

PERIODIC REVIEW AND REAUTHORIZATION OF  
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INSTITUTES/CENTERS (NON-ACADEMIC UNITS)  
***GUIDANCE DOCUMENT***

Coupled with strategic planning, periodic peer review for reauthorization is essential to advancing academic excellence and ensuring the Institutes/Centers are well positioned to successfully respond to opportunities and to support the needs of faculty who desire to contribute to cross-cutting, interdisciplinary scholarship and innovation.

For discipline-centered departments, the Academic Program Review is the primary means to maintain and improve quality, where the intent is to be a periodic self-examination process that includes peer feedback and provides guidance on ongoing strategic actions to realize future opportunities. For interdisciplinary Institutes/Centers, the objective of the Periodic Review is similar: a process designed to provide a clear assessment of the strengths and challenges and guide the future direction of activities.

An effective periodic review is beneficial to the Institute/Center in planning for the future, fully engages the faculty and administration in the development of the self-study, external peer review, unit response and the subsequent implementation of the recommendations. As a result, Institutes/Centers can realize many benefits and outcomes from a quality review tailored to the scope and scale of its activities, including:

- An examination of the quality and value of the Institute/Center's activities by the faculty and students.
- A clarification, evaluation, and perhaps revision, of the Centers/Institute's goals, strengths, challenges, and opportunities.
- An improved source of information to help guide the Centers/Institute's future actions, activities, and decisions on resources.
- An assessment of Centers/Institute's objectives and how they enable achievement of the University's strategic priorities and goals.

As delegated by the President, the Vice President for Research is responsible for the coordination, oversight and documentation of the periodic review and reauthorization processes of all University Research Institutes/Centers. As such, the office for Research, Discovery & Innovation (RDI) serves as the main point of contact for this process, although the periodic review and reauthorization is a collaborative process with senior university administrators, college deans, and department heads whose faculty are Institute/Center members.



## 1. Periodic Review

All Institutes/Centers are expected to undergo periodic review for reauthorization after its initial establishment period (no more than 5 years) and renewal period (no more than 7 years). The office for Research, Discovery & Innovation (RDI) initiates the need for review by informing the Institute/Center Director. In extenuating circumstances, the Director may request in writing an extension of up to one year from the Vice President for Research. A periodic review of a university research Institute/Center can also be initiated by the Director or Vice President for Research at any time. In the absence of timely completion of the initial periodic review process, the Institute/Center will be suspended and "sunsetted" after the establishment period has been completed. The Institute/Center then will no longer be considered a campus unit and is not permitted to continue to act as a Institute/Center from that time onward.

The Institute/Center Director is expected to conduct a periodic review in coordination with RDI (see "Sample Calendar of Activities" outlining the review process). Typically, there are three components to the periodic review:

- Internal Self-Study Report;
- External peer review of the Institute/Center that produces an Evaluation Report with recommendations for the Institute/Center;
- Internal Review Response outlining specific actions the Institute/Center will take to address the Evaluation Report's recommendations over the following performance period.

The Self-Study Report (see *Self Study Report Sample Outline*) should reflect on the Institute/Center's past accomplishments and present needs to refine its future mission, achieve its goals and expand impact. The Director coordinates with Institute/Center staff, faculty, and affiliate members in the preparation of the Self-Study Report which shall be submitted to RDI at least 3 months prior to the scheduled review date.

The external peer review shall be conducted by a team of individuals who have national expertise in areas that are common with the Institute/Center. The Director, in consultation with the Institute/Center members and the pertinent cognizant deans, submits nominations to the Vice President for Research for those to serve on the Review Team. The Review Team composition will vary among Institutes/Centers, but should be reflective of the university's core value of diversity in perspectives, and thus will typically include: 1) at least two individuals who are employed at other peer or similarly well-regarded institutions, agencies, or industries (faculty or similarly qualified professionals) outside of the University of Arizona; 2) at least one faculty member from the University of Arizona who is not affiliated with the Institute or Center, 3) one member from the University's Research Advisory Council. The Vice President for Research reviews the nominated candidates, appoints the External Review Team and designates one member as Chair.

The external Review Team is required to review the Self-Study Report and conduct a campus visit that includes meetings with relevant administrators, faculty, staff, students, affiliate and advisory members to gain a more thorough understanding of the Institute/Center to conduct their evaluation. Two exit meetings also are required for the Review Team to provide preliminary evaluation of and recommendations for the Institute/Center: one with the Director, members, and designated staff and a second exit interview the Vice President for Research, relevant dean(s) and any other pertinent university administrators. RDI schedules the on-campus review, pays for the travel and honoraria costs of the

external reviewers, develops the charge statement for the Review Team based on input from the cognizant Deans, and establishes the review team meeting schedule framework in coordination with the Institute/Center. The Institute/Center is responsible for providing suitable meeting space and logistical support during the Review Team campus visit.

Within 30 days of the campus visit, the Review Team shall submit the written Evaluation Report. The Evaluation Report should focus on recommendations to strengthen the Institute/Center within existing resources and operating context, as well as suggestions for investment that would have the greatest impact to advance quality and increase research and engagement activities. The Evaluation Report shall include:

- Brief Introduction
- Strengths and Weaknesses
- Recommendations that are specific, concrete, and feasible that can be reasonably implemented within the resources currently in place.
- Other sections at the Review Team's discretion.

Within 30 days of receipt of the Review Team's Evaluation Report, the Institute/Center Director and Vice President for Research shall meet to discuss its recommendations and mutually identify actions and timelines to address them. This should include any anticipated modifications in the type, mission or purpose of the Institute/Center and description of the proposed changes. Based on this discussion, the Institute/Center Director submits to RDI a Review Response that describes the planned actions for the next performance period.

Institute/Center faculty, staff, students, affiliate and advisory members are expected to be actively engaged in all phases of the periodic review process. They are expected to be familiar with the Self-Study Report, participate in the Review Team's campus visit, and actively participate in the development of the Institute/Center response.

## **2. Reauthorization of Institutes/Centers**

Reauthorization may be requested by the Institute/Center Director following either the initial 5-year or ongoing 7-year performance periods. Following completion of the Periodic Review, the Institute/Center Director submits a request for reauthorization to the Vice President for Research that briefly describes:

- Review process
- Summary of external Review Team recommendations
- Institute/Center Review Response
- Requested period of reauthorization (up to 7 years)

Copies of the periodic review supporting documents (reports, itineraries, etc.) should be appended to the reauthorization request.

If the Periodic Review recommends the Institute/Center proceed into the next performance period without significant modifications from the previous authorization period, only a brief review by the Vice President for Research will be necessary. If substantive changes in the type, mission or purpose are requested, a more intensive review will be conducted appropriate to the nature and scope of the

requested changes. For major and fundamental changes to the Institute/Center, the Director may be requested to submit material as described in the *Guidance on Establishment and Modification of Centers and Institutes* which may include review by the Dean's and/or Provost's Council.

The Vice President for Research makes the final determination of reauthorization. RDI is responsible for disseminating this determination, along with corresponding reports, to the Institute/Center Director, Provost, relevant deans and others as appropriate.