



GUIDANCE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW CENTER/INSTITUTE (NON-ACADEMIC UNIT)

At the University of Arizona, non-academic units are established to facilitate research and/or outreach initiatives and are usually called centers (College-level) or institutes (University-wide). These non-academic units do not offer degree programs and generally do not offer courses, but may support the research and outreach activities of an academic unit. The Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) has delegated to the Universities authority to approve the creation, modification, or disestablishment of non-academic units, set forth by the following policy:

ABOR Policy 2-222 C. -- Research Centers or Institutes:

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 non-academic units 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 Centers and Institutes at the University of Arizona to the office of Research, Discovery & Innovation (RDI).

In the special case where the primary goal is to establish a Center/Institute related to an instructional or student affairs purpose put forth by the sponsoring (S)VP, Research, Discovery & Innovation is still responsible for coordinating the creation, modification and disestablishment process. Research, Discovery & Innovation 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 or 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 college or department and as such, include identified members from the faculty of multiple colleges. For these definitional purposes, colleges within University of Arizona Health Sciences are considered to “count” as one, and as such, UI/Cs must include at least sponsoring college beyond the Health Sciences to be considered university-wide.



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 a college, and thus have a budget that is fiscally independent of other academic units. 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, Discovery & Innovation is responsible for ongoing review.

COLLEGE LEVEL CENTER or INSTITUTE: College Centers/Institutes (CCIs) are expected to support excellence in interdisciplinary inquiry and collaboration, at a scale primarily within the scope of the college. For these definitional purposes, colleges within University of Arizona Health Sciences are considered to “count” as one, and as such, even if there is more than one sponsoring Health Sciences college, the center or institute is defined as a CCI.

CCIs may have some specialized infrastructure (e.g., space, facilities, equipment or professional expertise) that typically are contained within a college. CCIs have a separate budget that is fiscally independent of other academic units within the college and is managed under the purview of the college. CCIs are expected to generate sustainable external funding from either extramural sponsors or philanthropic resources in support of its operation. College-level Centers and Institutes report to the cognizant dean(s), who 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 Non-Academic Centers/Institutes under ABOR policy, do not need to engage in the implementation process described below, and are a part of the department’s usual scope of authority, budget, oversight, and review.

II. Process for the Establishment of All Institutes and Centers

Research, Discovery & Innovation (RDI) oversees the process for the creation, modification, review and reauthorization of all Centers and Institutes at the University of Arizona. As such, RDI staff are available for ongoing consultation and assistance, and those interested in establishing a center or institute are recommended to consult with 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 college or university institute or center. The group seeks input from relevant and affected department heads and cognizant Dean(s) and/or Vice President. The Cognizant Administrator(s) (typically college dean or Vice President), singly or collectively, makes an initial affirmative judgement about the necessity of the College-level or University-wide Center/Institute, then formally requests institutional review for establishment by Research, Discovery & Innovation, and lastly submits the completed Implementation Request form to Research, Discovery & Innovation's Center/Institute Coordinator to initiate the process. College-level Center/Institute implementation requests must be accompanied by a letter of support from the College Dean's Office.

Research, Discovery & Innovation performs the initial review for completion, sufficiency, and potential overlap with other extant units, and works with the proposing team and Cognizant Administrator to further hone the Implementation Request, as warranted. Following internal review, the Implementation Request is vetted by Research, Discovery & Innovation with the Dean's Council and Provost's Council. Where possible, the Cognizant Administrator and Center/Institute leadership will be invited to join the review to answer questions or issues. Other offices may be asked to review the Implementation Request (e.g. Office of General Counsel) as warranted.

The Cognizant Administrator shall submit written material addressing any concerns raised by the Dean's or Provost's Councils, or other offices as warranted, which will be considered in the final review by the Vice President for Research. Recommendation for approval of the Center or Institute is submitted by the Vice President for Research to the President, who makes the final determination. Written approval will be conveyed to the Cognizant Administrator by the Vice President for Research, and upon approval, the Center/Institute will be listed on the University of Arizona website. Centers and Institutes 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. Modification of Existing Centers & Institutes

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

IV. Annual Reporting by All Centers and Institutes

Annually, all Institutes and 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 Institutes and Centers are encouraged to utilize input from their external advisory boards in this process where warranted and feasible.



College-level Centers and Institutes. The College Center or Institute Director provides this Annual Report to the Cognizant Administrator, typically the college dean, as well as an updated business plan for the upcoming period. The Cognizant Administrator reviews and discusses this Annual Report and business plan with the Director, finalizes the evaluation, and then approves the action and business plans. The Cognizant Administrator then submits the Annual Report and updated business plan to Research, Discovery & Innovation for recording.

University-wide Institutes and Centers. The University Institute or Center Director provides this Annual Report to the Vice President for Research, as well as an updated business plan for the upcoming period. The Vice President for Research, 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, Discovery & Innovation's Center/Institute Coordinator.

IV. Periodic Review and Reauthorization of All Centers and Institutes

All Centers and Institutes are expected to undergo periodic review prior to request for reauthorization. See "*Guidance for Periodic Review and Reauthorization of Centers and Institutes*" on the [RDI Research Centers and Institutes website](#) for specific information on the processes. Without such explicit review and reauthorization and timely completion of the attendant processes, Centers and Institutes will be suspended and/or disestablished after the term of approval has been completed, the Center or Institute will then 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 RDI Center/Institute Coordinator, Luz Sandoval at 621-1622, lvalenzu@email.arizona.edu.