DEST Specifications


Definition of research

For the purposes of these specifications, research comprises:

- creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications;
- any activity classified as research which is characterised by originality; it should have investigation as a primary objective and should have the potential to produce results that are sufficiently general for humanity's stock of knowledge (theoretical and/or practical) to be recognisably increased. Most higher education research work would qualify as research;
- pure basic research, strategic basic research, applied research and experimental development.

Activities that support research and meet this definition of research include:

- provision of professional, technical, administrative or clerical support and/or assistance to staff directly engaged in research;
- management of staff who are either directly engaged in research or are providing professional, technical or clerical support or assistance to those staff;
- activities of students undertaking postgraduate research courses;
- development of postgraduate research courses;
- supervision of students undertaking postgraduate research courses.

Activities that do not support research must be excluded, such as:

- preparation for teaching;
- scientific and technical information services;
- general purpose or routine data collection;
- standardisation and routine testing;
- feasibility studies (except into research and experimental development projects);
- specialised routine medical care;
- commercial, legal and administrative aspects of patenting, copyright or licensing activities;
- routine computer programming, systems work or software maintenance (research and experimental development into applications software, new programming languages and new operating systems would normally meet the definition of research).

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