



7.9.1 Establishment and Review of Organized Research Units

Chapter 7 - Research and Sponsored Programs	Original Effective Date: June 2014
Section: 7.9 Organized Research Units	Date Last Reviewed: November 2021
Responsible Entity: Vice President for Research	Date Last Revised: November 2021

I. Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures and criteria for establishing, reviewing, and terminating Organized Research Units at UT Health San Antonio.

II. Scope

This policy applies to employees seeking to establish a new Organized Research Unit or who direct and/or are affiliated with an existing Organized Research Unit, as well as supervising department Chairs, Deans and Vice Presidents.

III. Policy

A. Functions

An Organized Research Unit (ORU) is established to provide support for interdisciplinary research that complements the academic goals of departments of instruction and research. These units are typically referenced as Institutes, Laboratories, or Centers. The functions of an ORU are to:

1. Facilitate research and research collaborations;
2. Disseminate research results through conferences, meetings, and other activities;
3. Strengthen graduate and undergraduate education by providing students with training opportunities and access to facilities;
4. Seek extramural research funds; and,
5. Carry out UT Health San Antonio (University) and public service programs related to the ORU's research expertise.

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B. Procedures for Establishment

An ORU is established upon the President's approval of a proposal submitted by the faculty via the Council of Deans and the University Research Strategic Advisory Council, to the Vice President for Research.

1. Each ORU must be headed by a Director and must have an independent external advisory committee.
2. Proposals to establish an ORU will be reviewed pursuant to guidelines established by the Research Strategic Advisory Council.

C. Procedures for Review

Periodic review of ORUs is necessary to ensure consistency with institutional goals and priorities, and the institution's need to sustain a capacity to innovate.

1. Each ORU will be reviewed annually by the individual to whom they report (typically a dean or vice president) as part of the annual budget process.
2. In addition, ORUs will be reviewed at least every six years by an independent external advisory committee appointed by the President, in consultation with the Vice President for Research and the ORU Director. Committee reports will be forwarded to the President, who will determine whether the ORU should continue, be phased out, or be discontinued.

D. Maintenance of Reviews and Approvals

Documentation of the establishment of ORUs and the required six-year review must be filed with the Office of the Vice President of Research, which will maintain and make available to the President an inventory of the ORUs throughout the University.

IV. Definitions

When used in this document with initial capital letter(s), the following words have the meaning set forth below unless a different meaning is required by context.

Units included as ORUs normally carry one of the designations defined below. Institute, Laboratory, and Center are the most commonly used designations.

Institute – a major unit that coordinates and promotes faculty and student research on a continuing basis over an area so wide that it extends across department, school or college, or campus boundaries. The unit enhances and supports broad-based research efforts. The unit may also engage in public service activities stemming from its research program, within the limits of its stated objectives.

Laboratory – a non-departmental organization that establishes and maintains facilities for research in several departments, sometimes with the help of full-time research staff

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appointed in accordance with institutional policy. A Laboratory in which substantially all participating faculty members are from the same academic department is a departmental Laboratory and not an ORU.

Center – a non-departmental unit that furthers research in a designated field or unit engaged primarily in providing research facilities for other units and departments.

V. Related References

Regents Rules and Regulations

[Rule 80307](#) – *Naming Policy*

VI. Review and Approval History

- A. The approving authority of this policy is the University Executive Committee.
- B. The review frequency cycle is set for three years following the last review date, a time period that is not mandated by regulatory, accreditation, or other authority.

Effective Date	Action Taken	Approved By	Date Approved
06/2014	Policy Origination		
09/2021	Policy Revision, discretionary edits		
11/2021	Policy Revision	Executive Committee	11/19/2021