



RESEARCH

The University's research mission is:

To advance knowledge and understanding through regionally inspired research and research training which meets the highest international standards for quality and applicability.

The objectives

- Maximise research and research training income.
- Implement the Research and Research Training Management Plan 2001-2003.

The priority objectives under the plan were:

- Consolidate the operations of the University's first research institute, Sunshine Coast Research Institute for Business Enterprise (SCRIBE), and commence the process of establishing the second.
- Further develop the management and administration of higher degrees by research in line with the requirements of the Commonwealth's Research Training Scheme.
- Further develop the provision of training and development opportunities for staff and research students.
- Further develop bachelor honours programs as the first formal stage of research training.
- Introduce a new internal grants scheme to position researchers for success in applying for external grants.
- Commence reviewing and revising all policies and procedures relating to research and research training.
- Improve performance in the Research Training Scheme (RTS) and the Institutional Grants Scheme (IGS).
- Further develop research partnerships and establish the joint research facility at Kingfisher Bay Resort on Fraser Island.

Research on issues relevant to regional development, and of international interest is a focus of the University. To achieve this, the University has developed, and continues to seek, local, national and international research partnerships.



- Develop alliances with key industry and business partners, and other research agencies in the region, nationally and internationally.

The achievements

Research priorities

The University's research and teaching programs have been developed to reflect the research and educational needs of the greater Sunshine Coast region. These regional needs are reflected in the University's research priority areas for 2002:

- Environmental management
- Public health
- Regional business development
- Social and cultural development

Research institutes

To facilitate research concentration and economies of scale, the University's policy is to establish two research institutes. The first research institute, officially launched in 2002, was the Sunshine Coast Research Institute for Business Enterprise (SCRIBE). The second research institute underwent planning in 2002 for establishment in 2003. This institute is to be called the Research Institute for Environment and Health (RIEH), and will focus on environmental management, public health, sports participation and cultural development. The major contributors to RIEH will be staff and students from the faculties of Science, and Arts and Social Sciences.

Sunshine Coast Research Institute for Business Enterprise

The Sunshine Coast Research Institute for Business Enterprise (SCRIBE), was officially launched on March 18. The launch also marked the launch of SCRIBE's first research publication, the Maroochy Business Indicators Survey, commissioned by Maroochy Shire Council. SCRIBE is being funded through a seed grant from the University of \$150,000 over the first three years. SCRIBE operates within the Faculty of Business. The inaugural director was Professor Deborah Ralston, Dean of the Faculty of Business. A new director will be appointed in 2003.

SCRIBE's main research program is related to regional business development. The Institute monitors regional economic activity, and conducts studies aimed at improving the region's capacity to develop sustainable industries and employment opportunities. The Institute also examines issues such as regional infrastructure, small business development and economic advancement.

Successful projects commissioned in 2002 include:

- Maroochy Shire Business Indicators Survey, for Maroochy Shire Council.
- Industry Cluster Development Project, for Queensland Department of State Development.

- Sunshine Coast Information and Communication Technology Business Capabilities and Perceptions Survey, for Queensland Department of State Development and Queensland Information Industries Bureau.
- Judging of the Sunshine Coast Daily Top 100 businesses.
- Tourism and Economic Development Levy submission, for Maroochy Shire Council.
- Maleny Cymbidium Growers Survey, for Sunshine Coast Area Consultative Committee and Caloundra City Council.
- Kilcoy Regional Profile.

SCRIBE also lodged in 2002 an application to be placed on Commonwealth departments' register of regional research organisations.

In partnership with the University, the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Wood Innovation in Melbourne made a submission in 2002 to establish an extension of the CRC on the Sunshine Coast. The extended CRC would address take-up of new technologies among small and medium sized enterprises in the construction and furniture industries.

National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre

The National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre is a partnership between the University and National Seniors Association, which is partially funded by the Federal government through the Prime Minister's office. The Centre will conduct social research in consultation with National Seniors Association and University of the Sunshine Coast staff into people's needs through the ageing process, and how to sustain the productivity of seniors in the community.

Professor Leon Earle was appointed as the inaugural director of the Centre in August, and the Centre was officially launched by Federal Minister for Ageing Kevin Andrews on November 27.

In 2002 the Centre commenced a study into mature age employment in Australia, funded by the Federal Government and National Seniors Association. The Centre also conducted consultancy activities with Westpac, Commonwealth Bank, Queensland Health, the Diversional Therapy Association and a range of residential care providers and professional associations in 2002.

Centre for Multicultural Community and Social Development

The University established late in 2002 the new Centre for Multicultural Community and Social Development. Based in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Centre will develop partnerships within the community development sector, provide education for industry professionals, and conduct research. Research specific to the Sunshine Coast region will play a major

The University established in 2002 two research centres; the National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre, and the Centre for Multicultural Community and Social Development. The centres focus on specific research programs, and will contribute to the work of the research institutes.



part in the Centre's activities. It is expected the Centre will become a national think-tank of multicultural and community issues.

Two Masters students and one PhD student have commenced research under the Centre in 2002, studying topics including the nature of multicultural arts, and ethnic minorities in Australia. The Centre also attracted government funds for research in 2002: a two-year Commonwealth-funded project on women, leadership, family support and youth development; and State-funded projects on achieving structural change in the community development sector, and support systems to sustain multicultural families.

The Centre will publish a biannual journal. Edited by the Centre's director, Narayan Gopalkrishnan, the journal is the first to be produced by the University. The Centre will be officially opened by Premier Peter Beattie in 2003.

Research Training Scheme

In 2002 the University remained one of four smaller Australian institutions not yet fully included in the Research Training Scheme. However, its research training provision continued to expand in preparation for future inclusion in this system. During 2002, under the supervision of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Graduate Studies Sub-committee, progress was made in improving the efficiency of the management of higher degrees by research, and the development of information systems for monitoring and reporting the progress and completion of candidates.

Training and development

The following staff development opportunities were provided in 2002:

- Workshop program.
- Access to AV-CC programs.
- Support for participation in external professional development activities.
- Enhanced support mechanisms for staff applying for ARC Linkage and Discovery grants.

Bachelor honours programs

Following a review, the Research Management Committee, through the Graduate Studies Sub-committee, was given responsibility for the oversight of bachelor honours programs. The Graduate Studies Sub-committee established a reference group to advise on all matters pertaining to the quality of bachelor honours programs. This reference group will present a series of recommendations to the Graduate Studies Sub-committee early in 2003.

Internal Grants Scheme

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced a new internal grant scheme in 2002. The scheme aims to enable staff developing a research record to further develop their research in order to become increasingly competitive when applying for external research grants. The first round of the scheme resulted in the allocation of a total of \$50,000 shared between five project teams.

Policy review

During 2002 several key policies related to research and research training became due for review. In addition, as a result of the Commonwealth's changes to its research funding policies, most policies related to research and research training needed to be updated. The major task of reviewing and revising all related policies and procedures was commenced in 2002 and will be completed in 2003.

Research income

Institutional Grants Scheme	
2001	2002
\$51,080 (Small Grants Scheme)	\$119,186

Research Training Scheme	
2001	2002
\$192,000	\$305,954

Research Infrastructure Block Grants	
2001	2002
\$481	\$3,997

In addition to internal grants to support the development of competitive research programs and expertise, the University also provides information to staff and students about external grant opportunities, and assists with the development and submission of applications.

The following external grants are just some of those received in 2002:

- Dr Thomas Schlacher won a grant of \$30,000 financed jointly by Caboolture Shire Council and the Natural Heritage Trust Fund to study microbial water quality issues and sewage source tracing in Pumicestone Passage.
- Professor Rod Simpson and Dr Anne Neller were awarded a grant of \$50,000 by the Victorian EPA to conduct a community health survey on the impact of diesel truck movements in central Melbourne.
- Dr Bishnu Sharma received a Virtual Business Community Project grant of \$10,000 for a study on small and micro business success factors.

Postgraduate infrastructure

DEST provided the University with an additional five EFTSU of funded places for higher degree research students in October, bringing the total funded load to 20 EFTSU. The postgraduate infrastructure policy was reviewed and reaffirmed in 2002.

Vice-Chancellor's Medal – Researcher

Dr Tara Magdalinski, senior lecturer in Australian and Cultural Studies, was awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Medal for Outstanding University Researcher in 2002, for her research into drugs and sports.



Research partnerships

The University continued to be active in securing and maintaining productive research partnerships. The University currently has partnerships with the following organisations:

- Area Consultative Committee
- Australian Macadamia Society
- Australia Zoo
- Bribie Island Aquaculture Centre
- Caloundra-Maroochy Water Supply Board
- Community Solutions
- Environmental Protection Authority
- Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village
- Maroochy Horticulture Research Centre
- Nambour General Hospital
- Pumicestone Catchment Association
- Queensland Department of Environment
- Queensland Department of Primary Industry
- Queensland Department of Primary Industry Southern Fisheries Centre, Deception Bay
- Queensland Forest Research Institute, Gympie
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
- Sunshine Coast Sub-tropical Fruit Association
- Surf Lifesaving Queensland
- Underwater World

Bacteria research offers pest control solutions to farmers

A research team at the University led by Dr Ipek Kurtböke developed screening technologies for micro-organisms in 2002 which may provide local farmers with an alternative for pest and disease control. The micro-organisms are sourced from the University's Microbial Library, and tested for their anti-fungal properties on cut flower and strawberry crops. Research results obtained in 2002 indicate the fungal infections of cut flowers such as *Phytophthora* species can be reduced using certain micro-organisms. Once the trials are completed and the products comply with regulatory orders, the University's Microbial Library will offer an alternative solution to farmers and horticulturalists in the Sunshine Coast area through the development of environmentally friendly biological control agents.

The gender wars in advertising

University lecturers Dr Debra Harker and Associate Professor Michael Harker conducted research commissioned by the Advertising Standards Bureau (ASB) into public perceptions of advertising in 2002. The research measured community attitudes towards, and perceptions of, gender portrayal in advertising, particularly the portrayal of women. The research found that men are seen as the growing target of stereotyping in advertising. More than 750 people were surveyed for the study, which highlighted key differences between the Australian population at large and the people who have complained to the Advertising Standards Bureau about offensive advertisements.

The future

Research plans for 2003 include:

- Continue work on the establishment of the University's second research institute – the Research Institute for Environment and Health (RIEH).
- Introduce candidate feedback on research training and experience for higher degree by research candidature students.
- Continue to seek private investment for higher degree research scholarships.

The priority objectives for 2003 in the Research and Research Training Management Plan are:

- Establish a new research institute.
- Complete the overhaul of management and administration of higher degrees by research in line with the Research Training Scheme.
- Complete the review and revision of all policies and procedures relating to research and research training.
- Review the Research and Research Training Management Plan and develop a new Plan for the period 2004 – 2006.
- Introduce a Candidate Feedback on Research Training Experience instrument and system.
- Further develop the provision of training and development opportunities for staff and research students.
- Improve performance in the Research Training Scheme (RTS) and the Institutional Grants Scheme (IGS).

Scientific search takes student across the globe

PhD student Helen Ison was awarded a Guest Scholarship for Studies or Research in Sweden in 2002 to further her studies at one of Europe's largest medical research universities – the Karolinska Institute. Ms Ison spent three months in Stockholm to continue her PhD in the Centre for Microbiology and Tumorbiology. Ms Ison's PhD research is investigating the 'molecular pathogenesis of bacterial translocation'. Her research aims to identify how potentially deadly bacteria moves from the gut into the bloodstream and surrounding organs. Ms Ison's research links into studies conducted at Karolinska, which have examined disease mechanisms potentially caused by the gut bacteria.



SCRIBE's forward plans include:

- Establish an advisory committee to assist SCRIBE in developing appropriate strategies.
- Establish closer liaison and collaboration with faculty and University staff on joint research projects.
- Develop a research priorities agenda for regional development issues.
- Initiate a workshop and seminar program on key issues.
- Expand participation in relevant forums and conferences.
- Launch the Regional Sustainability Indicators Project for the Sunshine Coast-Cooloola region in conjunction with local government authorities, State government agencies and other faculties at the University.
- Expand networks with local state and national bodies.
- Expand its research and publications output.