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| **Reviewer/Approver** | Dr Ksenia Sawczak, Head Research and Development |
| **Paper title** | NTRO reporting framework  |
| **Recommendation** | That the Faculty Research Committee consider this report, and if consideration is favourable, recommend that this is sent to AAP for additional commentary before it is tabled at UE Research Committee for endorsement. |
| **Consultation Pipeline**  |

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| FASS Research and SACE  | **→** | FRC | **→** | UE-RC |

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| **Resource Implications** | FASS Research proposes an internal Assessment Panel (emulating the model developed for the Low Risk Ethics Panel). Panellists assessing NTROs will be able to count this work within the scope of their 0.2FTE service role. FASS Research proposes a Chair for this panel, with a separate discussion on service allocation in consultation with the ADR. |

**Executive Summary**

There is a vacuum in the reporting of Non-traditional Research Outputs (NTROs) in FASS, possibly more widespread across the University. The Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) exercise was the only driver for collecting NTROs in the higher education sector, and its demise provides an opportunity to revisit the way NTROs are recognised, collected, verified, and assessed. NTROs will become increasingly important in the Academic Excellence framework, as public-facing research outputs with a natural affinity to engagement and impact narratives. The replacement of IRMA being imminent, FASS Research has consulted with senior researchers in SACE to propose the following steps for consideration by the Faculty Research Committee, and if endorsed, to be tabled at UE-RC for discussion.

1. An improved NTRO reporting process for academics, to be modified when the new system is introduced
2. An in-house assessment of NTROs by peers
3. A system of secured storage of NTRO metadata in the library catalogue and/or minting of DOIs through the Sydney eScholarship Repository,

**Background / Context**

The University of Sydney’s [University Guidelines for Non-Traditional Research Outputs](https://intranet.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/intranet/documents/research-support/reporting/ntros/ntro-guidelines-sydney.pdf) (NTROs) were first developed in the early 2010s to manage the reporting of NTROs in the Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) collection exercise. Research Portfolio administrators liaised with academics across faculties/university schools (FASS, SCM, APD) to adapt ERA requirements within university software systems. Collection methods were designed to respond to the capacity of the Integrated Research Management Application (IRMA) as (a) a storage repository of relevant support material, (b) a way to send this material to external assessors to verify that the outputs in question qualified as research, and (c) a method for exporting required ERA data to the ARC.

As the University transitions to a new software more purpose-built for collecting publication and grants data, FASS Research envisages a simplified data input process for NTROs, without need to store research outputs in the system. The library’s eScholarship Repository has the capacity to mint DOIs for NTROs, allowing for citation of works across research landscapes. For those works that cannot be stored in the repository (for copyright reasons), metadata on the library website will be generated, allowing alternative citation options.

**Risks / Benefits**

There are risks in not updating the current NTRO collection approach. Capacity for competitive research grant submissions by artistic research practitioners will be limited, as their works will continue to be excluded from citation in academic discourse. There may be knock-on effect in the HDR space, as research students look for supervision from artistic scholars recognised in the academy as well as in the wider community. We house two of Australia’s leading creative arts schools – the Sydney College of the Arts, and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Inadequately representing their creative research represents another reputational risk: the legacy of high-quality research-based artistic practice at USYD could potentially fade away.

Benefits to this proposal include a simpler system for academics to navigate; a secure place to store metadata and/or artistic outputs (where appropriate, within the boundaries of copyright law), and for these outputs to participate in academic discourse through the minting of DOIs and the subsequent possibility to measure influence of these outputs through citation.

Following endorsement from the FRC for this initiative, it is the intention of FASS Research to submit this proposed system for NTRO collection and uplift to UE-RC, with a proposal to adopt it as a model across all Faculties and University Schools. Creative NTROs are produced in other domains across the University (Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Architecture Design and Planning, Law). Commissioned reports are also produced in STEM Faculties and the Business School. A university-wide adoption of this model will help ensure efficiency and robustness in our capture of these important outputs. This comes at an important time as the government continues to encourage engagement and impact.

**Implementation**

1. FASS Research will redesign and rename the Visual Arts proforma as “Creative Research proforma”, expanding its capacity to record all NTRO types that FASS Researchers register. Testing of this form will take place in conjunction with researchers in SACE. Timing of the redesign will depend on the delivery of the new outputs and grants database system (currently out for tender).
2. In consultation with creative research academics, questions prompting responses about research content will be inserted in the form, replacing the current Research Statement format. Researchers will have the option to still use this format. Visual artists often formulate curatorial or artists statements, which could explain the research content of the work. The following questions have been proposed:
	1. Is the work a process driven practice, or a work that evolves in the environment?
	2. Does it fall within a collective work practice (a portfolio)? What significant effort was expended in the creation of this? Can it be compared to a monograph in terms of effort?
	3. In what ways does this work differ from your last work?
	4. What motivated you to create this work?
	5. How has it evolved your practice?
	6. How has this work engaged audiences, and what is its impact in the creative world?
	7. In what way has this work been recognised by peers as excellent? (evidence of reviews, arts venues, awards, publishers, etc)
3. Eventually this “statement of research content” will be used to describe the work on the library website. It will be accessible for modification/updating by the researcher at any time and is the researcher’s IP.
4. An NTRO panel will be formed, with researchers volunteering for this as part of their 0.2FTE service role. The panel will be administered by FASS Research and led by a senior academic, who will chair the panel.
5. Once necessary data for the NTRO has been gathered via the new proforma (or the new system), this will be collated and sent to the (randomised) panellists. The panel will be comprised of artistic/creative researchers, with at least one practitioner from a field directly related to the researcher. A process of “request not to assess” will be in place, managed confidentially by FASS Research. The panellists will determine eligibility to enter the research collection. They will provide constructive feedback. In case of disagreements, the Chair will determine the outcome.
6. After being accepted into the collection, the work will either be minted with a DOI, added to the researcher’s ORCiD profile, and stored in the eScholarship Repository, or it will receive a unique URL in the Library catalogue.

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| **Author** | Dr Joseph Toltz, Manager, Research Support |
| **Requests for further information** | Requests for further information may be directed to the author. |