Research Institutes and Centres

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Contact: Vice-President (Research) – 306-585-5184

Introduction

The University of Regina values the strengths and contributions of its research institutes and centres and seeks to ensure their success as a vital part of the University’s research mandate.

In keeping with good governance, this policy provides for the creation, management and disestablishment of University of Regina research institutes and centres.

Definitions

* **Research Institute or Centre** – a formally constituted unit of the University that is established to bring together relevant researchers and increase focus on a specific area or topic. The terms “research institute” and “research centre” are equivalent for the purposes of this policy.
* **Relevant Authority** – the person with authority and responsibility for a research institute or centre. This is the dean, in the case of a faculty-based research institute or centre, and the Vice-President (Research), in the case of a University-based research institute or centre.

Policy

Purpose of Research Institutes and Centres

The prime objective of a research institute or centre is the generation of research product and knowledge. However, a research institute or centre may also have important non-research co-objectives, such as teaching or training, dissemination of research, or public service.

Types of Research Institutes and Centres

The University has two types of research institutes and centres:

1. Faculty-based, under the oversight of the relevant dean and the authority of the Vice-President (Research); and,
2. University-based, under the authority of the Vice-President (Research).

As research orientation and activities evolve, it is possible that it becomes advantageous to convert an initially faculty-based institute or centre to university-based status, or vice-versa. In such a situation the relevant dean and the Vice-President (Research) may recommend this change to the Board of Governors.

Funding

Research institutes and centres are encouraged to seek out external funding so far as possible. Notwithstanding, the University may provide operating funding and in-kind support so far as competing priorities allow.

Duration of Research Institutes and Centres

Research institutes and centres are expected to have longevity.

Leadership and Accountability of Research Institutes and Centres

Every institute or centre shall have a director with administrative responsibility for the institute or centre. The director shall report either to a faculty dean in the case of a faculty-based institute or centre or to the Vice-President (Research) in the case of a university-based institute or centre. Appointments as a director of a research institute or centre will normally be for three to five years. Re-appointments are possible with the approval of the relevant authority.

A director who is a faculty member of the University will continue to receive applicable benefits and privileges. Course release or other compensatory workload reduction may be agreed upon, depending on individual circumstances. Where the director is out of scope, benefits and privileges will be defined in the applicable appointment letter and by the relevant University policies.

Where a director of a university-based research institute or centre is a faculty member, the Vice-President (Research) shall forward an annual assessment of the director’s performance to the relevant faculty dean as input into the faculty performance review process. This assessment will be shared with the director.

Research Institutes and Centres and Academic Programming

A research institute or centre may contribute to undergraduate, graduate, or other training (such as internships) related to ongoing research programs. However, while academic programs may be supported by a research institute or centre, such programs shall not be housed or administered by a research institute or centre.

Multi-Institutional Arrangements

At times it may be advantageous for a research institute or centre to enter into a formalized arrangement (such as a partnership or other relationship) with an entity or entities external to the University. Such arrangements may be subject to formal agreement signed by the Vice-President (Research) or other authority depending on the arrangement contemplated.

A University of Regina research institute or centre may be co-housed at another institution. In such situations, the relevant authority will work with the director to minimize unnecessary duplication in reporting or review processes (for example, an institute or centre annual report or review could be designed to meet the criteria of all administering institutions).

Signing Authority

The relevant authority will provide an incoming institute or centre director with a document defining the director’s signing authority.

Financial Structures

An appropriate research institute or centre account structure will be set up in consultation with Financial Services.

Office of Record

The Office of the Vice-President (Research), or its designate, will hold copies of reviews and annual reports of both university-based and faculty-based research institutes and centres.

Policy Compliance

Research institutes and centres shall conform to University policies and procedures.

Consequences for Noncompliance

If a research institute or centre does not meet the requirements outlined in this policy, a full review may be conducted and the research institute or centre may be disestablished.

Processes

Establishment of a New Research Institute or Centre

The following are the steps to establish a new research institute or centre:

1. The relevant authority, in consultation with the Council Committee on Research, reviews foundation documentation (described below) and forwards the relevant documentation with a recommendation to establish a new research institute or centre to Executive of Council

2. Executive of Council recommends on the matter to Senate

1. Senate approves the establishment of the research institute or centre and makes a recommendation to the Board of Governors
2. The Board of Governors makes a decision to establish the research institute or centre

Foundation Documentation

Comprehensive foundation documentation is essential before approval of a new research institute or centre. The documentation should be complete enough to justify the need for a new institute or centre, demonstrate its viability, and guide the management of the new institute or centre over its initial years of existence. At a minimum, the documentation should include:

* name of the institute or centre
* rationale for, and purpose of, the institute or centre
* an analysis of the institute or centre’s fit within the University’s strategic research priorities
* management structure of the institute or centre, including clear lines of authority and responsibility
* anticipated duration of the institute or centre (this may be indefinite or for a specified term – if for a defined term, plans for institute or centre wind up should be included)
* a budget for at least the first three years of operation of the institute or centre, including anticipated revenues from all sources and all operational costs
* a description of physical resource needs (such as office or laboratory space)
* projected staffing requirements
* a risk assessment and risk management strategy, particularly for budget shortfalls
* a definition of institute or centre membership, and membership categories
* terms of reference for an advisory committee for the institute or centre, if applicable
* envisioned relationships with existing University entities and with entities external to the University
* projected contributions, if any, to University goals other than research (such as contributions to teaching and training or to public service)
* performance metrics against which the institute’s or centre’s progress and success will be measured (e.g. external funding, publications, graduate student numbers, community service)

Once a new institute or centre is approved and a director appointed, the foundation documentation should be viewed as a living template and ongoing guide for institute or centre operations.

In response to changing circumstances and opportunities, changes to the foundation documentation can be recommended, typically as part of a review or annual report. In accepting proposed changes to foundation documentation, the relevant authority will use his/her good judgment as to whether the proposed changes are so fundamental as to require approval from the Board of Governors.

Disestablishment of a Research Institute or Centre

Research institutes or centres may be disestablished via either of two mechanisms:

1. In the case of a research institute or centre with a prescribed termination date, the institute or centre will cease to exist as of that date; or,
2. In the case of a research institute or centre with no prescribed termination date, the institute or centre may be disestablished by the Board of Governors.

The relevant authority may recommend disestablishment, giving due consideration to consultations with the relevant director, the Council Committee on Research, and key institute or centre partners. In the case of disestablishment under (2) above, reasonable notice will be given so as to allow for the orderly winding up of institute or centre affairs.

Reporting

Research institutes and centres shall report annually on activities. The director of a research institute or centre is responsible for preparing the annual report and providing it to the relevant authority. Unless otherwise mutually agreed by the director and the relevant authority, the annual report due date for the University year ending April 30 will be June 30 of the same year.

Deans will forward a copy of the annual report of a faculty-based institute or centre to the Office of Record.

Unless otherwise mutually agreed by the director and the relevant authority, the annual report will include, at a minimum:

* an application of the specific performance metrics found in the institute or centre’s foundation documentation, including a discussion of progress on meeting performance objectives
* a listing of publications attributable to institute or centre activities
* a listing of presentations and workshop and conference activity attributable to institute or centre activities
* a listing of communications or media activities attributable to institute or centre activities
* an assessment of any outreach or public service activities attributable to institute or centre activities
* a listing of contributions to undergraduate, graduate or internship training
* a university-year financial statement noting all monies received and expended by the institute or centre in each of its University accounts (i.e. FOAPALs)
* an assessment of the status and continued viability of the institute or centre

Where the relevant authority deems it advisable, the relevant authority may direct a research institute or centre director to prepare an interim report at any point in time between institute or centre annual reports. In so doing, the relevant authority will define the nature and scope of the requested information. The interim report, and where useful an assessment of it by the relevant authority, may be provided to the Board of Governors.

Internal Review

The director of a research institute or centre is responsible for preparing an in-house review and providing it to the relevant authority. An internal review shall take place at any point in time on the request of the relevant authority, and at least every five years. The relevant authority shall provide a director with at least 90 days’ notice of an internal review due date. Unless otherwise mutually agreed by the director and the relevant authority, an internal review is based on all the elements of the annual report, plus, at a minimum, the following additional components:

* an assessment of the institute or centre’s progress since the most recent review, based on the specific performance metrics found in the institute or centre’s foundation documentation
* an analysis of the institute or centre’s fit within the University’s strategic research priorities
* an assessment and recommendation as to whether any of the institute or centre’s foundation documentation, management structure, membership categories, or performance measures should be amended to respond to new realities
* a summary of all revenues and expenditures since the most recent review
* an analysis of challenges and opportunities over the next three to five years
* a strategy for the next three to five years to address challenges and opportunities
* a recommendation as to the continuance, restructuring, or disestablishment of the institute or centre

Upon receipt and consideration of the in-house review, the relevant authority may:

* approve the internal review;
* request further information; or,
* initiate an external review.

Deans will forward a copy of the in-house review of a faculty-based institute or centre to the Office of Record.

External Review

At any point in time the relevant authority may initiate an external review.

An external review involves comment, analysis and recommendations by an appropriate external individual or entity (either external to the institute or centre, external to the relevant faculty, or external to the University) selected and engaged by the relevant authority. Details of the external review may differ as defined by the relevant authority, but typically may include:

* an analysis of the institute or centre’s research performance
* an analysis of the institute or centre’s non-research contributions to the University
* an analysis of the institute or centre’s fit within the University’s strategic research priorities
* a funding and expenditures summary over the lifetime of the institute or centre (or since the previous external review)
* a research plan over the next five years
* a funding and expenditures projection over the next five years
* confirmation the institute or centre’s current management structure is appropriate or recommendations for changes to the management structure
* a recommendation as to the continuance, or restructuring, or disestablishment of the institute or centre

Upon receipt and consideration of the external review, the relevant authority may accept the review or request further information.

Deans will forward a copy of an external review of a faculty-based institute or centre to the Office of Record.

Related Information

* [RCH-030-010 Budgetary Limits on Spending Research Funds](http://www.uregina.ca/policy/browse-policy/policy-RCH-030-010.html)
* [OPS-010-050 Fiscal and Research Year Ends](http://www.uregina.ca/policy/browse-policy/policy-OPS-010-005.html)
* [RCH-030-005 Research Cost Recovery](http://www.uregina.ca/policy/browse-policy/policy-RCH-030-005.html)