



Guidelines for the Operation of Research Centres and Institutes

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

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

The University of Ottawa is committed to fostering a research environment that respects and values diversity and inclusion and provides equal opportunity for everyone. The governance, membership and activities of research centres and institutes should be geared towards the principle of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

1. Official 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 fuel advances in research and innovation and rally researchers and students around a common goal.

The Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (OVPRI) oversees research centres and institutes that have received official institutional designation, according to the guidelines outlined in this document.¹ They receive annual funding from the OVPRI for their operating costs. This funding is conditional on a satisfactory report that must be submitted once every two years to the OVPRI.

1.1 Research centre

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

The official designation of a research centre must first be approved by the faculty or faculties involved, and then by the University’s Research Commission.² The OVPRI is responsible for final approval.

¹ We recommend that research centres and institutes that were created before the implementation of these new guidelines align their management structure with them.

² The Research Commission (RC) is an advisory committee chaired by the vice-president, research and innovation. Its mandate is to address all major issues related to 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 (or the vice-provost’s delegate), and the University librarian and vice-provost (knowledge systems).

1.2 Research institute

A **research institute** is an **interdisciplinary, multi-faculty unit** whose main purpose is to foster research excellence through its activities and to support knowledge mobilization activities, while engaging in educational activities (e.g., development and implementation of interdisciplinary study programs, professional development programs, internship opportunities, mini-courses).

The official designation of a research institute must first be approved by the faculty or faculties involved, and subsequently by the University's Research Commission. The OVPRI is responsible for final approval.

2. Creation of a research centre or institute³

Through a call for expression of interest, the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (OVPRI), invites **interdisciplinary, multi-faculty teams** of researchers to submit a letter of intent if they wish to establish a research centre or institute as designated by the University, and to receive annual OVPRI funding.

The letter of intent must be submitted to the deans of the concerned faculties and to the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (OVPRI). If the letter is approved by the participating faculties and then by members of the Research Commission, the research team is invited to submit a full application. Please note that the OVPRI is responsible for final approval of the creation of research centres and institutes.

The letter of intent and the full application must include the information detailed in the document entitled *Call for expression of interest - Creation of New Research Centres and Institutes*.

3. Appointment of a research centre or institute director (Appendix A)

The selection of a director of a research centre or institute is made as per the *Instructions for the Selection of a Research Centre or Institute Director* (Appendix A). Generally, the director of a research centre or institute is appointed for a five-year term and can be reappointed for a second five-year term. Cumulative terms cannot exceed 10 years in total.

4. Reappointment of a research centre or institute director (Appendix B)

For an existing centre or institute, the associate vice-president, research promotion and development, (AVPRPD) notifies the deans of faculties prior to the end of the current director's term. The AVPRPD then approaches the research centre or institute's director to determine whether the latter wants to be considered for a new term.

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

³ See *Call for expression of interest - Creation of New Research Centres and Institutes*.

the response is **positive**, the AVPRPD initiates the process, in accordance with the *Instructions for the Re-appointment of a Research Centre or Institute Director* (Appendix B).

5. Reporting, evaluation and closing guidelines

5.1 Activity report

The director of the research centre or institute must submit an activity report once every two years in the format provided by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (OVPRI). The OVPRI notifies directors of the deadline for the submission of the activity report.

5.2 Evaluation of a centre or an institute

A center or institute may be subject to an external evaluation at the request of the deans or the OVPRI, regardless of the number of years it has existed. The evaluation process is determined by the OVPRI in collaboration with the deans of the participating faculties. The evaluation is based in particular on the strategic plans and centres' and institutes' activity reports.

5.3 Guidelines for closing a centre or an institute

A closure process can be initiated by the OVPRI when a research centre or institute no longer aligns with the strategic research priorities of the University or when the activity reports of the centre or institute no longer meet the excellence criteria: research excellence (innovation), interdisciplinarity, development of partnerships and grant applications for large-scale projects, training and mentoring quality and added value, and organization of knowledge mobilization activities. In some cases, the closure process may be preceded by an external evaluation.

Appendix A. Instructions for the appointment of a research centre or institute director

1. Candidates solicitation and appointment of selection committee members

Following the solicitation of internal⁴ candidates, the associate vice-president, research promotion and development (AVPRPD) designates the members of the selection committee in accordance with the guidelines below. The AVPRPD must ensure that the composition of the selection committee respects the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and complies with the University's guidelines in this area.

2. Selection committee composition

The AVPRPD must form a selection committee composed of:

- One vice-dean research of a faculty that provides financial or in-kind support for the research centre or institute.
- One vice-dean research of a faculty that does not provide financial or in-kind support for the research centre or institute.
- One member (uOttawa regular professor) of the research centre or institute nominated by the professor's peers.

The AVPRPD chairs the evaluation committee. The committee reviews the documents provided by the director as well as the comments received from the members of the research centre or institute during the consultation.

3. Selection process

- Candidates⁵ must submit a curriculum vitae, a statement of research interests in specific areas related to the centre or institute and a document describing their goals and contributions to the mission of the centre or institute.
- The selection committee shortlists least two candidates, unless it determines that there is only one suitable candidate.
- Candidates are selected based on a combination of qualifications, such as:
 - A strong national or international academic reputation in a field of research critical to the core activities of the research centre or institute
 - Proven wide-ranging leadership skills, including communication, management, and administrative skills, with the ability to lead a diverse group of researchers working as a team
 - Demonstrated experience in applying for major grants
 - An established record of multi-sectoral training and mentoring

⁴ The OVPRI must use appropriate means to search for candidates, including internal distribution of information relating to the vacant position.

⁵ Only candidates occupying a regular professor position (associate or full professor) are eligible.

- Ability to develop and implement a vision and strategic plan for the research centre or institute
- Experience in managing groups of comparable size (an asset)
- The selection committee may interview shortlisted candidates if the members wish to do so.

4. Consultation

Following the selection of the candidate, the AVPRPD seeks the opinion of current members⁶ of the research centre or institute in confidence regarding the candidate's potential appointment.

5. Recommendation

The selection committee recommends a candidate for the position of director of the centre or institute. The recommendation must be approved by the vice-president, research and innovation (VPRI).

Once the recommendation has been approved, the VPRI or the latter's delegate conveys the decision to all members of the research centre or institute as well as with the relevant deans of faculties that provide financial or in-kind support for the research centre or institute.

⁶ An updated list of the research centre or institute members (uOttawa regular professors) must be provided to the OVPRI.

Appendix B. Instructions for the re-appointment of a research centre or institute director

1. Expression of interest in a second term

The associate vice-president, research, promotion and development (AVPRPD) must notify the deans of faculties that provide financial and/or in-kind support for the research centre or institute prior to the end of the current director's term. The AVPRPD then approaches the research centre or institute's director to determine whether the latter wants to be considered for a second term.

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

If the response is **positive**, the AVPRPD initiates a confidential consultation process with the members⁷ of the research centre or institute.

2. Recommendation

Following the consultation, the VRAPDR will issue a recommendation on the reappointment of the current director. If the recommendation is positive and is approved by the vice-president, research and innovation, the OVPRI conveys the decision to all members of the research centre or institute, as well as to the deans whose faculties provide funding or in-kind support.

If the recommendation is negative, a new process for selecting a director is initiated, in accordance with the *Instructions for the Selection of the Director of a Research Centre or Institute* (Appendix A).

⁷ An updated list of research centre or institute members (uOttawa regular professors) must be provided to the OVPRI.