

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Research
AREA: Research Organizations

Number: 08.02.01

SUBJECT: Policy for the Establishment, Evaluation and Discontinuation of Research Organizations

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document provides guidance concerning the rationale and procedures for establishing research clusters, institutes, centers, core facilities, and laboratories (hereafter referred to as Research Organizations or RO). This document governs those Research Organizations that receive direct financial or other support, including space, from the University of Houston (UH). In particular, they apply to all ROs that receive, or expect to receive, direct return of overhead monies generated by research grants and contracts from the UH Division of Research. Also, this document applies to those entities of the UH that represent themselves as ROs without actually using that name with reporting structures that are at the college or departmental level.

This MAPP does not pertain to academic centers and institutes for which approval and oversight are provided by the appropriate Department Chair(s) and Dean(s) in concert with the Committee on Academic Centers and Institutes.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Research Organizations: A Research Organization (RO), for the purposes of this MAPP, is a cluster, institute, center, or core facility based at the University of Houston whose primary purpose is research and development, and/or scholarly and creative activity among University of Houston faculty.
- B. Core Facilities: Provide critical research equipment and infrastructure to a broad user community - both internal and external to the institution. Ongoing operations of core facilities are typically covered by user fees and service charges with a defined chargeback mechanism. The facilities are generally operated under direction of a facility manager under the oversight of a faculty user committee which reports to the Vice Chancellor/Vice President (VC/VP) for Research and Technology Transfer.

III. RATIONALE

- A. Research Organizations exist to enhance the educational and/or research activities of the University of Houston and to provide the critical mass to attain national recognition, pursue center grants and partner with other institutions and industry. The VC/VP for Research and Technology Transfer will maintain a list of recognized Research Organizations.
- B. Research Organizations are multidisciplinary groups of investigators that include and draw on the strengths of multiple academic departments and colleges. These ROs are faculty-driven, multilevel frameworks that connect researchers with expertise in various disciplines in a multi-campus system with industry partners and funding agencies. They provide an inclusive foundation for collective scholarly activity and foster the sharing of ideas. The overarching goal is to develop a critical

mass of skills within the UH System (UHS) that promotes the mission of the University.

- C. Research organizations are primarily “scientific,” meaning that they engage in research that is empirical and oriented to methods that require empirical observation and methods. They may also have components devoted to scholarship, education, training, and/or dissemination. They may also be a combination of these three types of ROs. These Research Organizations are not Academic Centers that have instruction or training as a primary purpose and which have separate guidelines in [MAPP 12.03.03](#), Procedures for Establishing and Operating Academic Institutes and Centers.

IV. REPORTING STRUCTURE

- A. Research Organizations are distinguished by their reporting structure. Research Clusters, Institutes, Centers, or Core Facilities are recognized as a University, College or Department RO. A University level RO must be interdisciplinary and typically involves multiple colleges and departments. University ROs report directly to the Division of Research. College or Department ROs may or may not be interdisciplinary. A College level RO reports to the Dean of the College and typically (but not necessarily) involves multiple departments. A Departmental RO reports to the Departmental Chair, and is usually centered on activities of faculty within that department. Both College and Departmental ROs may expand to include other faculty and departments across colleges and may reach a level where the RO could apply for designation as a University level RO reporting to the Division of Research.
- B. University ROs may be built around core facilities, which provide critical research equipment and infrastructure to a broad user community—both internal and external to the institution. Ongoing operations of core facilities are typically covered by user fees and service charges with a defined chargeback mechanism. The facilities are generally operated under direction of a facility manager under the oversight of a faculty user committee which reports to the Vice Chancellor/Vice President (VC/VP) for Research and Technology Transfer.

V. FUNCTIONS

The functions of a Research Organization may be any, all of, or more than the following:

- A. A Research Organization is a non-profit organization that engages in research and educational activities.
- B. A Research Organization may be identified primarily with one discipline, be multi-disciplinary, may support research in a wide variety of areas, and may involve more than one UHS university or institution. These organizations may involve research that is primarily “scientific,” “scholarly or creative,” “educational and dissemination,” or a combination of these types.
- C. A Research Organization may be supported by appropriated funds or depend entirely on sponsorship by outside agencies and foundations.
- D. An agreement between a Research Organization and the VC/VP of Research and Technology Transfer must provide at least the following documented in Section VI.

VI. PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING A RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

The operations of each Research Organization (RO) must guarantee appropriate fiscal controls, as well as oversight of the academic/research mission of the RO. Each RO must have policies to ensure that the operations conform to state and federal statutes and regulations, requirements of funding agencies supporting research conducted by (or awarded to) the RO, Board of Regents policies, UHS Administrative Memoranda (SAMs), and other institutional policies.

- A. Proposal Development - To establish a new RO, a group of faculty members should develop a proposal based upon a two to five year strategic plan. The proposal must be approved by the Department Chairs and/or Dean(s) of the department(s)/college(s) involved, and submitted to the Office of the VC/VP for Research and Technology Transfer. The Office of the VC/VP for Research and Technology Transfer will act on the proposal within three months, with final notification from the VC/VP for Research and Technology Transfer. All proposals will be reviewed by the Research and Scholarship Committee. The VC/VP for Research and Technology Transfer may establish an ad hoc advisory committee as needed.
- B. Content And Form Of The Proposal Submission - The proposal should include a statement of objectives, a list of faculty and other participants and an indication of how the Research Organization will be funded.

It should include the following components as a minimum:

- 1. **Introduction** - Presents a reason for the existence of the proposed RO
 - a) Provide a brief overview of the research area. Provide a brief history of the research area in general and at UH, specifically.
 - b) What other universities/entities claim this area of research as an area of expertise?
 - c) How will this RO be differentiated from its competitors?
 - d) How will this RO respond to needs not currently being addressed by the competition?
 - e) What are the competitive obstacles to success?
- 2. **Goals and Objectives** - The benefits to the UH should be presented along with the benefits to the faculty involved.
 - a) How will this RO fit into departments and colleges within UH?
 - b) How will UH's existing strengths be leveraged in forming this RO?
- 3. **Organization, governance, and membership should be delineated** - Faculty membership can include both tenure-track and research faculty. The role of the faculty in the RO should be defined and standards should be set for faculty involvement. Faculty members listed as RO members should be active participants in the activities of the RO with defined roles and research programs, including a clear statement of how they are involved with the RO.
 - a) Describe the proposed RO hiring plan in terms of staffing (e.g., faculty, post docs, students, staff, etc.).

- b) Describe the management of the RO.
- c) Describe how the business processes will ensure efficient operations and best Return on Investment (ROI).
- d) Provide an organizational chart of the RO.
- e) Describe the relationship with industry or other institutions.
- f) Describe the relationship with the UH Center for Industrial Partnerships (CIP).
- g) Describe the RO advisory board, if any.
- h) Describe the administrative organization of the RO, including rules governing membership and how prospective members will join or leave. The role of the Director and his/her authority over the members in the RO should be delineated. Describe the plans for ensuring that information on activities completed by the RO is available to the appropriate administrators, department heads and Deans.
- i) Describe the rules governing how the director is chosen, appointed and terminated, whether there is a governing or advisory council, and how it is constituted and the frequency of meetings of the officers of the RO.
- j) Describe the procedures for the dissolution of the RO.

4. **Budget and Fiscal Accountability** - The operating budget of the RO should be submitted for the first year. If funds are being requested, include the following:

- a) What faculty lines and amounts are necessary to fund the RO?
- b) What additional personnel resources are required?
- c) What startup package levels are necessary to fund the RO?
- d) Specify and define applicable charging mechanisms for use of equipment and facilities and how these funds are used to support the RO.

If funds are not being requested then provide documentation of financial operations and business practices of the RO, including statements on financial accountability.

5. **Space** – Space requirements should be identified.

- a) Where will the new RO be housed?
- b) What facilities, equipment, and technology are needed?

6. **Commitments** - Departmental or College commitments should be described.

7. **Members** – A listing of faculty who will be members of the RO, along with two-page curriculum vitae for each member should be submitted.

8. **Reporting Point** - The proposal should state to whom the RO will report. If the RO will be primarily in one department, then the RO will report to that department chair. If the proposed activity is primarily within one college, then reporting will be to the Dean of that college. Truly multi-disciplinary ROs that are “scientific” and involve multiple departments, colleges, and/or external institutions (i.e., University level) may report directly to the VC/VP for Research and Technology Transfer. The VC/VP for Research and Technology Transfer must be consulted prior to submission of a request for establishment of a multidisciplinary University-level RO.
9. **Funding** - A list of recently funded activities related to the proposed RO and projected sources of future funding should be provided.
 - a) How will existing grants and related external funding support the Research Organization? Include specific IDC credit splitting arrangements negotiated at the departmental, college, or University level.
 - b) Will existing research dollars be brought into the University with any targeted hires?
 - c) What funding agencies and opportunities exist for the research generated?
 - d) How will these funding opportunities be pursued (e.g., a strategic research development plan)?
 - e) What are the sources of these funds? (Pay particular attention to sources such as philanthropic, graduate student fund generation, federal initiatives, state line items, IDC return levels, etc.).
 - f) Detail the projected Return on Investment.
10. **Impact** - How the new RO will impact the UH/UHS.
 - a) What are the specific impacts on UH’s mission to double research in five years (in terms of projected research expenditures)?
 - b) What are the projected impacts on graduate and/or undergraduate student programs (e.g., new degree programs, new tracks in existing programs, increasing student involvement in research - for undergraduate, this ties in with the SACS QEP)?
 - c) What are the specific impacts on graduate and/or undergraduate student enrollments, and thus formula funding?

VII. REVIEW PROCEDURES

An agreement between a Research Organization and the VC/VP of Research and Technology Transfer must provide at least the following:

- A. That the VC/VP for Research and Technology Transfer approves of the creation, existence, and purposes of the Research Organization.
- B. That the Research Organization may not carry on activities that do not, in their entirety, support the mission of the university.
- C. That the Research Organization may be built around core facilities.

- D. A RO may be approved for the full 5-year period or may be approved for a one-year probationary period. A RO may be terminated for a variety of factors (see Section VIII, Discontinuation of Research Organizations).
- E. That the Research Organization will undergo a review every four years, with an extensive review at the fourth year, prior to the fifth year, which is the original length of the charter. The review period and depth of the evaluation will depend on the nature of the Research Organization. The charter will not automatically renew, but will be renewed based upon performance according to the fourth year review. The Research and Scholarship Committee will play a key role in this review process.
- F. That the Research Organization is subject to all policies and procedures of the Board of Regents and UH System administration, and must submit to reporting and auditing requirements as established by the UHS administration.
- G. That the Research Organization will submit a business plan and analysis relating planned pursuits to actual results to the Office of the VC/VP for Research and Technology Transfer.
- H. That the Research Organization will submit an annual report with updated contact information for its Director and Officers by January 31 to the Office of the VC/VP for Research and Technology Transfer.

VIII. DISCONTINUATION OF RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS

The discontinuation of a Research Organization may be due to any, all of, or more than the following:

- A. A Research Organization may be voluntarily terminated by the relevant administrative body or director.
- B. A RO may be terminated due to lack of activity, faculty departure, or other indications that the RO is not active.
- C. A RO may be terminated due to significant lack of productivity in terms of scholarly activities (articles, books, etc.) and/or submitted grants, if applicable. In addition, if training is a goal, lack of participation of trainees.
- D. A RO may be terminated due to a significant reduction in faculty support of the RO evidenced by a decline in faculty participation, resource sharing (e.g., if applicable, credit splits to support the research organization).
- E. A RO may be terminated due to evidence of problems with leadership or support because there is no named director, a failure to respond to questions, a failure to provide the required two-year and five-year progress reports, and/or a discontinuance of departmental or college support.
- F. A RO may be terminated due to lack of financial viability.
- G. A RO may be terminated due to evidence of financial misconduct, scientific misconduct, and/or related ethical misconduct or financial mismanagement.

- H. A RO may be terminated due to failure to meet established goals for external support or return on investment, especially if the research organization received startup funds or other sources of support from the University.
- I. A RO may be terminated due to duplication of efforts or other indications that the research organization is redundant.
- J. A RO may be terminated due to space utilization that is not commensurate with the level of activity if attempts at relocation have not been successful.

**University Level Research Organizations
(Additional Criteria if the RO reports to Division of Research (DOR))**

- K. A DOR reporting RO may be terminated or reclassified if the RO no longer meets the criteria for a University level Research Organization.
- L. A DOR reporting RO may be reclassified if the services provided are primarily core facility services, in which case the RO would be considered a core facility.
- M. A DOR reporting RO can be reclassified if there is evidence that it is not multi-disciplinary and does not involve multiple departments, colleges, and/or external institutions.

IX. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Interim Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer

Review: Every three years on or before August 31

X. APPROVAL

Ramanan Krishnamoorti
Interim Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer

Renu Khator
President

Date of President's Approval: _____ August 10, 2015

XI. REFERENCES

[MAPP 12.03.03](#) – Procedures for Establishing and Operating Academic Institutes and Centers
[Research and Scholarship Committee Web Site](#)
[Division of Research Web Site](#)

REVISION LOG

Revision Number	Approved Date	Description of Changes
1	08/10/2015	Initial version