

Organizational Unit Membership Criteria

Council of University Centers, Institutes, Museums and Laboratories Planning Group
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Unit Definitions

Center: A Center provides an organizational base for research and scholarly activity in a given academic area or closely related areas. It often provides a vehicle for interdisciplinary research in a given area involving more than one department, college, school, or other administrative structures.

The “Center” structure may facilitate efforts of the department, college, school or university to obtain extramural funding in specific areas. It serves as a formalized link between the academic community and the professional community in the area(s) of focus. A Center, however, is *not* an autonomous structure within the internal statutory organization of a department, college, school or university and the center director most commonly reports to a dean or department head. A Center is not involved in the independent offering of credit course or degree programs.

Institute: An Institute shares the Center’s focus on research and scholarly activity, provision of opportunity for interdisciplinary activity, value in facilitating efforts to obtain extramural funding, and service as a link between the academic and professional communities.

However, the Institute is a far more *formalized* structure and may be equivalent to an *autonomous* unit within the internal structure of the university such as a division, school or college and commonly reports through the institute director directly to the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies. An Institute is not involved in the independent offering of credit course or degree programs.

Museum/Gallery: A unit devoted to the procurement, care, study, and display of objects of lasting interest or value. Organized on a permanent basis essentially for educational or aesthetic purposes and which, using a professional staff, owns or uses tangible objects, whether animate or inanimate; cares for these objects; and exhibits them to the public on a regular basis either free or at a nominal charge.

Laboratory: A physical location providing opportunity for experimentation, observation, or practice in a field of study. Any designated space, such as a building or part of a building used, or intended to be used for experimental study or for testing and analysis, but not primarily for instruction.

Establishment of a Research Unit

Research units are formed to facilitate the development and growth of activity in a specific area and to attain specific objectives. Attainment of such objectives typically requires a multidisciplinary approach involving more than one department, college, school, or other administrative structures. In the academic setting, research unit objectives must include research as a primary part of its activities. It may also include

instruction or service or any combination of these activities. Attainment of these objectives is intended to serve university, local, state, national or international needs.

Establishment of institutes and centers derives from opportunity and need, often funded largely from extramural sources and staffed by individuals with mutual interests from several disciplines. Because of this funding and staffing pattern, it is essential that a research unit be accommodated within the existing university structure so that it complements institutional missions.

Procedures for the Establishment of a Research Unit

All units using the terminology “Center”, “Institute”, “Museum or Gallery”, or “Laboratory” in their name must be approved by the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies.

In order to establish a research unit the procedures outlined below must be followed.

1. **Need:** A clearly identified need must be shown with evidence that the proposed unit and not an existing organizational unit will serve the stated need. In most cases, each research unit should have research as its primary mission and may also include instruction or service or any combination of these activities.
2. **Personnel:** Provide a list of the individuals which will make up the proposed unit, defining their role within the unit, their expertise to carry out that role, and the permission from the appropriate administrators to participate in the proposed unit. An organizational chart identifying the proposed unit director and a justification of why that person was chosen for the position.

Once the unit has received institutional approval from the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, the director must be approved for that position via the normal procedures set for administrative positions.

3. **Funding:** Provide a description of how the unit will be funded. Be sure to show appropriate support documentation that funding sources are available. If no funds will be used initially, describe what efforts will be undertaken to find support of this proposed unit in the future.
4. **Approval:** Letters of support for the proposed unit must be obtained from the appropriate administrators and participants involved. For example, if the unit is to be organized under a specific department, the chairperson and dean of that school must send letters of support and approval, if the unit is to be organized directly under a dean his/her approval is needed. Once the proposed plan for the development of the unit is approved by the Council of University Centers, Institutes, Museums and Laboratories, it is submitted to the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies.