



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 74.14: University-Recognized Centers and Institutes

DATE: April 12, 2024

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to ensure compliance with the university policy concerning centers and institutes. Centers and institutes provide stimulating and organized opportunities to enhance research, particularly of an interdisciplinary nature, as well as instruction and outreach beyond what is possible from the traditional academic units. It is the desire of the university that these innovative activities succeed, grow, and achieve excellence. This OP is designed to enhance the future success of centers and institutes at TTU.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in April of even-numbered years by the Office of Research & Innovation (OR&I) with substantive revisions presented via the Provost and Senior Vice President (PSVP) to the President by May 15.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Definitions

- a. Center: A university-recognized center is composed of faculty and, potentially, staff and students who declare a shared technical interest and pursue shared research, instruction, and/or outreach as an enterprise that involves common activities; these may include cooperative research and scholarship, shared resources, operations, facilities, and personnel.
- b. Institute: A university-recognized institute is broader and more complex than a center and may be a collection of centers or an amalgamation of entities.
- c. University Official: The person to whom the center or institute director reports (e.g., a dean, a vice president, or the PSVP) may be referred to as the “university official.”

2. Policies and Procedures

The intent of a university-recognized center or institute as an approved organizational unit of the university is to help the faculty, staff, and students succeed in the pursuit of excellence and achievement in research, instruction, and outreach. In the pursuit of that goal, recognition, registration, and review of centers and institutes confirms a general commitment by the university to the success of the enterprise. A center or institute may not offer formal courses for degree credit or award degrees unless specifically authorized by the PSVP.

Accountability and performance-based management are the responsibility of the university official to whom the proposed center or institute director reports as identified in Attachment A.

An up-to-date database of university-recognized centers and institutes will be maintained in the Office of Research and Innovation (OR&I).

a. Establishment

Faculty groups with common interests may find it appropriate to organize themselves in a common focus to establish an identifiable unit within the university. Major criteria for the formation of such units are:

- (1) Relevance to the university's academic, research, and/or service mission;
- (2) Potential benefits to be gained by the formation of such a unit; and
- (3) Direct contributions to achieving the goals in the university's strategic plan.

In this context, the university is authorized to establish centers and institutes as they pertain to the academic, research, and service mission of the institution. Each university-recognized center and institute must conform to university policies as well as to state regulations and statutes and requires appropriate oversight, reporting, and review.

Each center or institute must be established by completing Attachment A. Any university financial commitment to the proposed center or institute must be documented (Attachment A, section 5.). Approval shall be obtained from the university official (for example, a dean, vice president, the PSVP, and so forth). Final approval shall then be obtained from OR&I. If the center or institute is approved, all documents will be filed with OR&I.

b. Modification

Proposed changes in name, mission, direction, director, or university official shall be submitted through the university official to OR&I by completing Attachment B.

c. Dissolution

A university-recognized center or institute may be proposed for dissolution by the director at any time through the university official by submitting Attachment B to OR&I.

Alternatively, if at any time the university official believes that it is in the university's better interests to dissolve a center or institute contrary to the director's wishes, the university official may request in writing with cause that OR&I initiate a review. OR&I will request in writing a response from the center or institute director in a timely manner not to exceed six months. If disagreement between the director and the university official persists, OR&I shall charge the University Research Committee to conduct a review. The committee will report its findings to OR&I, which will implement the committee's recommendations.

If dissolved, the center or institute will develop a written plan providing for the timely disposition of any property or assets, to be approved by the university official. When disposition is completed, the university official and OR&I shall be notified in writing.

d. Review

Centers and institutes will be evaluated annually to ascertain if their continued existence is in the best interest of the university and its total program.

Centers and institutes will be reviewed on a three-year rotation after establishment to determine progress toward achieving established goals and will receive an annual performance review. Centers and institutes will be randomly assigned to one of three groups and submission of an annual or triennial report will be required.

- (1) Annual Report: Gathers basic information such as website management and engagement metrics. The goal of this report is to ensure the center or institute is active and maintaining up-to-date information for external audiences.
- (2) Triennial Report: Gathers in-depth information related to the center or institute work over the last three years. The report gathers information on the accomplishments, plans, and alignment with university strategic plans and initiatives, as well as engagement, collaborative, and publication metrics. Basic reporting measures found in the Annual Report are also included in the Triennial Report. The goal of the Triennial Report is to provide a thorough understanding of the work, partnership, and productivity of each center or institute.

Following the review, centers and institutes will be given recommendations by the committee and assigned active, inactive, or probationary status.

- (1) Active Status: centers or institutes assigned active status will be reviewed annually.
- (2) Inactive Status: centers or institutes will be assigned inactive status if no activity has been reported after two years. If a center or institute is assigned inactive status, the center or institute website will be removed from public access. Status changes will be reviewed annually.
- (3) Probationary Status: centers or institutes assigned probationary status will be reviewed again after a period specified by the review committee. The timeline for subsequent review will begin on the first day of the next fiscal year.

The review will be initiated by OR&I by notifying the director and the university official to whom he/she reports. A review team will be appointed by OR&I after nominations are solicited from the center or institute director and the university official. OR&I has the option to appoint one or two members who are external to the university, but they should not represent a majority.

[Attachment A: Request to Establish a University-Recognized Center or Institute](#)

[Attachment B: Request to Modify or Dissolve a University-Recognized Center or Institute](#)