

University of Ottawa
**Guidelines for the Creation and Operation of Research Centres
and Institutes**

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The University sanctions the designation of “research centre” or “research institute” when the procedures outlined in the present document are followed.

Guidelines for the Creation and Operation of Research Centres and Institutes

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The University of Ottawa is committed to fostering a research environment that respects and values diversity and inclusion and that provides equal opportunities for everyone. As such, the administration and activities of research centres and institutes must also comply with the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion.

1. Designation of Research Centres and Institutes

The University of Ottawa is committed to research excellence and innovation. Research centres and institutes provide valuable platforms for the exchange of ideas among researchers, both within and across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Knowledge creation and transmission in these collaborative environments fuels advances in research and innovation, and provides a common point of focus for researchers and students.

1.1 Research Centre

A research centre is an interdisciplinary unit whose main objective is to foster research excellence through its activities and to support knowledge mobilization activities.

Official designation of a research centre follows review and approval by the faculty or faculties involved, and subsequently by the University's Research Commission.¹ Final approval must be obtained from the Administration Committee.

1.2 Research Institute

A research institute is an interdisciplinary unit whose main objective is to foster research excellence through its activities and to maintain high quality teaching programs at the graduate and/or undergraduate levels.

Official designation of a research institute follows review and approval by the faculty or faculties involved, and subsequently by the University's Research Commission. Final approval must be obtained from the Administration Committee and the Senate.

1.3 Others²

Alternative terms such as "research group," "research program," "research unit" or "research laboratory" may be used to describe a group of investigators who have chosen not to apply for "research centre" or "research institute" designation.

¹ *The Research Commission (RC) is an advisory committee chaired by the Vice-President, Research. Its mandate is to address all major issues affecting research at the University of Ottawa. The RC is composed of the Vice-Deans of Research from all faculties, as well as the Associate Vice-Presidents, Research, the Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and the University Librarian and Vice-Provost (Knowledge Systems).*

² *In special circumstances, an "affiliated centre or institute" may be established with other legal entities external to the University and their mandate defined by the consortium. Such an entity would normally report to an external board. They are therefore under different administrative guidelines.*

2. Creation of a Research Centre or Institute

A proposal for the creation of a research centre or research institute must be submitted to the dean(s) of the faculty or faculties involved and to the Vice-President, Research. If approved by the faculty or faculties involved and subsequently by the University's Research Commission, it will be submitted to the Administration Committee (for a centre and an institute) and Senate (for an institute only) for final approval. During the review process, additional information may be requested.

The proposal must address the points hereunder and further described in the *Instructions for the Creation of a Research Centre or Institute* (Appendix A):

- Name of research centre or institute
- Description and justification
- Governance
- Members (see Appendix B for a list of membership categories)
- Infrastructure and resources
- Budget
- Visibility
- Sunset clause
- Letters of support

3. Appointment of a Research Centre or Institute Director

Following the approval of a centre or institute as per the process described in the previous section, a director can be selected in accordance with the *Instructions for the Selection of a Research Centre or Institute Director* (Appendix C). Generally, the director of a research centre or institute is appointed for a five-year term, which can be renewed for a second five-year term. Cumulative terms cannot exceed 10 years in total.

In brief, the process is as follows:

- Following the advertisement for external candidates (standard procedures for recruitment of faculty members) or internal candidates (job description posted internally), the Associate Vice-President, Research, Promotion and Development (AVPRPD), in consultation with the deans (or their delegates) of faculties that provide financial and/or in-kind support for the research centre or institute, will select the chair and members of the selection committee in accordance with the composition requirements described in Appendix C or as per the standard procedures (external posting).
- The candidates will be asked to submit a curriculum vitae, a statement of research interests in specific areas related to the centre/institute, and a five-page document describing his/her aspiring contributions to the mission of the centre or institute (template to be provided).
- The selection committee will establish the short list and carry out the interviews.
- Additionally, the selection committee will privately seek the opinion of current members³ of the research centre or institute (if it already exists) regarding the potential appointment of the

³ If not already available on its website, the research centre or institute must provide an up-to-date list of its members to the Office of the Vice-President Research. Refer to Appendix B: Membership Categories for a Research Centre or Institute.

selected candidate before recommending a candidate for approval to the Vice-President, Research.

If approved, the Vice-President, Research or delegate will communicate the decision to deans of the relevant faculties and the members of the research centre or institute.

4. Evaluation and Re-appointment of a Research Centre or Institute Director

In the case of an existing centre or institute, the AVPRPD will notify the deans of faculties that provide financial and/or in-kind support for the research centre or institute one year prior to the end of the current director's mandate. The AVPRPD will then approach the research centre or institute's director to determine whether they want to be considered for a new term, and if so, to also discuss the duration of the term itself (total cumulative terms cannot add up to more than 10 years).

If the response is negative, the process for selecting a new director will be implemented in accordance with the *Instructions for the Selection of a Research Centre or Institute Director* (Appendix C). If the response is positive, the AVPRPD will initiate the process as per the *Instructions for the Evaluation and Re-appointment of a Research Centre or Institute Director* (Appendix D).

In brief, the process is as follows:

- The AVPRPD will form an evaluation committee in accordance with the composition requirements described in Appendix D. The AVPRPD will chair this committee. The evaluation committee should complete the evaluation process three months before the end of the director's mandate.
- The AVPRPD will initiate a consultation process with the members⁴ of the centre or institute.
- Simultaneously, the AVPRPD will ask the director to submit a curriculum vitae and a five-page document describing his/her aspiring contributions to the mission of the centre or institute (template to be provided).
- These documents, as well as the comments received from the members of the research centre or institute during the consultation, will be reviewed by the members of the evaluation committee.

If the evaluation is positive, the committee will make a recommendation on the re-appointment of the director. Final approval is required from the Vice-President, Research.

If the evaluation is not positive, a new process for selecting a director will be initiated in accordance with the *Instructions for the Selection of a Research Centre or Institute Director* (Appendix C).

In both cases, the Vice-President, Research or delegate will provide feedback to the director of the research centre or institute.

5. Reporting and Evaluation

5.1 Annual Report

⁴ If not already available on its website, the research centre or institute must provide an up-to-date list of its members to the OVPR. Refer to Appendix B: Membership Categories for a Research Centre or Institute.

The director of the research centre or institute must submit an annual report in the format provided by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and submit a copy to the deans of the participating faculties and to the Office of the Vice-President, Research.

5.2 Expert Evaluation

Generally, the Office of the Vice-President, Research will undertake to evaluate a research centre or institute every 10 years. However, an evaluation of a research centre or institute's previous five years may take place following a request from the dean(s) or the Office of the Vice-President, Research.

The exact nature of the evaluation will be determined by the Office of the Vice-President, Research, in consultation with the deans of the relevant participating faculties. The evaluation will be based on criteria presented in the centre or institute's strategic plans and annual reports (last five years), such as research excellence, productivity, research, quality and added value of training and mentoring, and the support to members in the development of grant applications and for knowledge mobilization activities. The evaluation will also consider the differences between disciplines and may include interviews with the director and selected members. These interviews may be conducted by external experts. The evaluation report will be presented to the Research Commission.

A formal evaluation is not required to close a research centre or institute.

Appendix A. Instructions for the Creation of a Research Centre or Institute

1. Name of Research Centre or Institute

Provide the name of the research centre or institute in both English and French. These names must be reviewed and approved by the University of Ottawa's Language Services.

2. Description and Justification

Describe the objectives of the research centre or institute and explain how they are aligned with the University's Strategic Areas of Development in Research, as well as with the faculty's or faculties' strategic research plan(s). Identify the scope of planned activities for the first five-year period (i.e. research clusters, visiting scholars, graduate training, knowledge mobilization strategies and teaching programs, where appropriate), as well as the anticipated impacts. Describe how researchers, the University and the community will benefit from the creation of such a research centre or institute.

3. Governance

Describe the governance structure and function, as well as the operational plan and roles of the proposed committees, including external advisory committees, if relevant. It is strongly recommended that an organizational chart be included.

Following the approval of the research centre or institute, the process to select the director of the research centre or institute will be initiated in accordance with the *Instructions for the Selection of a Research Centre or Institute Director* (Appendix C).

4. Members

Provide a description of the research centre or institute membership categories, including a list of core founding faculty members, their areas of expertise and a brief description of how they will engage in interdisciplinary research. Inclusion of member CVs is not required. See Appendix B for examples of membership categories.

5. Infrastructure and Resources

Provide an inventory of current infrastructure and resources. Include a list of future requirements for the research centre or institute. In addition, provide a plan for obtaining said resources (e.g. space, administrative support, teaching relief).

Obtain and include signed letters of support (see section 9).

6. Budget

Provide a detailed budget covering the first five years of operation, specifying anticipated expenditures and revenues from all sources, including fundraising, donations, in-kind contributions, etc. When possible, research centres or institutes should demonstrate an effort to become financially independent.

7. Visibility

Research centres and institutes benefit both the University of Ottawa and its members, given that they play an important role in enhancing the University's research excellence and reputation, both nationally and internationally. Therefore, the proposal should include a plan for the purpose of creating visibility for the research centre or institute.

All web pages, communications, promotional materials and branding must comply with University of Ottawa standards. Please consult the University's policies and guidelines on bilingualism and branding.

8. Sunset Clause

Research centres and institutes may be closed for reasons such as fiscal constraints or performance issues. To this end, the application for creation must include a protocol for the closure of the research centre or institute, which must in turn include plans related to human resources and instructions for the consignment of furniture, research equipment and anything else held by the research centre or institute.

9. Letters of Support

Include letters signed by the deans of the participating faculties, indicating their support for, and approval of, the creation of the research centre or institute. Also include letters from external stakeholders, such as partners and potential sponsors.

Appendix B. Membership Categories for a Research Centre or Institute

The Office of the Vice-President, Research recognizes multiple membership categories within the research centres and institutes. See the non-exhaustive list below.

1. Principal Researchers

- Holds a regular faculty appointment at the University of Ottawa.
- Is a principal or co-investigator on at least one research grant related to the thematic priorities of the research centre or institute.
- Authors or co-authors academic research papers in an area of relevance to the research centre or institute, the number of which may vary by the research discipline.
- Makes a minimum of one presentation each year (e.g. conference, symposium, seminar) in an area of relevance to the research centre or institute.
- Contributes to the training of highly qualified colleagues, students and postdocs by teaching, supervising and mentoring.
- Actively participates in the research centre or institute's activities, such as knowledge mobilization.

2. Affiliated Researcher

- Holds a regular or adjunct faculty appointment at a university in Canada or abroad.
- Is a co-investigator or active collaborator on a research project within the research centre or institute.
- Actively participates in the research centre or institute's activities, such as knowledge mobilization.

3. Visiting Researcher

- Holds a visiting faculty appointment.
- Is a principal, co-investigator or active collaborator on at least one research grant related to the thematic priorities of the research centre or institute.
- Authors or co-authors at least one academic research paper annually in an area of relevance to the research centre or institute, the number of which may vary by the research discipline.
- Makes a minimum of one presentation (e.g. conference, symposium, seminar) during the period of appointment in an area of relevance to the research centre or institute.
- Actively participates in the research centre or institute's activities, such as knowledge mobilization.

4. Postdoctoral Fellow

- Is a postgraduate researcher supervised by a principal researcher of the research centre or institute.
- Actively participates in the research centre or institute's activities, such as knowledge mobilization.

5. Student (Undergraduate, Graduate)

- Is a student at the undergraduate or graduate level supervised by the principal researchers of the research centre or institute.
- Actively participates in some of the research centre or institute's activities, such as knowledge mobilization.

6. Support Staff

- Is an employee at the University of Ottawa (regular or contractual).
- Supports the activities of the centre/institute, either in his/her capacity as research staff (e.g. research associate, research assistant, technician) or as other staff (e.g. administrative assistant, communication officer).

7. Other Partners

- Is not a member of the research community but participates in the activities of the research centre or institute.

Appendix C. Instructions for the Selection of a Research Centre or Institute Director

1. The Selection Committee

The Associate Vice-President, Research, Promotion and Development (AVPRPD), in consultation with the deans (or their delegates) of faculties that provide financial and/or in-kind support for the research centre or institute, will select the chair and members of the selection committee in accordance with the composition requirements set out below. The AVPRPD will ensure that the committee's membership complies with University policies on equity, diversity and inclusion and bilingualism.

2. Composition of the Selection Committee

At a minimum, the selection committee must comprise the following members:

- Two regular, full-time professors, affiliated with the research centre or institute, at least one of whom is tenured
- One external member, i.e. a professor from another faculty not affiliated with the research centre or institute
- A dean of a faculty (or his/her delegate) that provides financial and/or in-kind support for the research centre or institute
- One representative of the Office of the Vice-President, Research, unless the chair is from that office

3. Selection Process

- The selection committee will seek candidates using the most appropriate means by disseminating information related to the vacant post internally (and externally as required).
- The candidates will be asked to submit a curriculum vitae, a statement of research interests in specific areas related to the centre/institute, and a five-page document describing his/her aspiring contributions to the mission of the centre or institute (template to be provided). In the case of recruitment of external candidates, the standard process must also be followed.
- The selection committee will establish a short list of no fewer than two candidates unless the committee determines that there is only one suitable candidate.
- Candidates will be selected on the basis of a combination of qualifications, which include but are not limited to:
 - A highly respected academic reputation, of national or international scope, in a field of research that is critical to the core activities of the research centre or institute
 - Proven wide-ranging leadership skills, including communication, management and administrative skills, in conjunction with an ability to address the challenges of unifying a diverse group of researchers
 - Proven ability to raise funds and experience applying for major grants
 - Established record of multi-sectoral training and mentoring
 - Ability to develop and implement a vision and a strategic plan for the research centre or institute

- Asset: Experience in managing groups of comparable size
- The selection committee will only interview shortlisted candidates.

4. Consultation

Following the interviews, the selection committee will privately seek the opinion of current members⁵ of the research centre or institute (if it already exists) on the potential appointment of the selected candidate.

A non-response from members of the research centre or institute will be interpreted as an endorsement of the selection of the director.

5. Recommendation

The selection committee will recommend a candidate for approval by the Vice-President, Research.

6. Approval and Appointment

Once the recommendation has been approved by the Vice-President, Research or delegate, the decision will be communicated to all members of the research centre or institute as well as to the relevant deans of faculties that provide financial and/or in-kind support for the research centre or institute.

⁵ *If not already available on its website, the research centre or institute must provide an up-to-date list of its members to the OVPR. Refer to Appendix B: Membership Categories for a Research Centre or Institute.*

Appendix D. Instructions for the Evaluation and Re-appointment of a Research Centre or Institute Director

1. Timeline

The Associate Vice-President, Research, Promotion and Development (AVPRPD) will notify the deans of faculties that provide financial and/or in-kind support for the research centre or institute one year prior to the end of the current director's mandate.

The AVPRPD will then approach the research centre or institute's director to determine whether they want to be considered for a new term, and if so, to also discuss the duration of the term itself (total cumulative terms cannot add up to more than 10 years).

If the response is negative, the process for selecting a new director will be implemented in accordance with the *Instructions for the Selection of a Research Centre or Institute Director* (Appendix C).

If the response is positive, the AVPRPD will initiate a consultation process with the members⁶ of the research centre or institute. Simultaneously, the AVPRPD will ask the director to submit a *curriculum vitae* and a five-page document describing his/her aspiring contributions to the mission of the centre or institute (template to be provided).

2. Evaluation Committee

The AVPRPD will form an evaluation committee composed of:

- the deans (or their delegates) of the relevant faculties that provide financial and/or in-kind support for the research centre or institute
- a dean of a faculty that does not provide financial and/or in-kind support for the research centre or institute
- one member of the research centre or institute to be elected by the membership to represent them

The AVPRPD will chair the evaluation committee. The committee will review the documents provided by the director, as well as the comments received from the members of the research centre or institute during the consultation. The committee should complete the evaluation process three months before the end of the director's mandate.

3. Decision

If the evaluation is positive, the committee will make a recommendation on the re-appointment of the director. Final approval is required from the Vice-President, Research. If the evaluation is not positive, a new process for selecting a director will be initiated in accordance with the *Instructions for the Selection of the Director of a Research Centre or Institute* (Appendix C).

In both cases, the Vice-President, Research or delegate will provide feedback to the director of the research centre or institute.

⁶ If not already available on its website, the research centre or institute must provide an up-to-date list of its members to the OVPR. Refer to Appendix B: Membership Categories for a Research Centre or Institute.