tiered support of the candidature at supervisor, school and Faculty level with the ADR only involved if major problems with the supervision needed to be managed.
- The need to revise scholarship allocation processes, one suggestion was to write industry co-funding into allocation criteria. Capping RTPs reducing flexibility was also discussed.
- Attaching scholarships to Linkages was considered but the issue of timing was raised – Linkage time frames do not necessarily align with the tenure of the PhD candidature.
- Some institutions used a mixed model of funding where the partner can contribute two or three years of funding depending on the project design/funding constraints.
- Risks of the student’s academic freedom being compromised or constrained by the competing interests of the industry partner. What can be done to protect the integrity of the research project? The role of the industry supervisor needs to be clearly defined to prevent this arising, and robust supervisor accreditation needs to be in place.
- The lack of longitudinal data on API/APA careers trajectories was noted, as was the volatility of the sector.

Next steps

Possible sessions for September meeting.

- Engagement and Impact – table DASSH ADRs feedback paper for discussion.
- NTROs – table results of survey of key NTRO decision makers for discussion.
- Revisiting the FoRs – how do we get them reviewed? What are the stress points we can emphasise – eg, the lack of specific space for Indigenous Australian law while there IS a category for Maori law?
- Special guest stars – who would be interested to talk with? Tanya Plibersek? Overseas research leader to provide comparison? End users? Joy Damousi – new AHA President and her equivalent in Social Sciences.
- HASS advocacy in Australia? Representatives of Universities Australia, CHASS, the Academies and DASSH in a room together to align strategy? (is the ADR network the appropriate level for this project?).
- Centre of Excellence 2023 round – should HASS caucus (as STEM does) to identify the next round of CoE bids – what areas should a bid be submitted in? Who will be involved in them? Which will the sector support?