

GUIDANCE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW INSTITUTE/CENTER

At the University of Arizona, centers or institutes are established to facilitate research and/or outreach initiatives and are usually called Academic Unit (AU I/C) or University-Wide Institute/Center. These Institutes or Centers do not offer degree programs and generally do not offer courses, but they may support the research and outreach activities of an academic unit. The Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) has delegated to the Universities the authority to approve the creation, modification, or disestablishment of Institutes or Centers, set forth by the following policy:

ABOR Policy 2-222 C. -- Research Institute/Center:

1. Emphasizes research and/or public service;
2. Includes faculty or staff from several disciplines to coordinate research or public service;
3. Disseminates new knowledge or provides technical assistance;
4. Has a separate identification in University operating budget;
5. Has assigned faculty and staff;
6. Is recognized by federal agencies providing budgetary support on a temporary basis;
7. May offer course work and continuing education.

Because the vast majority of these Institutes or Centers have a primary or secondary focus on facilitating research and scholarly inquiry, the President has delegated the responsibility for administering the process to establish, modify, and reauthorize all Institutes or Centers at the University of Arizona to the office of the Senior Vice President, Research, Innovation & Impact (RII).

In the special case where the primary goal is to establish an Institute or Center related to an instructional or student affairs purpose put forth by the sponsoring (S)VP, Research, Innovation & Impact is still responsible for coordinating the creation, the modification and the disestablishment process. Research, Innovation & Impact will adapt the vetting process and utilize relevant professionals for the review as warranted. In this case, the sponsoring (S)VP makes the initial affirmative judgement about its necessity, requests the review for establishment, provides written material in response to review, and will be notified of approval.

I. Types of Institutes/Centers

UNIVERSITY-WIDE RESEARCH INSTITUTE/CENTER: University Research Institutes/Centers (URICs) are expected to drive excellence in research, scholarship and innovation activity through building inter- and trans-disciplinary research capacity. To enhance the visibility, impact and public benefit of UA research, URICs are expected to create linkages among researchers within the University and with extramural government, industry, and community partners. A URIC must demonstrate its unique ability to meet a strategic need that complements and transcends what can be accomplished in a single academic unit and as such, include identified members from the faculty of multiple academic units.



URICs are expected to accomplish the following:

1. Lead efforts and design activities that bring together researchers from across campus in large scale, interdisciplinary collaborations that result in new forms of research and shared scholarship.
2. Enhance competitiveness for new forms of extramural support (sponsored and philanthropic) to grow research and engagement to provide substantive public benefit.
3. Enhance competitiveness for the hiring of new faculty that leverages existing strengths in new areas of research and stakeholder engagement, and mentor young faculty by expanding their access to new research areas and faculty colleagues.
4. Enhance the public impact and visibility of UA research by connecting interdisciplinary scholarship to local, regional, national and international communities.

To grow and succeed, URICs typically require specialized infrastructure (e.g., space, facilities, equipment or professional expertise) beyond what can be typically expected from an academic unit, and thus have a budget that is fiscally independent. They are expected to generate substantial external funding from either extramural sponsors or philanthropic resources to sustainably support its success. URICs report to the Vice President for Research, and Research, Innovation & Impact is responsible for ongoing review.

ACADEMIC UNIT LEVEL INSTITUTE/CENTER (AU I/C): Academic Unit Institute/Center (AU I/Cs) are expected to support excellence in interdisciplinary inquiry and collaboration, at a scale primarily within the scope of the academic unit. For these definitional purposes, University of Arizona Health Sciences is a single academic unit.

AU I/Cs may have some specialized infrastructure (e.g., space, facilities, equipment or professional expertise) that typically are contained within an academic unit. AU I/Cs have a separate budget that is fiscally independent and is managed under the purview of the Cognizant Academic Unit Administrator (CAUA) (College Dean, Department Head, or other supervisory official). AU I/Cs are expected to generate sustainable external funding from either extramural sponsors or philanthropic resources in support of its operation. The Cognizant Academic Unit Administrator (CAUA), is responsible for the review process.

Generally, activities that can be accomplished by personnel with appointments in a single department or office are considered “programs”, “laboratories”, “bureaus”, or “initiatives”, are not defined as Academic Institute/Center under ABOR policy, and do not need to engage in the implementation process described below, as they are a part of the department’s usual scope of authority, budget, oversight, and review.

II. Process for the Establishment of All Institutes/Centers

Research, Innovation & Impact (RII) oversees the process for the creation, modification, review and reauthorization of all Institute/Center at the University of Arizona. As such, RII staff are available for ongoing consultation and assistance, and those interested in establishing a center or institute are recommended to consult with these experts before initiating the process (see accompanying Implementation Request for contact information).



Groups of university faculty and staff develop the concept for the interdisciplinary focus and activities that will constitute the proposed academic unit institute or center. The group seeks input from relevant and affected Cognizant Academic Unit Administrator (CAUA). The CAUA, singly or collectively, makes an initial affirmative judgement about the necessity of the College-level or University-wide Institute/Center, then formally requests institutional review for establishment by Research, Innovation & Impact, and lastly submits the completed Implementation Request form to Research, Innovation & Impact's Institute/Center Coordinator to initiate the process. AU I/Cs implementation requests must be accompanied by a letter of support from the CAUA.

Research, Innovation & Impact performs the initial review for completion, sufficiency, and potential overlap with other extant units, and works with the proposing team and CAUA to further hone the Implementation Request, as warranted. Following internal review, the Implementation Request is vetted by Research, Innovation & Impact. Other offices may be asked to review the Implementation Request (e.g. Office of General Counsel) as warranted.

The CAUA shall submit written material addressing any concerns raised by other offices as warranted, which will be considered in the final review by the Senior Vice President RII. Written approval will be conveyed to the CAUA by the Senior Vice President RII, and upon approval, the Institute/Center will be listed on the University of Arizona website <https://research.arizona.edu/facilities/institutes-centers>. Institute/Center may be authorized for an initial term of up to five years, and renewals are reauthorized for a period of up to seven years.

III. Externally Funded Institute/Center

If a "center" is stood up under an external funding award, a "New Center Application" must be processed for approval by the Senior Vice President RII in compliance with ABOR Policy 2-2222. Once approved, the Institute/Center (I/C) will enter into the normal initial 5-year review for new institute/centers, and subsequent 7 year renewal cycles.

If an externally funded center's initial award expires, but it generates a sufficient mix of resources to sustain itself, it can continue to exist subject to the SVPRII I/C approval process.

If an externally funded center came into existence prior to the President's 7/20/2021 Delegation memo on I/C approval, SVPRII will work diligently with I/C Directors, and their reporting unit to grandfather those I/C's approval.

- Should the existing externally funded center not be self-sustaining from either its original or alternate mix of resources at the time of its review for grandfathered approval, the default position is that the center will be disapproved, absent a justification and plan signed by their director and reporting unit head outlining the plan to restore them to fiscal sustainability within the current Fiscal Year.



VI. Modification of Existing Institute/Center

The CAUA, singly or collectively, may request to modify or disestablish AU I/Cs or University-wide Institute/Center by submitting a written request to the Research, Innovation & Impact Institute/Center Coordinator that describes the desired change and rationale for the modification. These requests will be reviewed by the Senior Vice President RII, and an appropriate action, including a review process, will be taken tailored to the nature of the request.

V. Annual Reporting by All Institute/Center

Annually, all Institute/Centers are expected to develop an *Annual Report* of 1) list of members and process used to define membership, 2) its activities, outcomes and impacts of the prior year, 3) to internally assess progress and critically evaluate achievement against its goals, and 4) describe action plan for the upcoming year to continue to advance to its goals. University-wide Institutes and Centers are encouraged to utilize input from their external advisory boards in this process where warranted and feasible.

Academic Unit level Institute/Center (AU I/C). The AU I/C Director provides this Annual Report to the CAUA, as well as an updated business plan for the upcoming period. The CAUA reviews and discusses this Annual Report and business plan with the Director, finalizes the evaluation, and then approves the action and business plans. The CAUA then submits the Annual Report and updated business plan to Research, Innovation & Impact for recording.

University-wide Institute/Center. The University-wide Institute or Center Director provides this Annual Report to the Senior Vice President RII, as well as an updated business plan for the upcoming period. The Senior Vice President RII, or designee, reviews and discusses this Annual Report and business plan with the Director, finalizes the evaluation, and then approves the action and business plans. The Annual Report and updated business plan are recorded by Research, Innovation & Impact Institute/Center Coordinator.

VI. Periodic Review and Reauthorization of All Institute/Center

All Institute/Center are expected to undergo periodic review prior to request for reauthorization. See “*Guidance for Periodic Review and Reauthorization of Institute/Center*” on the [RII Research Institute/Center website](#) for specific information on the processes. Without such explicit review and reauthorization and timely completion of the attendant processes, Institute/Center will be suspended and/or disestablished after the term of approval has been completed, the Institute/Center will no longer be considered a campus unit, and is not permitted to continue to act as a campus unit at that time.

If you have any questions, contact RII Institute/Center Coordinator, Luz Sandoval at 621-1622, lvalenzu@email.arizona.edu.