



THE UNIVERSITY of
NEW ORLEANS

Policy No: AP-OP-24.3
TITLE: Centers and Institutes
EFFECTIVE DATE: January 10, 2017*
(*Policy Revised, see below)
CANCELLATION:
REVIEW DATE: Fall 2024

ADMINISTERED BY: Office of the President

PURPOSE

This policy provides a framework for the establishment, review, maintenance, operation and discontinuation of centers and institutes. The purpose of centers and institutes is to advance the university's mission and strategic plan in areas such as workforce training, academic programming and research and innovation.

AUTHORITY

Authority for this policy is derived from the Louisiana Board of Regents, Academic Affairs Policy 2.05 and 2.05A

DEFINITIONS

Center: A center is a unit whose purpose is to conduct research, and may include closely related academic, public policy, or public service activities. A center must reside within an existing academic unit (college) and reports to the head of that unit but may cross college lines and report instead to a senior academic officer (Vice President for Research, Provost, or Associate Provost as appropriate). A center is not directly involved in the offering of courses for credit or degree programs. A center may also serve as a formalized link between the academic community and the professional community. A center should also facilitate efforts of the institution to attract external funding for related research.

Institute: An institute is a unit whose primary function is to conduct research and offer associated instruction under the auspices of a department or college. An institute may also offer training and other closely related academic or public service activities. An institute reports directly to an academic dean, associate vice provost, associate provost, or chief academic/research officer. An institute may serve as a formalized link between the academic community and the professional community. An institute should also facilitate efforts of the institution to attract external funding for related research.

Center of Excellence: A center of excellence is a team, unit, program, or shared facility or an entity that provides leadership, best practices, research, support and/or training for a focus area. UNO's center(s) of excellence will abide by the Board of Regents' Academic Affairs Policy 2.05A. A center of excellence is accountable to higher expectation of performance and productivity and will include contributions to the body of knowledge and economic development; placement of graduates; generation of external interest and support; formation of joint ventures and partnerships; and positive recognition of the area and its faculty and students. The designated Center of Excellence is recognized as a leader in the field and a concentration of expertise and may be the sole provider of education and research in a focused area.

Council of Centers and Institutes: The Council of Centers and Institutes (CCI) will be the oversight body for all centers and institutes. The Council on Centers and Institutes (CCI) will be comprised of a subcommittee of the Research Council consisting of representatives of Board of Regents approved centers and institutes that are in full, active status.

Research Council: The Research Council is an advisory body to the Vice President for Research that provides guidance and assistance on the development of planning and policy for research, scholarly, and creative work at the University of New Orleans.

PROCEDURE

The mission of a center or institute must be consistent with the university mission. It must also align with the university's strategic plan. Centers and institutes are multidisciplinary units that transcend departmental or college boundaries. They are designed to function in ways that a single department or a college cannot by bringing together diverse experts to focus on an important problem or group of problems that require approaches from different perspectives and expertise. The benefit that centers and institutes bring to the university must outweigh the cost to the university. These benefits may take the form of measurable revenue, or they may take the form of less tangible benefits that cannot easily be assigned a monetary value. As an institution, it is necessary to carefully and objectively measure the benefits of each individual center or institute and compare them to the direct and indirect costs for maintaining the center or institute.

Approval

Initial approval of centers, institutes, and centers of excellence will be undertaken by the Council of Centers and Institutes. CCI will recommend action to the appropriate vice president. All UNO centers and institutes must be recognized and approved by the Louisiana Board of Regents according to the Board of Regents Academic Affairs Policy 2.05 or 2.05A unless provided an exception by the President. Such exceptions will apply to units that serve key roles in achieving the university mission, such as the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Women's Center. The formal procedures that must be followed to establish a center or institute are detailed in the "Center and Institute Procedure" document that is available on the Research Council website. Newly approved centers and institutes are given an initial three-year probationary period. Upon completion of the probationary period, a performance review is conducted to determine whether the center or institute may proceed to full, active status.

Management of Centers and Institutes

In order to ensure the health and growth of centers and institutes and maximize the benefits to the university, centers and institutes must conform to the guidelines provided in Table 1. Only Board of Regents recognized centers and institutes will be allowed to use center or institute in the title unless granted an exception by the President. All centers and institutes will have an advisory committee or board with at least two members from outside of the university.

Table 1. Center and Institute Oversight Guidelines

Center/Institute Attribute	Research/Proposal Oversight	Faculty/Staff Oversight
Wholly in a department	Center or institute is generally not justified	
Wholly within a college but across departments	College ¹	Each employee will be supervised by the department of assignment
Across colleges (University-wide center/institute)	Office of Research ²	Each employee will be supervised by the department of assignment

¹Routing of proposals will be: PI, chair, center/institute director, dean, Office of Research. If a conflict arises between department and center/institute, the dean should work to resolve.

²Routing of proposals will be: PI, chair, center/institute director, appropriate deans, Office of Research. If a conflict arises between department and center/institute, the dean should work to resolve. If a conflict involves a dean, the Office of Research and the Office of the Provost should work to resolve.

Supervision of Employees

Employee supervision will follow normal chain of command based on the unit to which the employee is assigned. Salaries for professors will continue to originate in their department of assignment. Staff member salaries may be funded by departments, colleges, or centers/institutes as negotiated among these constituents. Graduate student salaries and tuition may be funded by departments, colleges, or centers/institutes as negotiated among these constituents. Undergraduate student salaries may be funded by departments, colleges, or centers/institutes as negotiated among these constituents. All personnel action forms will be routed through the corresponding supervising unit(s).

Center or Institute Support

A department and/or college may support the operations of a center or institution at its discretion using general funds, F&A revenue, endowments, or other sources, but the department and/or college cannot be the sole sources of funding for a center or institute. Centers and institutes cannot purely rely on department/college's subsidies. A center or institute must demonstrate a clear pathway of financial independence within 3 years of existence or will lose its status of center or institute. The Office Research may provide enhancement funding (IMD 85.002), if available.

Stipends and/or Additional Compensation

Stipends or additional compensation, if any, for directors will have to be generated from the center's or institute's revenues (funds) or the corresponding department or college that established the center or institute.

Performance Review of Centers and Institutes

All active centers and institutes will be reviewed every five years (three years if conditionally approved). Institutional reviews will be scheduled in coordination with any external reviews that are required. Reviews may include, but are not limited to, the following components: Louisiana Board of Regents approval status, center/institute type, mission, scale, financial viability, external funding, financial support for faculty and students, scholarly activity, partnerships, and value added to the university.

The review process is completed by the CCI, a subcommittee of the Research Council. The respective Vice President will be responsible for any corrective action or recommendations from the performance review and will communicate a corrective action plan to and work with the director of the center or institute to ensure its implementation.

Centers and institutes will be under the purview of the Vice President for Research, but any academic functions will be overseen by the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Centers of academic excellence will be overseen by the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, centers of research excellence will be overseen by the Vice President for Research, and centers for workforce excellence will be overseen by the appropriate vice president as designated by the president.

Performance Review Actions

Performance review of a center or institute will result in one of the following outcomes:

Continuance

- The center or institute provides sufficient value to the university and its operations should continue

Re-classification

- If a center or institute is meeting the requirements for a different category, reclassification will be required in one of the following ways:
 - Changing a center to an institute
 - Changing an institute to a center
 - Changing a center or institute to a center of excellence
 - Changing a center of excellence to a different type of center of excellence (academic, research, or workforce)
- The appropriate vice president will provide a written timeline and expectations for reclassification.

Probation

Centers or institutes that are unable to adequately meet satisfactory progress will be placed on a one-year probationary period.

The appropriate vice president will outline metrics that define adequate progress to be removed from probation, and goals will be specified in writing for the director of the center or institute.

Final review will take place at the end of the probationary period.

Discontinuance

A center or institute that does not provide sufficient value to the university will be discontinued.

The appropriate vice president will develop a discontinuance plan with a time scale from 1-3 years.

IMPLEMENTATION

No unit at the university may be called a center or institute unless it has submitted a proposal that has been approved according to this policy.



John W. Nicklow
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University of New Orleans

**Policy Updates:
Revisions: 6/4/2021*