

## Policy on Senate Approved Research Centres & Research Institutes

<b>Department:</b>	Office of Research Services
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### 1.0 Purpose

This policy applies to all Research Centres and Institutes at Laurentian University. Its purpose is to define Research Centres and Institutes and to set out the procedures and criteria for their creation, governance, reporting, review and closure.

### 2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy will apply to all existing Research Centres and/or Research Institutes at Laurentian University.
- 2.2 This policy will apply to any person or group wanting to establish a Research Centre and/or Research Institute at Laurentian University.

### 3.0 Definitions

#### 3.1 Research Centres and Institutes

The terms “Centre” and “Institute” are used interchangeably in this policy. Centres and Institutes at Laurentian University report and are accountable to the Vice-President, Research (VPR) and are subject to all applicable University policies, procedures and guidelines.

Research Centres and Institutes facilitate collaborative research endeavours in an interdisciplinary area or areas of specialization within a particular discipline. They are neither intended to reflect the work of a single faculty member or research lab, nor be tied to the life of a single project or funding initiative. At the time of a Centre/Institute’s founding, and during its existence, it must have a minimum of three (3) full-time

Laurentian University faculty (i.e. tenured; tenure-track) as members. They may also involve significant research participation from other universities, governments, non-profit organizations or industry.

Research Centres/Institutes must have a governance and administrative structure, a Director and a budget. In some cases, Research Centres/Institutes may be assigned space on campus.

Research Centres/Institutes play an important role in training students and highly qualified personnel. Though a Centre/Institute may support the University's academic mission, academic programs are not typically housed in a Centre/Institute.

Only those collaborative research entities that have been approved by the Senate on the recommendation of the Research, Development and Creativity Council (RDCC) may use the designation "Research Centre" or "Research Institute".

### **3.2 Research Groups**

Consisting of a number of faculty members informally organized around shared research objectives, research groups do not require an organizational structure, dedicated physical space on campus, or funding. They are not formally recognized by the Senate.

Research Groups can form, grow, and dissolve as required but can also exist for a longer time period. They can be scaled up into Centres/Institutes (in accordance with the approval process outlined in this Policy), and Centres/Institutes can also be scaled down into Research Groups. A Research Group may choose to inform the Research Development and Creativity Council of their existence; however, a formal approval process is not required to form a Research Group.

## **4.0 Criteria for the Establishment of a Research Centre or Research Institute**

### **4.1 Criteria**

In addition to the criteria defined in Section 3.1, the Centre/Institute must also meet the following criteria:

- The proposed research must clearly enhance or challenge the current body of knowledge in the proposed area(s) of inquiry or, if applicable, break new ground.
- It must benefit the University's research mission beyond that which would accrue from individual or informal activities organized within existing University structures.
- Has a critical mass of Laurentian faculty involved as members: a minimum of three full-time faculty members.
- Fosters the training of highly qualified people, respecting leading principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in training

- Has clearly identified objectives and functions at its establishment and during its review.
- Be financially self-sufficient and sustainable in the long-term; the sources of funding outlined in the proposal must be sufficient for at least the first five years of operation.

The RDCC will also take into account the proposed governance structure, the degree of financial support and/or financial risk involved in the entity's start-up, and the projected ongoing costs.

Normally, two Research Centres/Institutes covering the same area would not be established or retained.

#### **4.2 Procedures for the Establishment of a Research Centre or Institute**

In order to establish a Research Centre or Research Institute the following actions are required:

- The lead applicant(s) shall submit the proposal to create a Research Centre/Institute, in accordance with the requirements set out in *Appendix A*, to the VPR.
- The VPR will share the proposal for review with the RDCC and the Dean(s) of the proposed participating members.
- The Dean(s) will share their recommendations with the VPR and RDCC within 8 weeks of receipt of the proposal application.
- Members of the RDCC will review the proposal and take into consideration any comments from the Dean(s).
- If the RDCC approves the proposal to create the new Research Centre/Institute, a recommendation to approve the creation of the Research Centre/Institute will be forwarded to the Senate.
- The Senate will consider the proposal and recommendation from the RDCC. The Senate will vote to approve or reject the proposal to establish the Research Centre or Research Institute
- Research Centres/Institutes are established for a term of five (5) years starting at the date of Senate approval.

### **5.0 Governance**

Research Centres/Institutes must have a governance plan which will typically include:

- Institutes/Centres are led by a Director, who is normally appointed for a 3 to 5-year term.

- The Director is accountable to the VPR, in all aspects related to the Institute/Centre and its function, including appeals for funds, negotiations concerning contract research, and grants from funding organizations.
- It is the responsibility of the Director to ensure that the activities of the Research Institute/Centre are in line with Laurentian University Policies and Procedures.
- The Director must hold a tenured-track or tenured appointment at Laurentian University; exceptions can be considered upon approval by the VPR.
- In the event that a Director leaves their position, the Centre/Institute must inform the VPR, and if there are budgets associated with the Centre/Institute, Financial Services. If a suitable Director cannot be found, the VPR will act as an Interim Director, for up to a year. If a replacement cannot be found within this time period, the Centre/Institute should begin to follow the steps outlined below in Section 10.0 Closure of a Research Centre or Institute.
- The Centre/Institute's governing body is expected to meet a minimum of once per year. A copy of the minutes from these meetings are to be attached to the annual report.
- The management of contracts, agreements and grants is handled by the Office of Research Services. Research contracts or agreements are signed on behalf of Laurentian University by the Vice-President, Research (or their delegate). Directors of Research Centres and Institutes are not authorized to sign a research agreement or contract on behalf of the University. Laurentian University is the legally binding authority for all research collaborations and therefore bound to all obligations outlined in a research agreement, including the management of research funds on behalf of the Research Centre or Institute.
- Research Centres/Institutes are expected to have a governance document that details, at a minimum, the following (see Appendix A for further details):
  - Mandate and objectives
  - Membership criteria (process to confirm members)
  - Administrative structure

## **6.0 Financial Operation**

Research Centres/Institutes will be responsible for obtaining sufficient revenue from grants, contracts, or other means to offset its direct costs of operation. Under no circumstances is a research entity to incur debt or operate a deficit.

## **7.0 Annual Reports**

All Research Centres/Institutes are required to submit an annual report due no later than June 30 (or the next business day if June 30 falls on a weekend or a holiday) to the RDCC. The annual report must include the information set out in the *Annual Report Template* in Appendix B.

Failure to submit an annual report within 60 days of the due date will trigger a meeting with the VPR and Dean(s) and may result in a formal review by the RDCC which could lead to the Centre/Institute's Senate approved status being revoked.

If there have been significant changes to the objectives, administration, operation, and/or funding of the Research Centre/Institute, the Director is required to highlight this in the annual report; minor modifications, as well as a name-change request, can also be included in the annual report. If the VPR or RDCC view the change(s) as substantial, a formal review may be required in accordance with Section 9.0 of this Policy.

### **8.0 Five-Year Review**

Each Research Centre/Institute will undergo a thorough review at the end of each five-year term.

The Director will be notified of the review a minimum of 6 months before the review. The information to be provided by the Centre/Institute is detailed in the *Review Template* in Appendix C. The review will examine the entity's operations, accomplishments, success, membership, finances and plans for future research.

The review team will consist of the respective Dean(s), the VPR and the RDCC. In some cases, one or two outside assessors knowledgeable in the field may also be requested by the review team.

Following the review, the review team will recommend one of the following actions to the Senate: 1) renewal with review in 5 years, 2) renewal with review in 1, 2 or 3 years or 3) closure (see Section 10.0 Closure of a Research Centre or Institute).

### **9.0 Off-Cycle Review**

It is envisaged that there could be a number of scenarios that could arise that would result in the VPR or RDCC recommending the review of a Research Centre/Institute before the scheduled 5-year renewal period. For example:

- Upon establishment of a new Research Centre/Institute the RDCC may recommend the first review occur at the 3-year mark (and not 5-year);
- If there are significant changes to the objectives, administration, operation, and/or funding of the Research Centre/Institute;
- If the RDCC requests a shorter review period after the last renewal.

### **10.0 Closure of a Research Centre or Institute**

Closure of a Research Centre/Institute may occur in the following circumstances:

- A majority of the Research Centre/Institute's members conclude that the research goals have been met and that no further research is planned.
- Following the Centre/Institute's review, it is not recommended for renewal.
- A suitable Director cannot be found.
- Annual reports are not submitted two years in a row.
- If they do not undergo a five-year review.

If closure is recommended, the Centre/Institute will have 90 days to submit an appeal to the review team before the recommendation is confirmed with the Senate. The Centre/Institute will have at least six (6) months to conclude their affairs, or reconstitute their activities as a Research Group (or other) from the date that the Senate confirms that the entity can no longer operate with the title "Senate Approved Research Centre/Institute".

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Proposal Template to Open a Research Centre or Research Institute**

The following sections must be included when submitting a proposal to the Vice-President, Research to request approval to establish a Research Centre or Research Institute:

1. Purpose
  - a. Indicate the proposed name.
  - b. Specify the mandate and primary objectives.
  - c. Provide a rationale and justification for opening the proposed Centre/Institute.
  - d. Describe the proposed research, outreach, training and knowledge mobilization activities.
  - e. Define the scope of proposed activities.
  - f. Explain how the Centre/Institute will benefit the University, its mission and strategic priorities.
2. Budget
  - a. Provide a detailed overall budget of the expected expenses for the first five years, accompanied with a budget justification, breaking down each year.
  - b. List actual and potential external financial resources.
  - c. If internal resources are requested, approval from the required signing authority should be provided (e.g., request for course releases, graduate teaching assistance).
  - d. If alternative faculty workload arrangements are requested, the details must be provided along with the source of funding to support the proposed relief from teaching duties.
  - e. Explain how the Centre/Institute will sustain itself financially.
3. Commitments

Detail the anticipated needs for the following:

  - a. Facilities: type, size, location and need (if new space is required this needs to be articulated)
  - b. Administrative support: library, computing, communications, finance or other University services
4. Membership
  - a. Describe the appointment criteria and process and categories/ranks for members.
  - b. Provide a list of founding members (including CVs), and of Schools and Faculties involved.

5. External Involvement
  - a. List researchers from other universities, industry partners, other organizations involved (specify if confirmed or potential).
  - b. Explain how their involvement will benefit the Centre/Institute.
  - c. Provide copies of draft agreements, MOUs, etc. (if relevant).
6. Governance
  - a. Describe the Director's responsibilities, selection and evaluation.
  - b. Outline the Centre/Institute's organizational structure, decision-making process, voting rights and other roles and responsibilities.
  - c. Provide a copy of the proposed bylaws for the Centre/Institute (if available).
7. Training of students and HQP
  - a. Describe the Centre/Institute's vision for their involvement and the planned training opportunities.
  - b. Explain how the training plan for students and HQP will incorporate [equity, diversity and inclusion best practices](#).
8. Letters of support
  - a. Include any letter of supports from Deans and external partners (if applicable).
9. Indicate potential for commercialization of research opportunities (consult the University's Commercialization Mandate Framework Policy).
10. Include a statement recognizing the obligation to conduct its activities in accordance with University policies and procedures, including the [Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research](#).



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Annual Report Template**

The following sections must be included when submitting an annual report to the Vice-President, Research. If this information is included in an annual report that a Centre/Institute produces for its members and the general public, that annual report document can be submitted instead; however, a cover letter that provides the page numbers (or sections) that contain the required information below must also be submitted.

1. Executive summary (this will be shared with the Senate).
2. List of members, including categories/ranks.
3. Work undertaken – research activities, projects, outcomes, publications, partnerships, grant applications, outreach, workshops, conferences, communications, etc.
4. Involvement of students and HQP.
5. Report on finances and other resources, including space, personnel, infrastructure, external funding, etc.
6. Budget update, including summary of expenses and income for the year, projections for next year, new funding initiatives.
7. High-level summary of initiatives planned for the next year.
8. Copy of the minutes from the governance meetings that took place during the year.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **5-Year Review Template**

The following sections must be included when submitting a 5-year review to the Vice-President, Research:

1. A progress report: how it has achieved or revised the original objectives, list of accomplishments, how it serves the overall University mission and the broader community, province, region, country, etc.
2. An updated membership list, including categories/ranks.
3. Relevant statistics – research outputs and bibliometrics, research funding received, student trainees, etc.
4. A 5-year financial plan identifying continued financial commitments and expenditures and potential source(s) of revenue.
5. A 5-year plan which should identify future research directions and objectives, outreach activities, development strategies and student and HQP training goals.
6. Letters indicating continued support for the Research Centre/Institute from relevant stakeholders and where resources are provided.
7. Names of persons who could provide internal or external assessments.