



University Policies

[Section IV: Research](<https://policies.umd.edu/research>)

Policy Number: IV-1.00(A)

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND REVIEW OF CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

(Approved by the President September 01, 2991, Amended April 27, 2021)

I. Purpose

The University of Maryland encourages faculty, staff, students, and administrators to engage in areas of common academic and research interests. The creation of academic and/or research-based entities that help to organize and engage faculty, staff, and/or students from one or more disciplines around those interests can expand the research enterprise, foster collaboration, and support the University's educational mission. To this end, the establishment, review, oversight, and termination of these entities will be guided by the procedures established in this Policy, in order to protect the legitimate interests of faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

II. Definitions

- A. "Academic Director" means the head of a School within a College, who is equivalent to a Department Chair.
- B. "Approval Authority" means the administrator or administrators with authority and oversight of the establishment, review, and termination of a Center or Institute. Depending on the level at which the entity operates, the Approval Authority may be a Department Chair, a Dean, multiple Deans, the Vice President for Research, the Senior Vice President and Provost, or the President.
- C. "Center" means an academic and/or research-based entity, which engages faculty, staff, and/or students in areas of specialized focus within one Unit or across multiple Units. A Center may be affiliated with an external agency and/or laboratory.
- D. "College Level Center" means a type of Center that is typically composed of faculty, staff, and/or students from a single College and may involve engagement from multiple departments or areas of focus within the College.
- E. "Department Chair" means the head of an academic department.
- F. "Department Level Center" means a type of Center that is typically composed of faculty, staff, and/or students from a single department within a departmentalized College.
- G. "Director" means the head of an academic and/or research-based Center or Institute
- H. "Group" means an informal collection of faculty members gathered to promote a common area of academic or research interest.
- I. "Institute" means an academic and/or research-based entity with prominence and stature that is typically intended to have a level of permanence similar to that of an academic department. Institutes engage faculty, staff, and/or students in areas of specialized focus within a College, across multiple Colleges, or University-wide. An Institute may be affiliated with an external agency and/or laboratory.
- J. "Intercollegiate Level Center" means a type of Center that is typically composed of faculty, staff, and/or students from two or more Colleges and involves engagement from multiple areas of focus across the University.

- K. “Multi-Institutional Center or Institute” means an entity created collaboratively between the University of Maryland and another institution, in order to advance the missions of both institutions or of the University System of Maryland (USM).
- L. “Unit” means an academic and/or research-based department, Institute, College or School, or Division.
- M. “Unit Head” means the administrator or administrators responsible for a Unit and the individual(s) to which the Director reports. A Unit Head may be an Institute Director, Academic Director, Department Chair, Dean, multiple Deans, the Vice President for Research, or the Senior Vice President and Provost.

III. Policy

- A. The University recognizes Groups, Centers, and Institutes as organizational entities intended to facilitate research, foster collaboration, and enhance the academic experience.
- B. Centers and Institutes must comply with applicable University and USM policies. Centers and Institutes that receive federal funds must ensure compliance with the federal regulations and guidelines that govern federal grants, contracts, and other funding agreements, including those regarding the responsible conduct of research.
- C. The establishment of new Centers and Institutes should be aligned with the definitions of these entities in Section II of this Policy. Existing Centers and Institutes that do not meet the specifications of these entities in the definitions in Section II of this Policy are not required to be redefined or renamed solely for that reason. Renaming and reorganization may be a potential outcome of a periodic review process as defined in Section VIII of this Policy.
- D. Centers and Institutes have a diverse range of financial models. Centers and Institutes should seek and maintain a level of support consistent with their mission and expectations, which could include funding from internal and external sources.
- E. Centers and Institutes have varied missions, and with few exceptions do not award degrees. If applicable, Centers and Institutes should foster relationships with academic programs to support the University’s educational mission.
- F. Centers may not serve as a tenure home.
- G. Institutes within the Division of Academic Affairs may serve as a tenure home with the approval of both the Senior Vice President and Provost and the President. All Institutes outside of the Division of Academic Affairs may not serve as a tenure home. Tenured/tenure-track (TTK) faculty with a tenure home in an Institute may also hold a joint appointment in an academic department or non-departmentalized College/School.
- H. Faculty contracts establishing joint appointments with Centers or Institutes must define the nature of the faculty member’s responsibilities with the entity and any potential limitations to their appointment.
- I. Centers and Institutes may be the primary appointment home for professional track (PTK) faculty and must establish and follow a plan of organization and policies, guidelines, and procedures for PTK faculty, in alignment with the University’s policies and guidelines.

IV. Entities and Levels of Organization

A. Groups

1. Groups may be short-lived, or may persist as the interest of the faculty develops.
2. Groups typically consist of faculty within one Unit but may include faculty from multiple Units.
3. Groups may use naming conventions including “Group,” “Research Group,” “Research Laboratory,” or other appropriate terminology, as long as the name does not improperly imply that the Group is a Center or Institute, as defined by this Policy.

4. Groups may evolve over time and establish themselves as Centers or Institutes by following the process defined in Section V.B of this Policy.

B. Centers

1. Centers may operate within one Unit or across multiple Units.
2. Centers should have a formal administrative structure and should be headed by a Director who will report to the Unit Head.
3. Centers will be organized within the following levels:
 - a. Centers within Institutes: The Unit Head for Centers within Institutes will be the Director of the Institute in which the Center resides. The Approval Authority is the administrator(s) to which the Institute Director reports, depending on the level at which the Institute resides.
 - b. Department Level Center: The Unit Head for a Department Level Center will be the Department Chair of the Unit in which the Department Level Center resides. The Approval Authority for a Department Level Center is the Dean.
 - c. College Level Center: The Unit Head for a College Level Center will be the Dean of the College in which the College Level Center resides. The Approval Authority for a College Level Center is the Senior Vice President and Provost. In the case of a College Level Center engaged in research activities, the Vice President for Research will be consulted when considering actions affecting the entity.
 - d. Intercollegiate Level Center: The Unit Head for an Intercollegiate Level Center will be specified at the time of its establishment. Intercollegiate Level Centers may report to one Dean, multiple Deans, the Vice President for Research, or the Senior Vice President and Provost, as appropriate to the level, structure, needs, and focus of the Intercollegiate Level Center. The Approval Authority for an Intercollegiate Level Center is either the Senior Vice President and Provost or the President. In the case of an Intercollegiate Level Center engaged in research activities, the Vice President for Research will be consulted when considering actions affecting the entity.

C. Institutes

1. Institutes may operate within one College, across multiple Colleges, University wide, or across multiple institutions.
2. Institutes should have a formal administrative structure and should be headed by a Director who will report to the Unit Head.
3. The Unit Head for an Institute will be specified at the time of its establishment, as appropriate to the structure, needs, and focus of the Institute.
4. The Approval Authority for an Institute may be a Dean(s), the Vice President for Research, the Senior Vice President and Provost, or the President.

V. Proposal and Establishment

A. Groups

1. Groups may be established at any time with appropriate notice to the Unit Head(s) of the Department(s) or College(s) in which they reside.
2. The name of a new Group must be approved by the Unit Head(s), in order to ensure that it is appropriate within the broader context of the Unit and does not overlap with terminology used for other named entities.
3. The Unit(s) will be responsible for maintaining records of all Groups and providing information about the Group in departmental communications and on departmental websites.

B. Centers and Institutes

1. The establishment of a new Center or Institute must be guided by a formal proposal.
2. A proposal for the establishment of a new Center or Institute may be prepared by informal groups of interested faculty and administrators, a committee appointed for the purpose of determining the need, desirability, and feasibility of a Center or Institute, or any similar formal or informal group.
3. Proposers are encouraged to consult with the Division of Research as a resource when determining the long-term feasibility of securing external funds in a specific research area.
4. The specific elements that should be included in a formal proposal are defined in the University of Maryland Guidelines for the Establishment and Review of Centers and Institutes.
5. In cases where a Center or Institute is being established as a result of an external funding opportunity, the proposal associated with that process may be substituted for the formal proposal.
6. All proposals should be submitted to the proposed Unit Head, who will oversee the review of the proposal.

VI. Review Process for Proposals

- A. Proposal review processes should be based on the level of the entity.
- B. Proposals initiated in response to external funding opportunities should be routed through the pathway appropriate to the funding process.
- C. The specific review processes for each type of entity are defined in the University of Maryland Guidelines for the Establishment and Review of Centers and Institutes.
- D. Approval Process for Center & Institute Proposals
 1. The Approval Authority will determine whether to approve the establishment of the proposed Center or Institute. The establishment of Centers and Institutes that are formed as a result of a successful external funding opportunity will be automatically approved by the University. The Approval Authority for entities at different levels of organization are specified in Section IV above.
 2. The naming of all approved Centers and Institutes should be in alignment with the mission of the entity and avoid duplication with existing entities. Philanthropic and honorific namings of Centers and Institutes must be in accordance with the USM Policy on the Naming of Facilities & Programs (VI-4.00).
 3. Proposals to establish Institutes will be reported to the University System of Maryland.
 - a. The Chancellor will be notified of the establishment of all Institutes.
 - b. The establishment of a Multi-Institutional Center or Institute will require the approvals of the Presidents of each institution and the Chancellor.
 - c. The establishment of a Center or Institute that is administratively separate from the University of Maryland will require the approval of the President, the Chancellor, and the Board of Regents.

VII. Periodic Review Processes

A. Review of Groups

1. Groups need not undergo a formal periodic review process.

B. Reviews of Centers & Institutes

1. All reviews should be tracked by the Division of Research, which will notify Unit Heads of the need to initiate a review.
2. New Centers and Institutes must be reviewed within five (5) years of establishment.
3. The initial review of a new Center or Institute is a major milestone in assessing its future viability and subsequent reviews will assess continued sustainability.
4. Reviews of established Centers and Institutes will be conducted within seven (7) years of the completion of the last review.
5. The Approval Authority, in consultation with the Unit Head, may determine whether a Center or Institute should be reviewed independently or as part of the review of the academic Unit within which it resides.
6. Unit Heads will be responsible for ensuring that reviews occur on schedule, and will oversee the review process.
 - a. All reviews should begin with a self-assessment conducted by the Director of the Center or Institute.
 - b. Reviews for Institutes should include an external review. Reviews for Centers may include an external review, if deemed necessary by the Senior Vice President and Provost and the Vice President for Research.
 - c. The Unit Head may appoint a representative review committee, which would be responsible for conducting the review and submitting its findings in a written report. In the absence of a review committee, the Unit Head shall conduct the review and develop the written report.
 - d. Reviews should measure progress against the benchmarks and metrics for success identified during the establishment of the entity and/or refined in subsequent reviews.
 - e. The specific elements of the review process are defined in the University of Maryland Guidelines for the Establishment and Review of Centers and Institutes.
 - f. Components of external funding agency reviews may be used to fulfill elements of a periodic review, when authorized by the Unit Head.
 - g. The written report from the review committee and/or external review(s) should be sent to the Unit Head for consideration.
7. The Unit Head will make a recommendation to the Approval Authority.
8. The Approval Authority will make a final determination on actions following a review as defined in Section VIII below.
9. Upon completion of all review processes, notification of the outcome should be forwarded to the Director, Unit Head, and the Division of Research.

C. Center and Institute Directors must undergo a formal comprehensive review in accordance with the University of Maryland Policy on the Review of Directors of Academic and Research-Based Centers and Institutes (I-6.00[D]).

VIII. Outcomes Following Periodic Reviews of Centers & Institutes

- A. The Center or Institute may be approved to continue normal operations with no modifications.
- B. The University will abide by the rules and regulations of external funding agencies or state or federal funding requirements, if changes are warranted for Centers and Institutes primarily funded by those sources.
- C. Reorganization or renaming procedures may be initiated.

1. If the Approval Authority determines that a reorganization is warranted following a review, the Unit Head may initiate procedures to transition the Center or Institute to a different type of entity.
 - a. The Unit Head may consider a variety of options for reorganizing an existing Center or may consider other structural changes appropriate to the needs identified in the review.
 - b. The Unit Head should consult with the faculty and administrators engaged in the entity's work, as well as with the relevant College(s)/School(s), the Dean(s), the Senior Vice President and Provost, and the Vice President for Research, if appropriate, prior to approving a reorganization.
 - c. If the proposed reorganization would result in the creation of a new Center, the new Center should be approved through the process for establishing a Center outlined in Section V.B of this Policy.
2. If the review indicates that the name of the entity should be changed, the Unit Head may initiate a process to rename the entity. Philanthropic and honorific namings must be in accordance with the USM Policy on the Naming of Facilities & Programs (VI-4.00).
 - a. The Unit Head should consider any agreements with external funding agencies or affiliated laboratories regarding the name of the entity.
 - b. The Unit Head should consult with faculty and administrators engaged in the work of the entity to develop a new name, and may consider engaging departmental or College-level committees, as appropriate.
 - c. The Unit Head should determine whether a proposed new name would conflict with names used by existing Centers or Institutes at the University that focus on similar or related topics, and whether the proposed name is appropriate for the level at which the entity operates.
 - d. The Unit Head may approve a new name for the entity after consultation with key stakeholders and the Approval Authority, and should notify the Division of Research of the change.

D. The Center or Institute may be placed on probation.

1. The Unit Head, in consultation with the Director, will develop a plan of corrective actions that must be taken during the probationary period to address the factors that led to the negative review.
2. The Center or Institute will have up to two years from the point at which the plan is finalized to implement the corrective actions.
3. The Center or Institute will submit a self-assessment to the Unit Head detailing its progress in addressing the factors that led to the negative review within two years.
4. The Unit Head will review the self-assessment and make a recommendation to the Approval Authority.
5. The Approval Authority will make a final determination on actions following the implementation of the plan. The Approval Authority may:
 - a. Remove probationary status and approve the continuation of normal operations;
 - b. Determine whether additional corrective actions are needed;
 - c. Determine whether additional time to address specific issues would be appropriate; or
 - d. Initiate sunseting procedures.

E. The Approval Authority may initiate sunseting procedures when a period of time is needed in order to appropriately complete or phase out the activities of the entity.

1. The Unit Head will develop the sunseting plan, in consultation with the Approval Authority, as appropriate. The Unit Head may engage the Director in the development of the sunseting plan.
2. The sunseting plan should address, among other things:
 - a. The time frame of the phase-out period, which may range from a few months to up to two years;
 - b. The reassignment or expiration of faculty/staff appointments;
 - c. Plans for ensuring the continued support of graduate students whose research is associated with the entity; and
 - d. Plans for how to address any remaining funding commitments and other financial matters.
3. The Unit Head will be responsible for taking any necessary steps to remove a Center or Institute from any public-facing websites or materials and notifying the Division of Research following sunseting.

F. The Approval Authority may initiate termination procedures as specified in Section IX below.

IX. Termination

- A. Groups, Centers, and Institutes may be terminated at any time by the Approval Authority, in consultation with the Unit Head, for violation(s) of USM or University policy, federal regulations, or state or federal law.
- B. Groups, Centers, and Institutes may be terminated at any time by the Unit Head due to inactivity, lack of funding, or lack of interest by the faculty to sustain the entity's activities.
 1. Groups may be terminated by the Unit Head if the faculty within the Group have left the University or are no longer interested in actively pursuing the focus area.
 2. Termination may also be initiated by the faculty within the Group, Center, or Institute when faculty support for the entity no longer exists, if there is no interest among the faculty in participating in or leading the entity, or when the entity is no longer financially viable. Requests for termination may be submitted to the Unit Head for consideration.
- C. Centers and Institutes may be terminated as a result of the periodic review process.
 1. Termination of Centers and Institutes may be initiated by the Unit Head if at the time of review, they determine that a Center or Institute is inactive and has no existing faculty or staff dedicated to its work.
 2. Centers and Institutes may be terminated as a result of a negative review or following a negative outcome from a probationary period, at the discretion of the Approval Authority.
- D. The process of dissolving a Center or Institute must:
 1. Take into consideration the contractual obligations and employment agreements with the faculty and staff associated with the entity, and determine how these will be fulfilled;
 2. Abide by any contractual agreements with external agencies and/or affiliated laboratories;
 3. Ensure the continued support of graduate students whose research is associated with the entity; and
 4. Provide for the appropriate closure of any active research space, including but not limited to the disposal of hazards, data, and supplies and equipment, in compliance with Environmental Safety, Sustainability, and Risk (ESSR) and other applicable oversight entities.

X. Implementation

- A. The requirement for regular reviews of academic and/or research-based Centers and Institutes applies to all such entities defined in this Policy, established prior to July 2021, as well as to any new entities created under this Policy.
- B. Existing Centers and Institutes should transition to the new review processes established in this Policy at the time of their next review.
- C. Centers and Institutes that have not been reviewed within the past five years or that do not have a defined review cycle should be reviewed as soon as is practical but no later than five years from the approval of this Policy, using the processes outlined in this Policy.