Policy Name: Policy for Carleton University Research Centres
Originating/Responsible Department: Vice-President (Research and International)
Approval Authority: Senior Management Committee
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Contact: Vice-President (Research and International)

Policy:
This policy sets out definitions and principles for the creation, rights and responsibilities, monitoring and review of Carleton’s University Research Centres.

Purpose:
The objective of this policy is to ensure that Carleton University Research Centres reflect the institutional commitment to promote collaborative efforts among researchers, and to highlight momentum in disciplinary or interdisciplinary areas of research excellence.

Scope:
This policy applies to Research Centres that report and are accountable to the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International)

Procedure:
Carleton University Research Centres (CURCs) reflect the institutional commitment to promote collaborative efforts among researchers, and to highlight momentum in disciplinary or interdisciplinary areas of research excellence. The presence of sustainable, active, and productive Research Centres is indicative of the direction, vitality, creativity and innovation of Carleton’s research community. Potential graduate students, visiting scholars, and candidates for faculty positions recognize these Research Centres to be valued and serious contributors to Carleton University’s scholarship. As a result, Carleton must be systematic, coordinated, and transparent in how its Research Centres are managed and supported. This policy sets out definitions and principles for the creation, rights and responsibilities, monitoring and review of Carleton’s University Research Centres.

1. Definition of a Carleton University Research Centre

A Research Centre is a formally structured organization that does not comprise a department, institute, school, or college within the university, that is established with the purpose of advancing scholarly activity primarily through collaborative and/or interdisciplinary research, research training, research dissemination, creative endeavours, and outreach. Ideally, a CURC will provide unique training opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students, and it is actively involved in the transfer of knowledge in relevant forums and communities. The members should comprise a critical mass of productive junior and senior researchers who are already active in sustainable, collaborative initiatives with one another, as evidenced by notable joint publications and funding. There are two forms a CURC may take, wherein:
1.1 Membership includes a balance of researchers from across multiple University Faculties, along with external partners (e.g., from the community, industry, government, NGOs, or other academic institutions). These Research Centres are either linked to an area of strategic development, or have reasonable potential to represent future areas in the University’s Strategic Research Development Plan.

1.2 Membership includes a balance of faculty from Carleton University, along with research partners that have demonstrable active collaborations at a national or international level. These collaborations might be concentrated in a specific domain, and these activities have achieved a national and international reputation. These centres highlight areas of exceptional research strength at Carleton.

Carleton University Research Centres will report and be accountable to the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International). It should be clear that CURCs are not intended to reflect the work of a single faculty member or research lab, nor be tied to the life of a single project or funding initiative. There also exists considerable collaboration that reflects the synergies among researchers, but these may be at a relatively early stage of development, or the scope of these interactions may be limited to a single Faculty, or are recognized and highly valued by the local community. These collaborative initiatives should be recognized and supported, but will be accountable to their respective Faculty Deans, according to their own terms, and as such would not be considered Carleton University Research Centres. In fact, not all research collaborations require any formal recognition and designation, and the University continues to encourage the informal formation of groups of research collaborators.

2. Structure of a Carleton University Research Centre

All CURCs must have a management structure. The scale of the management structure will be dependent on the scope and nature of the Centre’s activities, and might vary as a function of objectives, size and nature of membership, and funding arrangements. However, all Research Centres must identify a Director and a Management Board.

2.1 The Director must be a full-time faculty member at Carleton University. Each CURC will identify an appropriate Director; the Director will be appointed by the Vice-President (Research and International). The Director has an obligation to
- maintain a functioning governance structure (as detailed in the CURC’s application proposal),
- ensure that the CURC meets the terms of its responsibilities, including adherence to institutional financial (i.e., recovery of overhead and indirect costs on research contracts) and professional (i.e., ethics, risk assessment) policies, procedures, and regulations
- report the activities of the CURC to the VPRI, as required.

In recognition of the ongoing activities of the CURC Director, along with the increased load to produce a performance report and renewal application, the CURC Director will receive a .5 credit teaching reduction in the year in which a renewal application is required.

2.2 The membership of the Management Board should reflect the composition of the CURC’s constituent members, and will include an ex officio member representing OVPRI. The Management Board is expected to meet at least once per year. The specific terms of reference of such Boards may vary; however, the general purpose of these Boards is to
- receive and review the annual report of the Director
- provide advice and guidance on the Centre’s activities and programs, including strategic planning, and plans for seeking and evaluating funding revenue
- oversee financial expenditures, and ensure that the Centre’s activities follow the policies, procedures, and regulations of the University
All Research Centres are expected to be sufficiently resourced in advance of seeking CURC status to achieve their objectives, and are generally expected to be financially self-sufficient through external cost recovery (i.e. grants, contracts, or donations).

3. Creating, Monitoring and Reviewing CURCs

In keeping with good governance, the University has a responsibility to establish the appropriate criteria and procedures to ensure the relevance and viability of its Research Centres. Applications for establishing a CURC will be received and reviewed three times a year. The expectation is that CURCs will reflect exceptional value to the University’s research profile, and hence are limited in numbers.

3.1 Committee review

CURCs are established under the authority of the Vice-President (Research and International) upon the recommendation of the Carleton University Research Advisory committee (READ), which comprises the Associate Deans (Research), and Directors of OVPRI. This committee will:

- facilitate the creation of new Centres
- consider applications for the creation of CURCs in terms of whether they meet the definition of a CURC, their added value to the institutional research profile, and their capacity to generate greater momentum by acquiring status as a CURC
- review the annual reports and provide in writing to the Director of the CURC the results of these reviews
- be vigilant on an ongoing basis to the possible need to review CURC Policies and Guidelines
- oversee the monitoring, renewal, or disestablishment of Centres
- maintain a list of active Centres

3.2 Approval process

Official recognition and designation of a Carleton University Research Centre is at the approval of the Vice-President (Research and International), normally on the recommendation of READ.

Proposals for the creation of a CURC should be submitted to the Carleton University Research Office at least 4 weeks in advance of the posted dates for the CURC review meeting of READ. Proposals must be comprehensive enough to allow the merits and feasibility of establishing a Research Centre to be assessed, and shall include the following:

3.2.1. Name of Research Centre.

3.2.2. Description and Justification. This shall include:

(a) a concise statement of the mission and research objectives of the proposed Research Centre and their relationship to the strategic research plan and priorities of the University

(b) a description of the scope of activities envisaged

(c) a description of the key collaborative activities and outcomes produced by members of the Research Centre to date, and/or a delineation of how different streams of research fit within a coherent structure within the Centre
(c) a description of the research benefits and opportunities likely to result from the establishment of the Research Centre, including a 3-year plan for how the proposed Centre will facilitate research among scholars within the University and in the wider community, and will provide benefits for training future researchers.

3.2.3. Governance Structure. This shall include a description of:

(a) the organizational structure of the proposed Research Centre, including the roles and responsibilities of its various committees

(b) membership categories (e.g., industry, internal faculty), the conditions of membership, and procedures for evaluating and renewing membership

(c) procedures whereby the Director is identified for recommendation to the VPRI, and appointments are made to the Management Board and other relevant committees

(d) the privileges and responsibilities of membership.

3.2.4. Proposed Membership. This shall include a listing of the proposed membership of the Research Centre broken down by the various membership categories, where applicable, and workplace affiliations. For each proposed member, an abbreviated curriculum vitae shall be provided which details the following information: degree held, employment experience, professional activities, research interests, research funding record (last five years), and record of major research achievements (including at least the last five years). Research accomplishments conducted in collaboration with other members of the proposed Research Centre should be flagged.

A Director of the Research Centre should be identified, and must be a full-time Carleton University faculty member. Final appointment of the Director will be made by the Vice-President (Research and International).

Members of the Management Board should also be identified.

3.2.5. Physical Resources. This shall include:

(a) a listing of current research facilities (e.g. laboratories, space, equipment), including an indication of current strengths and weaknesses; and

(b) an indication of likely future requirements, including a proposed strategy for obtaining these resources.

3.2.6. Financial Resources. This shall include a detailed budget proposal for the first three years, which includes the anticipated revenue from all sources (i.e. grant funding, government, industry, recovery of overhead costs, royalties, etc.) and proposed annual operation costs, as well as concrete and specific plans for achieving sustainable financial self-sufficiency through external cost recovery.

3.2.7. Statements of Support and Commitment. Any commitments or agreements to provide space, teaching release time or other resources, including the recovery of indirect costs from contract research, should be documented and letters of support provided that are signed by those authorized to make such commitments. In the absence of such statements, it will be assumed that no such commitments or agreements have been made.
3.3 Annual reporting

On an annual basis, CURCs will be expected to submit, no later than September 1, a report to OVPRI (through the Carleton University Research Office) that will be reviewed by READ. This report will include:

3.3.1 a statement of the financial account for the previous twelve months ending April 30, including gross and net revenue, expenditures, source of funds, which has been verified by the University’s Research Accounting Office, along with a financial plan for the foreseeable future. This information is requested in order to monitor the continued financial viability of the CURC, and to ensure that it is operating on a cost recovery basis.

3.3.2 identification of partnerships established with the community, other academic institutions, industry, or any other external agency, including international links. This information allows us to track external research initiatives, thereby promoting the University’s ability to further facilitate and enable these partnerships.

3.3.3 a record of the centre-based research activity in the past year (including abbreviated CVs of the members highlighting research outcomes facilitated through the CURC). Where relevant, it would be useful to highlight activities of the CURC that have been especially productive or visible, and to indicate research program and activities planned for the next year, with some indication of how these activities might be facilitated by the University.

Annual reports will be used to identify, in a broad sense, opportunities for the University to further support the activities of its Research Centres, as well as to review the research activity and continued financial viability of the Centre. If concerns are flagged in this review process, the CURC Director may be asked to provide further information that could provide a basis for READ to recommend strategies that might enable greater effectiveness, or to make a recommendation regarding the CURC’s continued viability.

The outcome of this annual review will be conveyed in writing by READ to the VPRI, and to the Director of each CURC.

3.4 Review and renewal process

Recognized status as a CURC must be renewed in the first instance after 3 years, and every 3 - 5 years thereafter (as specified by READ at the outset of the cycle). On the appropriate anniversary date, a progress and planning report will be submitted to OVPRI (through the Carleton University Research Office), including

3.4.1 the annual report that would normally be submitted at this time

3.4.2 a statement of how the Centre has achieved its research objectives, or how and why it revised its original objectives. It would be useful to include in this statement a description of any research outreach, partnering, or international activities that could be further facilitated or promoted by the University.

3.4.3 a current membership list, including the designated director and members of the Management Board. Any changes to the governance structure should be detailed. If a change of Director is being proposed, the new Director must be appointed by the VPRI.

3.4.4 a 5-year plan identifying future research directions and development strategies. This plan should also indicate how the Centre will facilitate research among scholars within the University and in the wider community, as well as plans to engage students and promote the training of future researchers.
3.4.5 a 5-year financial plan identifying continued and potential sources of revenue and strategies for acquiring funds on a sustainable, cost-recovery basis.

3.4.6 letters indicating continued resource commitments to the Research Centre from appropriate Chairs/Directors and Deans.

If it is clear that the CURC either qualifies for renewal or that it does not, READ will recommend to VPRI that the CURC continue for a period of three to five years (depending on the strength of its sustained commitments), or that it be terminated, without further review. Any legal agreements that affect the status of the CURC must be taken into consideration in the formal recommendation.

In the event that the continued status of a CURC is not clear, the mechanism by which READ elects to proceed shall be at the discretion of the committee in consultation with the VPRI. The primary focus of the review shall be an assessment of: the extent to which the CURC has fulfilled its objectives, continues to meet the definition of a CURC, the appropriateness of its future goals, and its current and projected financial viability. The review process should normally involve meetings with the Director and Management Board, and might also include the solicitation of external assessments.

Within 4 months after it has been decided that such a review is to be undertaken, a report and recommendation emanating from this process will be submitted for review to the Director of the CURC in question to ensure that the report contains no factual errors. The Director (in conjunction with the Management Board) may submit a written commentary on the report to READ within 1 month of receiving the report. READ will then make its recommendation to VPRI concerning the future of the CURC. The recommendation may be (1) continuation with review in 3-5 years (time specified by READ), or (2) termination.

In some instances, Research Centres whose University status is terminated may have their renewal application forwarded to the relevant Faculty to be considered for approval as a Faculty-based Research Centre.

4. Rights and Obligations of Carleton University Research Centres

Through the establishment of Carleton University Research Centres, the University is committed to promote collaborative efforts among researchers, and to highlighting the visibility of the CURCs in order to enable further research, training, partnerships, and funding opportunities. To this end, the primary support the University will provide to CURCs will be targeted toward enhancing visibility, outreach, and capacity for training. As examples, this might include (depending on the effectiveness of the initiative, and available resources)

- Inclusion on a ‘Research Centre Wiki’
- Creation of a web forum posting CURC publications in pdf format
- Participation in an annual Research Centre Showcase
- Support for activities to promote student engagement
- Support to host symposium or other outreach events
- Capacity to negotiate with OVPRI for the return of a portion of overhead costs
- Priority consideration for university leverage funding for research opportunities with notable University and Centre benefits.

To maintain status as a CURC, including the associated rights and privileges, the CURC must continue to meet the terms of its approval, as described in this policy, and as indicated in the application proposal. In addition, the Director of a centre shall have the obligation to:

- ensure that all contracts and activities to be undertaken by or on behalf of the CURC are consistent with University policy, procedures, and regulations, including those pertaining to contract overhead;
submit an annual written report, including a financial account for the twelve months ending April 30 of each year, no later than September 1 of each year (as described in 3.3).

5. Risk Management and Accountability

CURCs will report and be accountable to the OVPRI. As a result, OVPRI assumes responsibility to

- provide the funds to support the OVPRI commitments made in this policy

- negotiate underwriting the financial risks associated with continuous operation of a CURC. This said, CURCs are expected to demonstrate in their annual review that they remain financially viable. If concerns are flagged in the annual review process, the CURC Director may be asked to provide further information to justify continued cost-linked operations.

- negotiate with the CURC and the relevant Faculty Dean(s) on distribution of any overhead costs associated with the funds acquired by a CURC

OVPRI will require assurances that a CURC is operating in a manner that is consistent with Carleton University’s policies, procedures, and regulations, and that it remains in financial good-standing. To this end, OVPRI may request the review of the financial situation of a CURC on more regular basis should there be concerns about its capacity to meet its obligation for financial self-sufficiency.

Contacts: Director of Research Services, Carleton University Research Office (CURO)

Links to related Policies: