

**PROCEDURE FOR POLICY 7.9 – Establishment, Governance and Review
of Research Institutes, Centres and Groups**

Governing Policy:	Policy 7.9 – Establishment, Governance and Review of Research Institutes, Centres and Groups
Subsections:	Research Institutes; Research Centres; Research Groups
Responsible Officer:	Vice-President (Research)
Responsible Office:	Office of the Vice-President (Research)
Effective Date:	June 6, 2025
Supersedes:	October 19, 2020

A. RESEARCH INSTITUTES

1. Proposal to Establish a New Institute

Proposals to establish Research Institutes are submitted to the Vice-President (Research) (VPR) and will be reviewed by the Committee on Research Institutes (CRI). The proposal should include the section enumerated below with respect to definition and scope, membership, governance, and resources. Additional resources and guidelines are available at uwo.ca/research.

DEFINITION & SCOPE

- a) Proposed name and term (start and end date - normally does not exceed five years).
- b) Priority research areas / themes (e.g., grand/complex research challenges).
- c) Rationale and justification.
- d) Primary objectives and functions to support interdisciplinary research and scholarship.

N.B. Please include details about the level of involvement of undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral scholars in institute activities and provide documentation regarding consultation with/support of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and the Faculties/Departments/Schools involved.

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- e) List of partnering or affiliated Faculties/Departments/Schools, Western core research facilities/research centres/research groups, and external institutions/organizations directly involved.

N.B. Append documentation indicating support for the proposal for each partner or affiliate when appropriate.

- f) Expected contributions to the core strategic interests of the University with details about the alignment to Western, Western Research, and partner Faculty's Strategic Plans.
- g) Key performance indicators of national and international impact and excellence.

N.B. The final selection of reporting requirements is at the discretion of the VPR.

MEMBERSHIP

- h) Overview of the breadth of engagement across disciplines, faculties, and external partners.
- i) Description of membership period of tenure, categories, criteria, fees (if any), and benefit eligibility.
- j) Append a list of member names, institutional affiliation, and qualifications/area of expertise.

GOVERNANCE

- k) Description of the proposed governance structure including reporting lines and terms of reference (i.e., specify mandate, composition, meeting frequency) at minimum for the director, research advisory committee and governing board.
- l) List of governance structure members including names, institutional affiliations, qualifications, and responsibilities.
- m) Level of participation of external institutions/organizations in governance, if any, and/or administration of the institute.

N.B. Provide evidence that necessary agreements between the University and the external institution have been approved by the VPR and attach copy of agreement or proposed agreement).

RESOURCES

- n) Space requirements at Western: (i) at start-up; (ii) within 3 years; (iii) within 5 years.
- o) Space requirements at other institutions or locations as appropriate.

N.B. Please provide documentation of any arrangements in place to secure such space.

- p) Requirements for administrative, and/or technical personnel support from the University including role title and description, supervisor's title within the Institute, and source of compensation.

N.B. For employees of external institutions/organizations, please provide copies of agreements or draft agreements outlining the obligations of the University and the institution/organization, respectively, vis-à-vis such employees.

- q) Provide a five-year budget plan outlining funds required for core operations and for supplemental programmatic activities.
 - i. Include a detailed budget justification listing secured and unsecured funds with letters of support outlining in-kind and cash contributions and/or copy of agreements with external institutions/organizations.
 - ii. Include a summary of funding sources such as prospective external grant support, prospective fundraising, "in-kind" support requested from University units or external sources at startup and for the first three years of operation.

2. Institute Reporting

Annual reporting by Institute directors is at the discretion of the VPR. Annual reports typically provide an update on progress related to the primary objectives and functions of the institute with a description of short-term future plans that advance the core strategic interests of the University. Additional resources and guidelines are available at uwo.ca/research.

3. Institute Modifications, Review, Extensions, and Review Outcomes

MODIFICATIONS

Institute directors must inform the VPR of any major changes to priority research areas/ themes, objectives/functions, administration/governance, and/or resources of an Institute as they arise during the active term of an Institute.

REVIEW

Three months in advance of the end of the term of an Institute, the VPR will inform the Institute governing board and the University Research Board (URB) about the status of the Institute. The VPR is responsible for defining and organizing the review process in consultation with the Institute director. Typically, the review process begins at least 12 months prior to the end of term. In general, the review should consider Institute activity and impact, assess the director's performance, and make recommendations regarding next steps.

- a) The VPR will organize a site visit for the External Review Board (ERB) in consultation with the Institute director.
- b) The VPR will establish key performance indicators for the director and Institute programming in consultation with the Institute governing board to be assessed by the ERB.
- c) The Institute director will provide the ERB, via the VPR, a **Review Package** that includes at minimum:
 - i. a copy of the original Institute proposal
 - ii. annual reports
 - iii. a term impact summary report with a description of how the primary objectives and functions of the Institute were achieved and its contributions to the core strategic interests of the University. Additional resources and guidelines are available from the VPR's office.
 - iv. a strategic plan for the next term (e.g., definition & scope, governance, resource requirements & sources of funding – see institute proposal section above for guidance).
- d) The VPR is responsible for reviewing the ERB report and making a recommendation regarding next steps (see Policy 7.9 for details). Normally, the VPR will share the ERB's report or major recommendations from the ERB's report with the Governing Board (GB) and Institute director.

EXTENSION

Requests for an extension of an Institute term should come as a letter or email communication from the director to the VPR's office. The communication must outline the main justification for the request (e.g., change of director, change of mandate, potential merger with another unit, etc.) and the suggested length of the extension. With respect to timeline, directors should take into consideration the requirement to submit a renewal package three months prior to the end of an Institute term.

RENEWAL

If renewal is recommended by the ERB, the VPR will consult with the director and the Institute GB before solidifying the new term details, governance, research priorities, and resources.

RESTRUCTURING

If restructuring to another unit type (e.g., centre, core facility, group) is recommended by the ERB, the VPR will consult with the director and the Institute GB before solidifying an effective date of transition, which would include allowances for following the procedures for establishing the recommended unit type.

DISSOLUTION

If a dissolution is recommended by the ERB, the VPR will consult with the Institute GB before solidifying an effective date of closure. If the renewal deadline has been reached and no renewal application is forthcoming (and no extension has been negotiated), the VPR, after consultation with the Institute GB, will recommend to the University Research Board (URB) that the Research Institute be dissolved with details about an effective date of closure.

B. RESEARCH CENTRES

1. Proposal to Establish a New Centre

Faculty members interested in establishing a Research Centre must submit a proposal to the relevant Dean(s) for consideration. Proposal requirements are largely at the discretion of the Dean(s). It is recommended that the following information be included:

DEFINITION & SCOPE

- a) Proposed name and term (start and end date - normally does not exceed five years)
- b) Priority research areas / themes
- c) Rationale, justification
- d) Primary objectives and functions to support multi/interdisciplinary research and scholarship

N.B. Please include details about the level of involvement of undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral scholars in institute activities and provide documentation regarding consultation

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with/support of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and the Faculties/Departments/Schools involved.

- e) Partnering Faculties/Departments/Schools and external institutions/ organizations directly involved

N.B. Please provide documentation indicating support for the proposal for each partner as appropriate. Where applicable include details about requested research eligibility status and indirect cost allocation percentage.

- f) Expected contributions
- g) Key performance indicators of impact and excellence

N.B. Final reporting requirements are at the discretion of the Dean(s).

MEMBERSHIP

- h) Overview of the breadth of engagement across disciplines, faculties, and external partners.
- i) Description of membership period of tenure, categories, criteria, fees (if any), and benefit eligibility.
- j) Append a list of member names, institutional affiliation, and qualifications/area of expertise.

GOVERNANCE

- k) Description of the proposed governance structure including reporting lines (if multiple components are proposed) and terms of reference (i.e., specify mandate, composition, meeting frequency)
- l) List of governance structure members (names, institutional affiliations, qualifications, and responsibilities)
- m) Level of participation of external institutions/organizations in governance, if any, and/or administration of the institute.

N.B. Provide evidence that necessary agreements between the University and the external institution/organization have been approved by the University's General Counsel or have been submitted for approval and attach copy of agreement or proposed agreement.

RESOURCES

- n) Space requirements at Western: (i) at start-up; (ii) within 3 years; (iii) within 5 years
- o) Space requirements at other institutions or locations as appropriate

N.B. Please provide documentation of any arrangements in place to secure such space.

- p) Requirements for administrative, and/or technical personnel support from the University – include role title and description, supervisor’s title within the institute, and source of compensation.

N.B. For employees of external institutions or organizations, please provide copies of agreements or draft agreements outlining the obligations of the University and the institution/organization, respectively, vis-à-vis such employees.

- q) Provide a five-year budget plan
 - i. Include a detailed budget justification listing secured and unsecured funds with letters of support outlining in-kind and cash contributions and/or copy of agreements with external institutions/organizations.
 - ii. Include a summary of funding sources such as prospective external grant support, prospective fundraising, “in-kind” support requested from University units or external sources at startup and for the first three years of operation.

2. Dean Recommendation to the VPR re: New Centre Proposals & Modifications

PROPOSAL SUPPORT

After assessing proposals, if a relevant Dean is in support of the proposed new Centre, a recommendation is made by the Dean to the VPR’s office for approval. A **Dean Recommendation Letter** should include details about the proposed name and term, director, research priorities, and anticipated impact. It must also specify details about requested research eligibility status and indirect cost allocation percentage at the faculty level (refer to Policy 7.7 for further details). The full proposal should be attached for information.

MODIFICATIONS

Dean or designate (e.g., Associate Dean Research - ADR) are required to report in writing (by letter or email) to the VPR’s office any changes in status as they arise

during the active term of a Centre. This may include changes in the name or term, directorship, governance structure, research priorities, anticipated impact, and/or research eligibility status. Please include a copy of the original VPR approval letter with the requested modification.

3. Centre Reviews, Extensions, and Review Outcomes

REVIEWS

Three months in advance of the end of the term of a Centre, the Dean or designate (e.g., ADR) must inform the VPR about the status of the Centre. The Dean or designate (e.g., ADR) is responsible for defining and organizing the review process in consultation with the Centre director. Typically, the review process begins at least 6 months prior to the end of term. In general, the review should consider Centre activity and impact, assess the director's performance, and make recommendations regarding next steps. The review package requirements are largely at the discretion of the Dean(s). It is recommended that the following information be included:

- a) the original Centre proposal
- b) an impact summary report for the most recent term
 - i. Description of how the Centre achieved its primary objectives and functions related to the priority research areas/themes:
 - collaborations among members
 - multi- and interdisciplinary research and scholarship productivity
 - impact at the national or international level
 - ii. Overview or highlights about research outputs:
 - Publications
 - Presentations
 - Other knowledge mobilization activities
 - Grant and donation activity including internal and external submissions, amount of funding secured or pending
- c) a plan for the upcoming term (e.g., definition & scope, governance, resource requirements & sources of funding – see B-1 section on centre proposals above for guidance).

Upon review completion, the Dean will forward information about the status of the

centre to the VPR. The review report should be appended for information.

EXTENSIONS

Requests for an extension should come as a letter or email communication from the Dean or designate (e.g., ADR) to the VPR's office. The communication must outline the main justification for the request (e.g., change of director, change of mandate, potential merger with another unit, potential change in research eligibility status, etc.) and the suggested length of the extension (i.e., specifically ending March 31, 20XX or October 31, 20XX). With respect to timeline, Dean's should take into consideration the requirement to submit a renewal package 3 months prior to the end of the term.

RENEWAL

If renewal is recommended, the **Dean Recommendation Letter** must include details about the review process undertaken, the proposed name and term, director (if a change in Centre leadership is recommended the Dean must identify a new leader and term timeline), research priorities, and anticipated impact. It must also specify details about requested research eligibility status and indirect cost allocation percentage at the faculty level (refer to Policy 7.7 for further details).

RESTRUCTURING

If restructuring is recommended, the **Dean Recommendation Letter** must include details about the review process undertaken and the proposed unit transition type (e.g., from centre to institute or group). The letter should also specify a timeline for the suggested transition which must include allowances for following the procedures for establishing the recommended unit type.

CLOSURE

If Centre closure is recommended, the **Dean Recommendation Letter** should specify the effective date of termination.

C. RESEARCH GROUPS

1. Proposal to Establish a New Group

Faculty members interested in establishing a Group must submit a proposal to the relevant Dean(s) for consideration. Proposal requirements are largely at the discretion of the Dean(s). It is recommended that the following information be included: proposed name and term, rationale and justification, research priorities, list of its members (name, affiliation, expertise), leadership structure, resources requested, and reporting process.

2. **Dean Recommendation to the VPR re: New Group Proposals & Modifications**

PROPOSAL SUPPORT

After assessing a proposal, the relevant Dean makes a recommendation to the VPR's office for approval. A **Dean Recommendation Letter** is required to include details about the proposed name and term, leadership, membership, and research priorities.

MODIFICATIONS

Dean or designate (e.g., ADR) will forward any changes in the information about the status of Research Groups to the VPR's office as they arise.

3. **Group Reviews, Renewals, Extensions, and/or Closure**

The review process, renewal packages contents, extension process, and/or closures are at the discretion of the Dean(s). The Dean or designate (e.g., ADR) will forward any changes in the information about the status of Research Groups to the VPR's office.

Last Reviewed: May 2025