



PROCEDURE FOR ESTABLISHING AND GOVERNING INSTITUTES & CENTERS THAT CONDUCT RESEARCH AS PART OF THEIR MANDATE AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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Institutes and Centers are organizational structures outside academic departments, which are intended to address specific topics or issues and support the mission of the university.

These structures encourage faculty, students, and staff to engage in research, educational, and outreach activities at a scale and scope significantly beyond that of a single or small group of scholars.

This document provides the procedures to establish or sunset institutes and centers that conduct research. Therefore, this document sets University procedures for institutes and centers that conduct research as part of their mandate.

1. DEFINITIONS

These labels may not always conform with external funding constraints, which may take precedence. Without such constraints, every effort should be made to maintain consistency in organization structure and naming.

- 1.1. **Initiatives:** An initiative is the activity of the university, or a school or multiple schools to further a strategic objective.
 - 1.1.1. Depending upon its scope, an initiative may develop into a center or institute.
- 1.2. **Institute:** An institute typically crosses multiple schools and coordinates significant efforts engaging faculty, students, staff, and postdoctoral fellows and can contain one or more centers within its structure. Institutes are aligned with the strategic interests of the University.
 - 1.2.1. An institute furthers interdisciplinary research, may provide education and outreach, and may provide infrastructure and facilities for use by units across the University.
 - 1.2.2. Designation as an institute occurs by virtue of one or more of the following criteria.
 - 1.2.2.1. Comparative size and breadth of its efforts, including research; and
 - 1.2.2.2. National and international impact.
 - 1.2.3. An institute may be responsible for the operation and oversight of central infrastructure.

- 1.2.4. An institute is established upon approval by the President or jointly by the President's representatives, consisting of the Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, and Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation.
- 1.3. **Center:** A center is a unit contained within a single school or multiple schools, or within an institute, but has smaller budgetary implications for the University. A center is aligned with the strategic interests of one or more schools or an institute, and the university.
 - 1.3.1. A center furthers research in a designated field, may provide education and outreach, and may provide research infrastructure and facilities to units across the University.
 - 1.3.2. With an increase in its scope or scale, a case may be made for a center to be renamed as an institute.
 - 1.3.3. A center is established upon approval by the President or jointly by the President's representatives consisting of the Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, and Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation.
 - 1.3.4. This approval is based on an evaluation by the Deans of the relevant schools or the Director(s) of the relevant institute.

2. CRITERIA

- 2.1. **Funding:** The activities of an institute (or center) must be sustainably funded, typically with the majority portion of support from external sources, including philanthropy.
 - 2.1.1. External funding is particularly important to support the scholarly activities and administration of the center.
- 2.2. **Reporting:**
 - 2.2.1. A center with membership in a single school typically reports to the appropriate Dean. In exceptional cases, a center may have membership spanning two or more schools and report to the Deans of those schools.
 - 2.2.2. For larger centrally coordinated interdisciplinary initiatives, an institute or center reports to the Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, or Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation.
- 2.3. **Activities:** An institute or center is typically based on the activities of a synergistic group of faculty members and research staff who engage in a common theme or topic.
 - 2.3.1. Typically, an institute or center brings together expertise from one or multiple academic units to address issues and problems that require the knowledge, perspectives, and methods of multiple disciplines.
 - 2.3.2. An institute or center may participate in educational programs with the understanding that academic programs are housed in departments and schools.

2.4. **Approval:**

- 2.4.1. An institute is established upon approval by the President or the President's representative, based on a joint evaluation by the Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, and Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation.
- 2.4.2. A center is established upon approval by the President based on a joint endorsement by the Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, and Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation.
- 2.4.3. The approval process begins with an evaluation by the Dean(s) of the relevant school(s), or the Director of the relevant institute proposing the center.

2.5. **Governance:** The chief officer of an institute or center is the Director.

- 2.5.1. An institute may also be led by up to three equal co-Directors. A center may also be led by up to three equal co-Directors from the same school.
 - 2.5.1.1. The appointment(s) must adhere to the rules and constraints associated with the funding for the institute.
 - 2.5.1.2. The Director or co-Directors of a university-level institute or center are appointed by President or the President's representative based on an evaluation by the Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation who considers the recommendations from the Deans of its participating schools.
- 2.5.2. With concurrence of the President or the President's representative, the Director or co-Directors of a center are appointed or removed by the Deans of its participating schools or the Director(s) of an institute, where the Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs and Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation are informed promptly about the appointment or removal.

2.6. **Oversight:** Each institute or center must be overseen by an Advisory Board.

- 2.6.1. The Advisory Board must include a representative of the President, typically the Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, or Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation, who may name a delegate.
- 2.6.2. The Advisory Board must include the Director and the Dean(s) of the relevant school(s). Deans on the Advisory Board represent USC schools with significant faculty involvement in the institute.
- 2.6.3. For school-level initiatives, Deans facilitate discussions of the Advisory Board as Chairs or co-Chairs.
- 2.6.4. For a university-level and cross-school initiatives, the President's representative, typically the Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, or Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation, or their delegate, facilitates the discussion of the Advisory Board.
- 2.6.5. If a university-level institute or center assists in delivering educational programs, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Dean of the Graduate School will typically serve on the Advisory Board.

- 2.7. **Faculty appointments:** Institutes and centers do not grant tenure or make faculty appointments.
 - 2.7.1. The Faculty Handbook sets forth the policies governing faculty appointments.
 - 2.7.2. Institutes and centers can appoint fellows, scholars-in-residence, etc., subject to review by Deans or President's representative, typically the Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, or Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation.
 - 2.7.3. Oversight of the faculty affiliated with an institute or center remain the purview of the department and school in which the faculty member is based.
- 2.8. **Curricular and degree programs:** Institutes and centers do not have jurisdiction over courses or curricula and cannot offer courses for credit toward a degree.
 - 2.8.1. With approval from the relevant Deans, institutes and centers can work with schools and departments to develop interdisciplinary programs in the domain of the institute's interdisciplinary themes.
 - 2.8.2. An institute or center may co-sponsor courses or curricula that are offered by an academic unit to which regular full-time tenure-track faculty are appointed.
 - 2.8.3. While institutes or centers may support students, only schools and departments may recommend graduate or undergraduate students for admission to the University.

3. PROPOSING AN INSTITUTE OR CENTER

To establish a new institute or center, a proposal should be submitted by the Deans of the schools involved to the Senior Vice President for Research & Innovation with the following information.

- 3.1. Institute (or center) name, where naming conflicts with existing USC centers & institutes must be avoided.
- 3.2. Rationale, vision, and mission of the proposed institute.
- 3.3. Relationship with any relevant existing USC institutes or centers.
- 3.4. Names of participating faculty members.
 - 3.4.1. Projections of the number of affiliated faculty members, students, research staff appointees, and other personnel over a five-to-ten-year period.
- 3.5. Name of the Director or name(s) of the co-Director(s).
- 3.6. Names of the supporting Deans and schools.
- 3.7. Business model for the institute (or center), sources of funding, restrictions imposed by the funding sources, indirect cost arrangements with the schools, space and human resource needs, and other relevant information.
 - 3.7.1. Information must be provided about the funding required to support the institute, both the initial startup cost and the recurring cost of its operation,

and the internal and external sources of that funding, including specific external funding opportunities.

- 3.7.2. Immediate space requirements and projection of future space requirement.
- 3.7.3. Resources to ensure compliance with university IT and cyber security policies.
- 3.8. Organizational chart.
- 3.9. Evaluation metrics.
- 3.10. Equipment and other infrastructure needs, and explanation of how these needs will be met.
- 3.11. Anticipated educational and outreach efforts, and their relationship with the schools and central units in the University.
 - 3.11.1. While institutes may be involved in the delivery of academic programs, approval of these programs will follow normal University procedures and responsibility for will lie with the appropriate Dean of a school and the Provost, and, in the case of the Health Science schools, also with the Senior Vice President of Health Affairs.

4. REVIEW

The review of a proposal to establish an institute or center will be conducted by the Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation and result in a recommendation to the President or the President's representative, jointly the Provost and Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, considering the following matters.

- 4.1. The articulated goals of the institute or center are consistent with the research and academic priorities of the University and the purposes for creating institutes and centers.
- 4.2. The institute or center has a viable near-term financial plan and a long-term sustainable business model, including available funding opportunities that have been applied to or realistically targeted.
- 4.3. The space and other infrastructure resources necessary for the successful operation of the institute or center are available.
- 4.4. The institute or center has a plan to adhere to federal open data and open access mandates
- 4.5. The institute or center has a cybersecurity plan and a lead school or administrative unit assumes responsibility for all IT issues.

5. INSTITUTES OR CENTERS, REVENUE CENTERS, AND RECOVERY OF INDIRECT COSTS

- 5.1. Recovery of indirect costs is normally credited as revenue to the Revenue Center (typically school) that performed the work that generated the overhead. In some instances, an institute may become a revenue center.
 - 5.1.1. Alternative arrangements are possible based on the agreement of the Deans overseeing the revenue centers and approval by the Provost and Senior Vice President of Health Affairs.

- 5.1.2. The President or the President's representatives, typically the Provost or Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, may alter the allocation of recovered indirect costs at any time, particularly as the budgetary and academic circumstances of the University change.

6. WEBSITE REQUIREMENTS

Each institute or center is required to maintain a current website, at least containing the following.

- 6.1. Name, as approved, where institutes or centers may not change their name without approval from the Vice President for Research and, if relevant, the funder.
- 6.2. Vision and mission.
- 6.3. Descriptions of institute (or center) activities and programs.
- 6.4. Descriptions of research projects.
- 6.5. Contact information, including phone number, email address, and mailing address.
- 6.6. Director or co-Director(s) and their academic affiliation(s).
- 6.7. Participating faculty, their academic affiliations, and membership criteria.
- 6.8. Names and contact information for all staff.
- 6.9. Advisory Board members.
- 6.10. List of publications and other professional accomplishments.
- 6.11. Information for students and others about how to become involved.
- 6.12. IT certification that the website is compliant with minimum standards to attach to university network.

7. INSTITUTE OR CENTER REVIEWS

- 7.1. An institute (or center) must be reviewed at least once every five years by its Advisory Board to ensure continuing relevance and productivity based on the following criteria:
 - 7.1.1. The articulated goals of the institute or center are consistent with the research and academic priorities of the University and the purposes for creating institutes.
 - 7.1.2. The institute or center has a viable near-term financial plan and a long-term sustainable business model.
 - 7.1.3. The space and other infrastructure resources necessary for the successful operation of the institute or center are available.
 - 7.1.4. All internal financial support is reviewed and adjusted as appropriate following the review.
 - 7.1.5. The institute or center has a robust cybersecurity plan and a lead school or administrative unit has assumed responsibility for all IT issues

- 7.2. All university-level institutes (and centers) must be reviewed by an ad hoc committee at least every five years, with preferably at least two reviewers external to USC, as constituted by the President or the President's representative, typically the Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs or Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation.
 - 7.2.1. The review should include an evaluation of the Director or co-Directors.
 - 7.2.2. The role of the Director should be reviewed to assess administration, fiscal responsibility, climate in the center, role in synergizing collaborative relationships within and outside USC, intellectual leadership, and the broader impact of the center on its constituent schools,
- 7.3. All school-level institutes (and centers) must be reviewed by an ad hoc committee at least every five years, one that preferably includes at least two reviewers external to USC, as constituted by the relevant Deans.
 - 7.3.1. The review should include an evaluation of the Director or co-Directors.
 - 7.3.2. The role of the Director should be reviewed to assess administration, fiscal responsibility, climate in the center, role in synergizing collaborative relationships within and outside the school, intellectual leadership, and the broader impact of the center on the school,
- 7.4. Internal and external reviews must include at the least the following criteria.
 - 7.4.1. The institute (or center) produces a high-quality output, e.g., research and publications, in reasonable proportion to its infrastructure and resources.
 - 7.4.2. Its activities enhance the research reputation of the University.
 - 7.4.3. It enables scholarship that would not otherwise be possible at USC.
 - 7.4.4. It involves students and postdoctoral fellows in its research activities.
 - 7.4.5. It has financial stability based on external funding or philanthropy.
 - 7.4.6. There is continued interest from faculty and students.
- 7.5. The review committee must transmit its report and recommendations to the relevant Dean or Deans for school-level efforts, who, after internal review, must share it with the President, Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation, and the institute or center Advisory Board.
 - 7.5.1. Based on a review, or if circumstances warrant at any other time, the institute (or center) may be discontinued through a decision of the Advisory Board.
- 7.6. For university-level efforts, the review committee must transmit its report and recommendations to the Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation, who, after internal review, must share it with the President, Provost, Senior Vice President of Health Affairs, and the institute or center Advisory Board.
- 7.7. Based on a review, or if circumstances warrant at any other time, based on the deliberation of the Advisory Board, the Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation may recommend discontinuance of the institute to the President, Provost, and Senior Vice President of Health Affairs.

8. Dissolution

8.1. The dissolution of a center or institute must be approved by the overseeing Dean(s) and the Senior Vice President of Research & Innovation.

8.2. Proposals for dissolution should include:

8.2.1. Name, purpose, and function of the institute or center.

8.2.2. Reason for the proposed dissolution.

8.2.3. Plan for dissolution that includes a list of personnel, services or operations to be terminated, and the disposition of any external agreements, including gifts or grants.

9. Dissolution

9.1. Exceptions to these policies and procedures are expected to be very rare and must be approved by the President or the President's representative.