



Rules for the Institutional Research Excellence Awards (IREA)

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Rules for the Research Excellence Awards

1 Preamble

As a pre-eminent university in Africa, driven by the pursuit of knowledge and innovation, with a unique institutional culture based upon the values the University espouses, the North-West University has adopted these Rules for the Institutional Research Excellence Awards (IREA) on 20 June 2014.

2 Introduction

The purpose for the provision of incentives as a strategic imperative for accredited research articles are to increase the number of international publications, the overall publication units within the university, to motivate staff members to publish regularly, to increase the quality of publications, to increase the conversion rate of Masters and Doctoral outputs into publications.

The IREA financial incentive awards are available to staff members appointed permanently or for a fixed term or temporarily by the University (and remunerated by the University) and who have, during their term of appointment, contributed (as author/co-author) towards the publication output of the relevant year by way of research articles/books/conference proceedings (or contributions to these) that qualify for research subsidy as defined by the Department of Education. If a postgraduate or post-doctoral student co-authors a publication with a staff member, but became a staff member of the NWU by the time the IREA pays out, the student/staff member will be entitled to his/her IREA funding.

If a supervisor or supervisors publishes in collaboration with a student, the IREA calculation for the relevant staff members is performed without adding the student as co-author. The IREA allocation for the student is retained, i.e. the IREA calculation is repeated, counting the student as co-author. If the student is still a registered student by the time the IREA pays out, the Research Entity/School director/coordinator could grant an amount equal to one half of this IREA allocation to the student in the form of a bursary. If the student is no longer in the system, the IREA allocation is allocated to the relevant Research Entity or School.

In the event of death of an author of a publication, the IREA funding will be paid to the relevant Research Entity or faculty. The co-authors (if any) and/or family members will not be entitled to the IREA funding.

Up to a maximum of fifty per cent of the budget allocation of the relevant year can, upon request, be paid to the staff member from the relevant expenditure account, with the understanding that the percentage not claimed during the relevant year may not be claimed in subsequent years. The remainder of the allocation must be applied for further staff development, such as the attendance of conferences, membership fees for professional societies or anything else that could contribute towards improving the research output of the staff member, in line with the NWU financial policies. Capital items purchased are considered to be assets of the University, which will be recorded on the University's assets register, and will remain the property of the University after termination of service of the staff member.

With the IREA incentive programme, the University has established a unique system which serves as stimulation and encouragement in a variety of fields. Council set up the programme as a development instrument and continuously monitors the degree of success of the programme.

Subject to the provisions regarding capital items purchased in a case where a staff member leaves the service of the University as set out above, a staff member also forfeits any claim to the balance of his IREA budget in case of termination of service, or to any budget allocation that would have been made for published works.

3 Interpretation

The rules for calculating the total IREA incentive per researcher is done on a sliding scale with different weights for first, second and >2 articles.

The new IREA weights for 2014 onwards be adjusted as follows:

IREA payable from 2014		
Base amount	R8,000	
Category	Weight	R-value
First Local	1.75	R14,000
Second Local	2	R 16,000
> 2 local	2.5	R20,000
First International	4	R 32,000
Second International	4.25	R34,000
> 2 Intl	4.5	R36,000

Example:

Name	1st local	2nd local	>2	Total local units	1 st int	2 nd int	>2	Total int units	IREA Amount
NN	0.13	0.17	0.92	1.22	0.07	0.08	1.67	1.82	
Calculation	1	0.22			1	0.82			
	R12,000	R3,520	R0		R24,000	R29,520	R0		R69,040

While the IREA model certainly played a role in increasing the research productivity, a number of potential unintended consequences need to be monitored. These are related to:

- Staff work load. This is best done by the NWU Performance Management System.
- Quality and quantity of outputs. The high output by a few individuals is not necessarily a problem, since presumably the individuals have found an optimal method of working with their students (conversion of M and D degrees to research articles) and collaborators in well functioning environments.
- Ensuring that all work claimed by NWU staff relates to direct quantified contributions by NWU staff.
- In the light of the decreasing subsidy paid by DoHET for each accredited article equivalent, the affordability of the IREA program should be monitored and adjusted when needed.
- The risk of concentration of research outputs in a number of individuals and/or management structures.

4 Rules

4.1 The Rules for the allocation of IREA awards must be used correctly as illustrated in the example above.

4.2 The base amount be set as 7% of the unit value as annually determined by DoHET (rounded to the nearest R500)

4.3

It should be noted that an additional incentive was added in 2012 for the conversion of Masters and PhD degrees to articles by supervisors (alternatively: a potential disincentive was removed).

If a supervisor or supervisors publishes in collaboration with a student, the IREA calculation for the relevant staff members is performed without adding the student as co-author. The IREA allocation for the student is retained, i.e. the IREA calculation is repeated, counting the student as co-author. If the student is still a registered student by the time the IREA pays out, the Research Entity/School director/coordinator could grant an amount equal to one half

of this IREA allocation to the student in the form of a bursary. If the student is no longer in the system, the IREA allocation is allocated to the relevant Research Entity or School.

- 4.4 That the maximum IREA amount payable to the NWU author for her/his research work is R350 000, where after the money will fall to either the research entity or the school in which the person is working.
- 4.5 Post-Doctoral Fellows qualify for the IREA model like staff members. The Research Support Office must actively promote the incentive scheme among Post-Doctoral Fellows.
- 4.6 Campus Rectors must ensure that research output are commensurate with the task agreements, quality of outputs, and ownership of work be in order. (A data base with the outputs per individual, campus, department, research entity will be provided for assistance).
- 4.7 Campus Rectors must analyse the reason for low research outputs by such a large number of academic staff, with the assistance of the Research Support Office and that any interventions emerging from the analysis be incorporated in the NWU Research, Innovation and Community Engagement Strategic Plan.

5 Summary

IREA Rules will lead to:

- An increased incentive for first publications;
- An increased total output for NWU;
- A broader publication base.

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