



RUTGERS POLICY

Section: 10.1.5

Section Title: Academic Matters

Policy Name: Research Centers and Institutes

Formerly Book: 1.3.5

Approval Authority: Board of Governors

Responsible Executive: Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: Office of Academic Affairs

Originally Issued: 1959

Revisions: 2/1996; 07/1/2010; 7/1/2013

Errors or changes? Contact: polices@oaa.rutgers.edu

1. **Policy Statement**

The University is a center for innovative research. The University shall from time to time establish additional research centers and institutes, which may be supported by University budgetary resources, special provision from State appropriations (particularly in the case of such units created as a result of specific legislation), endowment funds, external grants or contracts, and/or some combination of these. Each research center or institute has its own mission statement, and as appropriate, a set of bylaws, procedures, or statement of governance.

2. **Reason for Policy**

This policy describes the process by which research centers and institutes are established, and where a current listing of University research centers and institutes may be obtained¹. This policy also identifies the governing bodies that have authority over the missions and policies of University research centers and institutes.

3. **Who Should Read This Policy**

- Chancellors and Vice Presidents
- Deans, directors and department chairs
- Faculty members
- Academic administrators

4. **Related Documents**

5. **Contacts:**

Office of Academic Labor Relations
848-932-7174

¹ Sources of information in the policy have been obtained from: University of Wisconsin – Madison C&I Policy, Northwestern University C&I Policy, Rutgers University – C&I Report (Nov. 2009).

6. The Policy

10.1.5 RESEARCH CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

Centers and Institutes (C&Is) are valued and encouraged at Rutgers University as vibrant and highly productive components of the University community. C&Is represent more dynamic structures and provide administrators with greater flexibility and opportunity to adapt to economic and academic competitive pressures. The purpose of this policy, which was primarily informed by recommendations of the Committee on Academic Planning and Review (CAPR) report on Centers, Bureau's and Institutes (November 3, 2009), is to provide specific procedures central to the creation, review, and renewal or dissolution of C&Is, with a goal to enhance their operation, support and impacts.

A. Classification of C&Is

For the purposes of this policy, C&Is² are classified according to their level of approval and reporting relationship. The following categories of C&Is are as follows:

1. **Board of Governors Centers and Institutes.** The mission of a C&I, or similar unit which is organized independently of a school, college, or Faculty and which has been created by the Board of Governors upon recommendation of the President of the University shall be such as is specified in the instrument of creation approved by the Board. The mission of each research center or institute established by action of the Legislature of the State of New Jersey shall be such as is specified in the establishing legislation and referenced in the minutes of the Board provided that such research center or institute is accepted and approved by the Board of Governors and Board of Trustees. The mission of each research center or institute established by authority of the President of the University shall be such as is specified in documents submitted to the Board of Governors prior to such Presidential authorization and referenced in the minutes of the Board.
2. **Statewide Centers and Institutes.** Statewide C&Is are major initiatives of the University, jointly sponsored by two or more schools or units, or by School(s) in collaboration with an external institution. They require the approval of the President and the Board of Trustees through its University Affairs/Research Committee.
 - a. Statewide centers/institutes have the following characteristics:
 - Multiple locations: All statewide centers/institutes are intended to have a physical presence at multiple Rutgers campuses. Campus locations of the center/institute are closely associated with a School at that site.
 - Statewide leadership: Statewide centers/institutes are led by an Executive Director, appointed by the EVPAA or Chancellor, acting in consultation with the Deans. Local Directors are appointed by and report to the Executive Director.
 - Consistent business practices: Statewide centers/institutes shall maintain consistent business practices across the center/institute, and shall, to the maximum extent possible, present themselves to the external community as a single, seamless unit.

² An Institute differs from a center in that it would have a broader mission than a Center, have wider academic interests than is characteristic of a focused research center, may include several Centers within it, and may include members from other higher education institutions.

- b. Application to form a new statewide center/institute will be in the form of a proposal as described in Section B.1, mutually agreeable to all involved parties and formally submitted to the University Office of Academic Affairs. Proposers are strongly advised to seek the informal approval of the Deans and the senior management of the University before undertaking this task.
 - c. Proposals must be pre-approved by the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (EVPAA), Chancellor of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) or the Chancellor of the Camden or Newark campus. The proposal is then submitted to the President and the Board of Trustees through its University Affairs/Research Committee for final approval.
3. **University Centers and Institutes.** Initial approval and renewal or termination of such a C&I is by the Vice President of Research and Economic Development (VPRED). Initiation of these C&Is can also be driven by the VPRED. The director reports to the VPRED. University C&Is will have a substantial number of members from more than one decanal unit and more than one discipline. At least two of the PIs must come from different departments or decanal units. A University C&I will have an internal structure which may include corporate memberships and/or sponsored research contracts, as well as public support (for example from NSF, NIH, DoD etc.). C&Is can apply for this classification through VPRED, and those that are accepted by a central committee can apply for internal support in the form of startup grants and administrative and management staff support from VPRED to fulfill the C&I's mission. These C&Is will be considered Public Private Partnerships which have a partnership-based, focused approach, to improve the Rutgers research infrastructure.
 4. **Decanal Centers.** Initial approval and renewal or termination of such a center is by the dean of that unit and the director reports to this dean. Typically, these centers will be almost completely comprised of faculty from a single decanal unit, but not from just a single department in that unit. Also included in this category are the Centers and Outlying Stations/Farms of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES). These are stakeholder driven research, service and outreach centers that come under the administrative authority of the Executive Director of the NJAES.
 5. **Departmental Centers.** Initial approval and renewal or termination of such a center is by the department chair and the dean of the unit to which the department belongs, and the director reports to the department chair. Typically, these centers will be almost completely comprised of faculty from a single department.
 6. The use of the titles "Rutgers" Center and "Rutgers" Institute should be reserved for those entities that are officially recognized by the University.

B. Creation, Review, and Renewal or Dissolution of C&Is

The Office of the Vice President of Research and Economic Development (OVPRED) can provide assistance and support in the Creation, Review, and Renewal or Dissolution of C&I's (existing or planned). All new centers and institutes should notify the OVPRED in the initial planning stages. Contact that office for more information.

1. Creation of a C&I

- a. A basic requirement for the establishment of a new C&I is that it not unreasonably duplicate activities already performed elsewhere in the University. For example, to create a C&I almost entirely comprised of faculty from a single department would require justification of why its purpose is distinct from that of the department.
- b. To begin the approval process, the faculty member (s) seeking approval for a C&I must develop a proposal that addresses the following topics, and should include, but not be limited to, the following: C&I Name; Director Name, Title, Department and School Affiliation; Purpose and Mission; Opportunity/Justification; Current Activities; Organizational Structure and Governance; Public-Private Partnerships; Financial Support; Program Description; Administration of Grants; Staffing; Membership Policies; Faculty Participation; Space; Endorsements; Evaluation; Impacts; Timeframe; and Life Cycle. Detailed information regarding the content of each of these sections can be found on the VPRED website: vpr.rutgers.edu.
- c. Based on the category of the C&I, as described in Section A, a proposal for the creation of a new C&I prepared according to section B.1 is then submitted for approval to either a department chair, dean, EVPAA, VPRED or Chancellor. If the C&I is approved, the supervisor (person to whom the center/institute Director reports) submits a letter of approval up through the academic chain of command to the EVPAA, VPRED or Chancellor, with a copy sent to the Committee on Academic Planning and Review, and the C&I Director. The letter of approval should contain a summary of the proposal including the justification for establishing the C&I, a plan for its funding, staff, and space needs, the length of time for which the C&I is approved (typically not to exceed five years), the criteria and conditions under which the C&I can be evaluated for renewal, along with the full proposal as an attachment.
- d. The Director, who is appointed by either a department chair, dean, EVPAA, VPRED or Chancellor, will report to and serve at their pleasure.
- e. While C&Is can differ widely in their scope, at a minimum, each should place on its website the mission, membership policies, infrastructure resources, list of faculty with their research interest and additional affiliations, and annual report of the C&I.
- f. The EVPAA, VPRED, Chancellors, and deans who supervise a substantial number of C&Is, should form and meet on a regular basis with a council of directors of C&Is reporting to that supervisor.

2. Review, Renewal or Dissolution of a C&I

- a. C&I operations will be approved for 5 year terms. Six months prior to the renewal/termination date of a C&I, those C&Is requesting renewal should submit to their supervisor a report which demonstrates how the C&I has achieved the goals and met the expectations outlined in the initial proposal for the formation of the C&I and has satisfied the criteria and conditions for renewal given when the C&I was approved.

- b. The report should contain the goals and expectations of accomplishments if the C&I is renewed, and any changes in the mission or other information about the C&I appearing in the proposal for the original establishment of the C&I or the prior 5 year evaluation.
- c. Supervisory review of the report should consider the central questions of whether or not the center is fulfilling its mission, if improvements are needed, and if the center should persist. The supervisor then has three options: (i) Terminate or renew the C&I without additional review; (ii) seek an internal review of the C&I to provide additional information before deciding; or (iii) request that the C&I undergo an external review chosen, (similar to a strategic review of a department) before making a decision. If option (ii) is chosen, this policy strongly recommends that outside letters of evaluation be solicited, just as in faculty promotions or review of grant proposals. This can provide a peer review of the reputation and accomplishments of a C&I relative to external organizations with similar goals. If option (iii) is requested, (perhaps if the result of option (ii) is inconclusive), approval is needed from the EVPAA, VPRED or Chancellor, with the review to be supervised by the Committee on Academic Planning and Review, and funded by the EVPAA, VPRED or Chancellor.
- d. After any additional input is obtained and a final decision is made, the supervisor of the C&I submits a letter either terminating or renewing the C&I, up through the chain of command to the EVPAA, VPRED or Chancellor, (or Board of Governors, if appropriate), with a copy sent to the Committee on Academic Planning and Review, and the C&I Director.
- e. If the C&I is renewed, the letter should contain a justification for the renewal (including any internal or external review reports), any changes in funding, staff, or space, the length of time for which the C&I is renewed, (not more than five years), and the criteria and conditions under which the C&I will be evaluated for further renewal.
- f. If the C&I is dissolved, the dissolution should not infringe contractual obligations to faculty and staff. As such, dissolution of a C&I requires a plan to reorganize human resources, and institutional, external funding, and infrastructure issues within the organizational framework of the University. This plan must be spelled out in the termination letter of the C&I, along with a justification for termination (including any internal or external review reports).
- g. The review, renewal or dissolution process described above applies to all C&Is (new and existing), unless such a process conflicts with existing contracts or agreements. In the case of C&Is with such conflicts, the C&I should still be reviewed and the contracts/agreements evaluated. This gives an objective basis for possible renegotiation of contracts that could benefit both the C&I and the University.
- h. Since many existing C&Is do not have an explicit renewal/termination date, (and hence there is no date to start the review process), a date shall be set by the supervisor that takes into consideration the length of time the C&I has already been in existence, but that is no more than five years in the future.

3. Renaming Centers

Proposals to rename centers must be approved by the relevant administrative unit. Center names should not overlap with those of existing departments, schools, colleges, centers, or other units.

4. Reorganizing or Restructuring Centers

Proposals to reorganize or restructure centers should be approved by the administrative unit and/or by the school/college dean, and then forwarded to the responsible EVPAA, VPRED or Chancellor. Reorganizations may include combining two or more centers into one, creating umbrella structures, splitting a center into two or more separate centers, or other significant restructuring. Appropriate endorsements should accompany the request. If restructuring appears to result in the creation of a new center, then it must be approved by according to the guidelines outlined in Section B.1.

5. Listing of Centers and Institutes.

A current listing of major research centers and institutes shall be maintained by the University Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning, together with a record of any such unit which has been disestablished by action of the Board of Governors or, as appropriate, by action of the EVPAA, VPRED or Chancellor with the approval of the President. The listing of major research centers and institutes is available at <http://www.rutgers.edu/research/centers-institutes>.

C. Principles Governing Shared Department/C&I Responsibilities for Faculty

1. Due to the shared responsibility between departments and C&Is, a C&I faculty search should be initiated jointly with the dean where tenure of the incoming faculty would reside. Before an offer is made, there must be an agreement between the units involved, specifying the distribution of the line weight, space allotment, start-up cost (see also F&A distribution), and the responsibilities of the incoming faculty to the department and to the C&I.
2. Members of C&Is require action by both the C&I and the home department in cases of merit and promotion. According to the rules of the University, "a personnel action may be initiated for a faculty member by his/her primary department (that is, the department in which the faculty member has tenure) or by the secondary department, SBR unit, or degree-granting program in which the individual has a significant or principal assignment. In both instances the primary department shall have responsibility for the personnel action in consultation with the secondary department, unit or program as described herein."
3. There are two reasons that a C&I member can lose membership. One is due to a negative review of her/his contribution to the mission of the C&I; the other is due to dissolution of a C&I. If membership ceases, faculty would lose the portion of their line and/or salary that is provided by the C&I, which has to be replaced by the unit responsible for tenure. It is therefore important that decanal units budget so that salary is available if C&I membership ends. Members that revert 100% to a unit different than the C&I, would also need to be physically relocated if the C&I needs to reassign space and resources.

4. Faculty workloads should be consistent with a balance of research and instruction in departments and C&Is. In addition, whether a faculty member is in a department or a C&I, the same criteria should be applied in determining whether a reduction in teaching obligations is appropriate in light of a faculty member's research responsibilities and accomplishments.

D. Distribution of Facilities and Administration (F&A)

1. Principles for F&A Distribution

- a. Typically, 50% of the F&A return is available for distribution to units (i.e., decanal units, departments, and C&Is), with the remainder reserved for the central administration. Any special distribution arrangement should recognize contributions of the dean, the department, and the C&I to which the faculty member belongs.
- b. F&A distribution arrangements should be based on ongoing responsibilities of the various units. Specific factors to consider include: (i) space provided; (ii) administrative support for grant management; (iii) technical support for laboratory and computer equipment; (iv) access to shared equipment; (v) fellowships and TAs for graduate students; (vi) programmatic initiatives in support of research (e.g., support of seminar series, conferences, post-docs, visitors); (vii) bridge funding for PIs between grants; and (viii) unanticipated short term personnel needs.
- c. The proposed F&A arrangement must be approved by the VPRED. The agreed upon special F&A distribution must be made clear to the receiving unit, as well as the costs they are then responsible for paying. The special distribution arrangement should be time-limited (no more than 5 year increments) and is subject to review and approval by VPRED for renewal.
- d. In cases of faculty membership in both C&Is and decanal units, the proportion of the financial benefit from F&A return depends on the extent of contributions by the C&Is and departments to the recruitment and retention of faculty members and on the research programs, activities, and infrastructure provided by each. The final review and approval of the arrangement is to be made by the VPRED.
- e. Faculty submitting grant proposals through a C&I must demonstrate a strong intellectual connection to the work of the C&I. This can be monitored by requiring membership in a C&I (if F&A distribution is involved) to be subject to approval by the administrator who oversees the creation and renewal/termination of the C&I in consultation with the appropriate department chair and center director. Note that an initial list of members and their contributions is part of the initial proposal to create a new C&I.
- f. When starting C&Is, a long term source of funds should be identified by the Dean, EVPAA, VPRED or Chancellor if F&A is used to partially fund tenure-track faculty salaries

E. Guidelines for Annual Reports

1. The Director of each C&I shall be responsible for the preparation of an annual report to be submitted to their supervisor, with copies to the appropriate Dean(s), and up through the academic chain of command as required.
2. Any centers that have ceased operation or that have been formally discontinued will be reported as such. Any center that has had a change in structure that wasn't already reported will be reported at this time. Any center that was created but not approved and comes to the attention of the dean through this process, will be considered for approval at this time upon completion of the requirements in Section B.1 of this policy.
3. The required information for the annual report, including benchmarks, can be found on the VPR website.

Center and Institute Proposal Information
(To be posted on VPR website)

1. **C&I Name.** The center's name should convey the center's focus clearly, even to those outside the field. If the proposed name is similar to that of another unit (an existing school, college, department, academic program, or center), a letter of endorsement from the existing unit with the similar name should be appended to the proposal.
2. **Director Name, Title, Department and School Affiliation.** Include this information for all founding members as well.
3. **Purpose and Mission.** What is the proposed purpose and mission for the new center? Explain why this activity could not be as successfully carried out in an existing department or center. Clearly identify the ways in which the proposed center will advance those goals and priorities of the University and/or the school or department as applicable.
4. **Opportunity/Justification.** Describe the combination of intellectual capital, research environment, and external factors that creates favorable conditions for the center's success. Provide a justification and explanation of the need for creating the C&I. Departmental centers are required to justify and explain why its purpose is distinct from that of the department.
5. **Current Activities.** Describe interdisciplinary research, teaching and outreach collaborations already underway that provide a foundation on which to build the center's activities.
6. **Organizational Structure and Governance.** How will the center be organized? Will it operate within a department, within a school or college, as a unit of the Graduate School, or across multiple schools and colleges? If it is interdisciplinary, how will interactions among departments and schools/colleges be managed? What will be its governance and administrative structure? How will its leadership be identified and to whom will its leadership report? What are the proposed responsibilities of the director? By what process is the director appointed, evaluated, and/or reappointed? For centers that will be active in more than one school or college, the proposal must specify how the deans will coordinate responsibility for center oversight and review. Ideally, a lead school will be specified. If the center will operate such that there is no single lead dean, then the proposal should make the organizational structure and lines of responsibility very clear. Will there be internal/external advisory boards. If so, provide information on the types/names of members you will recruit for participation and why. Draft by-laws that include the above information should also be provided.
7. **Public-Private Partnerships.** What public/private partnerships do you already have in place (i.e. federal/state funding, corporate contracts, etc.)? What are the opportunities for public-private partnerships? What role will these partners play in the proposed C&I? What contributions will they make and what benefits will be generated as a result of such partnerships?
8. **Financial Support.** What is the budget needed for the center and what will be its funding source? If the identified support is lost, what are the prospects for continuation of the center? Please note in particular whether state funds, particularly new state funds, will support the center.
9. **Program Description.** Describe the planned research, teaching, outreach and public/private partnership programs of the center, target audiences and timeline for implementation.

10. **Administration of Grants.** When faculty members who participate in a center succeed in securing grants associated with the center's mission and activities, will the grants be administered by the center or the faculty member's home department? Will it be possible to share administration and in what cases could that be appropriate? What process will be used to assign or share credit for extramural funding between the center and the Principal Investigator's department?
11. **Staffing.** It is important to identify faculty and staff who plan to participate in the center's activities. By what mechanism is the participation of new members solicited? Where the interests of centers and departments intersect, it may be important to clarify how activities of participants (faculty and staff) are allocated or credited among participants' various units, or to have procedures for engaging interested parties in discussion of this topic. How will administrative support be provided? Is it adequate to support the mission of the center? If an existing campus unit or an academic department will provide such support, include this information in the letters of endorsement appended.
12. **Membership Policies.** Describe the policies and requirements for approving both internal and external members, including the responsibilities and benefits of membership.
13. **Faculty Participation.** Provide an initial list of participating faculty and expected contributions.
14. **Space.** Where will the center's staff and activities be housed? Is the space adequate? If there is a need for more space, what plans exist to accommodate this need? Have the departmental/sponsoring unit and school/college facilities staff been consulted? If an existing campus unit or an academic department will provide such space, include this information in the letters of endorsement appended. Has the Office of Space Management been consulted and informed of the space to be used by the Center?
15. **Endorsements.** Here, it is important to address two issues: shared, similar or overlapping interests, and shared resources. This process assumes that relevant units have received drafts of the plan and that concerns are addressed or accounted for in the final version submitted for approval. Letters of endorsement may be appended to the plan. Issues to address include:
 - a. Does the center's function or organization overlap the efforts of departments, schools, colleges, or other centers at the university?
 - b. Does the center have the support of those who may be affected by it? The plan should provide evidence that all interested units are aware of plans for establishing the center and were afforded an opportunity to comment on the plan to establish the new entity. Early communication may help in discovering individuals with similar interests and in fostering their participation.
 - c. Will the center draw on another unit's resources? ("Resources" include staff, courses, and space as well as faculty time). If so, those units should be asked to provide a memo of support for the endeavor, and in it, to articulate a shared understanding of their contribution to the center.
 - d. Proposals should include written comments on the proposal, and endorsements from department chairs, deans, directors, and/or key faculty who will provide essential support for and who have an interest in the new center.
16. **Evaluation.** What is the proposed evaluation process for the center? The process should reflect the size and breadth of the center's activities. Explain the goals and expectations of accomplishment (these must involve clear outcomes and measurable impacts and they will serve as key elements in the review at the time renewal is considered).

17. **Impacts.** Will the new C&I draw new kinds of exceptionally talented faculty and students? Is the focal area critically important to the success of the University? Is it potentially transforming? Will it allow Rutgers to become the leading program among peer institutions? Does it impact on others beyond those participating in the initiative itself? Does it increase the potential for conducting higher levels of research? Does it increase the potential for securing major grant funding?
18. **Timeframe.** Describe the proposed timeframe for securing the requested commitments and moving forward with establishment of the center.
19. **Life Cycle:** Growth or discontinuation. C&Is should have clearly defined missions that address specific goals. The issues that stimulate creation of these units will evolve, and it's important to consider the ongoing need for the center. The proposal should address the expected life cycle for the center: Under what circumstances should it cease to exist? For example, centers should be closed when faculty cease to participate, when new leaders cannot be identified, when external resources that support the center are no longer available, or when its original purpose is no longer relevant. The proposal must include specific "sunset" provisions appropriate to the center being proposed.

Annual Report Information
(To be posted on VPR website)

C&I Annual Reports should include, but not be limited to, the following information. Additional information may be requested by the reporting unit.

- a. Changes from prior year. An assessment of changes from the prior year in the center's status with regard to the basic characteristics of a successful University research center outlined above.
- b. Progress. A summary of progress toward the objectives cited in the prior year's annual report.
- c. Objectives. Updated short- and longer-term objectives.
- d. Quantitative benchmarks. (See VPRED website for more information on benchmarks.)
 - a. In a center's initial annual report, a listing of quantitative benchmarks should be accompanied by retrospective tables providing historical performance.
 - b. In subsequent annual reports, the center's current year performance with respect to its quantitative benchmarks should be added to the data compiled for prior years.
- e. Financial Status. A year end budget showing all sources of income (i.e. grants, service fees, membership fees, F&A return, etc.) and expenses. Revenue and expense projections for the upcoming year.
- f. Publications. A listing of publications that are a part of the center's programs.
- g. Awards and proposals. A summary of the center's research awards and proposals. (These data can be provided by the Office of Sponsored Research.)
- h. Public-Private Partnerships. A summary of public and private partnerships; indicate any resources (both financial and intellectual) that these partnerships have generated.

Benchmarks (Examples)
(To be posted on VPR website)

Faculty

Center publications: number; index of quality/impact

Citations of center publications

Intellectual property disclosures, patents, licenses, start-ups

Center faculty who are members of the national academies or comparable bodies

Center faculty awards from professional societies

Other center faculty honors/recognition

Collaborations

Internal: departments/schools represented by faculty involved in collaborative research

Public-Private Partnerships: academic institutions, industrial partners, federal laboratories, other external entities involved in collaborative center research

Education

Educational programs leading to a degree

Courses which are part of a degree program

Training programs

Other educational programs, including symposia and colloquia for internal and external audiences

Outreach

Industrial/external relations programs

Educational outreach programs (e.g., high school students, teachers)

Service to society

Funding

Externally funded research awards

Total center award activity (including awards to center-affiliated faculty that are an integral part of the center's program but are administered by the department)

Research funded by University or center funds

Research expenditures

Research proposals submitted

Resources

Diversity of funding sources

Amount of discretionary funds

Personnel

Facilities and assets

Tangible return to Rutgers

Fiscal return

Support for students/fellows (doctoral, postdoctoral, undergraduate)

Shared research facilities

Intellectual property