

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
GUIDELINES - CENTERS AND INSTITUTES
July 7, 2023

I. Introduction

Centers and institutes focus on domains of knowledge that reside within a discipline or are cross-disciplinary in scope. These are organizational mechanisms that can be used to provide greater depth in teaching and/or research to a focal area within a discipline, or to apply a broader vision to problems that cross traditional knowledge boundaries. Centers and institutes may help develop new areas of research that enhance faculty development, encourage interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to teaching and research, provide relevant focus for service to external and internal constituencies, and/or promote sharing of resources (e.g., equipment, labs) and collaboration across departmental and college boundaries.

II. Definitions

Institutes: With some exceptions, an institute is an umbrella organization providing administrative support for two or more academic units that are working on related subjects. Institutes provide an array of services to a broadly defined population.

Centers: A center generally provides services and support to a specific population. This includes Centers of Excellence.

III. Types of Centers and Institutes

Centers and institutes are classified either as (1) State of Florida centers or institutes or (2) University of Florida (UF) centers or institutes.

- (1) State of Florida centers or institutes - An organization with a statewide mission that may include two or more state universities established to coordinate interinstitutional research, service, and teaching across the State University System. State of Florida centers and institutes must be approved by the Board of Governors. State of Florida centers and institutes' operational budgets reside within the bases of their host institutions. Additional budget requests must be reviewed by the Council of Academic Vice Presidents and only those with a positive recommendation are carried forward to the Board of Governors for consideration.

For information on State of Florida centers and institutes, refer to Board of Governors Regulation 10.015 https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/10_015_Institutes_and_Centers.pdf

- (2) University of Florida centers and institutes - An entity that has a university-wide mission. It is generally established by a single university to coordinate institutional research, service, and/or educational/training activities that enhance existing instruction, research, and service at the university. This includes Centers of Excellence that were established by the Florida legislature. The budget of a university center or institute and any requests for additional funding are wholly within the purview of the host university. UF centers and institutes may receive state funds based on the discretion of the dean of the college or relevant vice president to whom they report.

IV. Guidelines for Proposals to Establish New Centers and Institutes

It is appropriate and desirable to create centers and institutes when resources are available and when the establishment of a center or institute is consistent with the long-range plans of a college, unit, and/or the university. The departments, colleges, units and the university should be selective in creating new centers and institutes.

A university sanctioned center or institute is an extension of the university. It requires some degree of oversight to maintain mission concurrence within the organization. Section IV.I.1-2 below outlines approval requirements for establishing state and university centers and institutes.

The center or institute should be closely tied to the research and educational mission. Proposals for new centers and institutes must facilitate the academic mission of UF by enhancing its teaching and research functions, fostering external fundraising, and/or facilitating interdisciplinary cooperation. These activities should be facilitated in ways that a current structure (department or college or existing center or institute) cannot. In particular, UF expects that a proposal for a new center or institute will demonstrate how it will enhance UF's mission in a manner not being accomplished by existing programs.

To establish a State of Florida center or institute, the provost and the vice president for research of the host university shall prepare and submit a proposal to the Board of Trustees of the host university for approval. Approved proposals shall be submitted to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs in the Board of Governors' office. In addition to the following proposal requirements (section IV.a – IV.i below), university administration also requires components specified for university centers and institutes outlined in sections IV.A – IV.G.

The proposal shall specify the purpose of the organization, the need and demand to be a State of Florida center or institute, consistent with the Board of Governors strategic plan, and funding resources. The proposal shall also include a draft of the proposed memorandum of understanding, which has been ratified by the presidents of all affiliated institutions. The memorandum of understanding shall contain, at a minimum:

- a. The name of the center or institute.
- b. The identification of the host institution and participating institutions.
- c. The mission of the center or institute.
- d. Guidelines for appointing, funding, supervising, and evaluating the director of the center or institute.
- e. The criteria for appointments to the center or institute's advisory board, including terms, roles, authority, and, if known, current numbers.
- f. Expectations for the administrative and logistical support for the center or institute, including expectations regarding the reimbursement to the host university for direct costs of administrative services rendered by the university to the center or institute.
- g. Procedures at the institutional level for recommending increases/decreases in the appropriation of state funds for the center or institute.
- h. Specifications for the processing of contracts and grants, including the percentage of overhead funds to be returned to the center or institute.
- i. Expectations and criteria for the cyclic review of the center or institute and other planning and expectations for its operation.

After review by the Board of Governors' staff, the State of Florida center or institute proposal will be forwarded to the Council of Academic Vice Presidents for approval and recommendation to the Chancellor. The Chancellor would then determine whether or not this proposal should be carried forward to the Board of Governors. Any State of Florida center or institute must receive full approval from the Board of Governors prior to implementation to receive State of Florida status.

The proposal to establish university centers and institutes should be no more than 10 pages in length. Appendix material may be provided as specified. The following information should be included in the text of the proposal:

- A. Mission statement and goals: The mission of the center or institute should be defined and the goals for research, teaching and public service explained. All three elements are not required for a center or institute to be established but should be identified when they are anticipated to be part of the mission.
- B. Proposed activities: Describe the activities that are planned for the center or institute (e.g., collaborative research on the topic of (X); the intent to generate interdisciplinary resources, to design courses, to develop an interdisciplinary graduate program, attract postdoctoral fellows, create a lecture series; to establish a core service facility, provide greater focus and depth to a research area). Explain the plans to apply for external funding and identify the relationship of the center or institute's activities with those of departments and/or other centers or institutes. Describe the advantages of the center or institute over current structure (e.g., what unmet needs will be satisfied by having the center or institute?) and the value of the center or institute to the university and to the reporting unit. Describe, where possible, the synergistic and collaborative efforts existing amongst the members of the proposed center or institute. Also describe their record in successfully garnering extramural funds.
- C. Reporting structure: The proposal for a new center or institute must include a reporting structure and describe the logic of that structure at UF. In particular, the proposal should outline to whom and through whom the center or institute reports. The proposal should demonstrate appropriate levels of commitment and interest from relevant departments, colleges, or other stakeholders.

A new center or institute will in general, report to the dean of the college unless it is a campus-wide center or institute in which case it would report to the relevant vice president (Vice President Health Affairs, Vice President IFAS, Vice President for Research or the Provost). Any campus-wide centers or institutes should be discussed with the relevant vice president(s) prior to producing a proposal.

- D. Administrative structure: The position of the center or institute within the university/unit/college/department must be explained with the lines of accountability and responsibility clearly indicated. Each center or institute should design its own administrative structure in consultation with the relevant department chair(s) and dean or relevant unit vice president. However, it is expected that each center or institute will have at a minimum, a director and an advisory committee.
 1. The director must provide leadership and guidance for the direction of the research and facilitate interaction among faculty, staff and students. He/she should seek effective means of communication and collaboration, create an efficient organizational structure, and work to identify funds to sustain and expand upon the center's or institute's activities. The director is expected to be the primary contact between the center or

institute and the reporting authority. The director for a new center or institute will be considered acting until officially appointed by the reporting official (dean or vice president).

2. The functions of the advisory committee will vary according to the mission of the center or institute, needs of the director and the requirements of the unit to which the center or institute reports.
 3. Large centers or institutes that involve several units, colleges and departments should form an executive committee of the involved chairmen and/or deans/vice presidents; in certain cases, outside advisory groups are desirable. The roles that these committees will play should be clearly specified in the proposal.
 4. Center or institute membership - All members of the center or institute, their academic affiliations, and area(s) of expertise, should be listed in an appendix document.
- E. The proposal should describe the adequacy of the space and facilities for the center or institute and address needs for additional space required to achieve the goals of the center or institute.
- F. The proposal should include a budget plan. Particular attention should be given to the long-term financing, particularly if start-up funds are being requested.
1. For all centers and institutes, the proposal should indicate the source of funds utilized – whether from the state budget, grants and contracts, fees and/or private sources. The proposal should indicate whether the funding is currently in place or if new funding is needed. If new funding is needed, the source of the new funding must be identified.
 2. For all centers and institutes, the proposal should indicate whether the center or institute wishes to receive indirect cost return. The proposal must provide adequate justification for indirect cost return. The return mechanism will be in accord with established University of Florida policy. Centers or institutes that have been approved by deans of the participating colleges, relevant vice presidents of units, the Vice President for Research, and the Provost, but are awaiting final approval, are also eligible to receive indirect cost dollars, for a period not to exceed 2 years.
 3. Indirect cost returns to the center or institute must be agreed upon by the chair of the department, dean of the college or relevant unit vice president, the Provost and the Vice President for Research. Indirect cost returns may vary, with a maximum of 7.5 percent. Please be aware that because indirect costs are returned to the colleges, returns to the center or institute are charged as a cost to the college in which the director/principal investigator (PI) has their academic home. The unit vice president/dean of the director/PI's college must approve the indirect cost return to any center or institute.
- G. Requirements for approval of State of Florida and UF centers and institutes and information regarding their differences and lines of formal approval can be obtained by contacting the Provost's office. Generally,
1. State of Florida centers and institutes must be approved by the relevant dean(s), the relevant vice president(s), the Vice President for Research, the Provost, and Council of Academic Vice Presidents. The Chancellor shall consider the deliberations of the Council of Academic Vice Presidents in requesting center or institute full approval from the Board of Governors. State of Florida centers and institutes' operational budgets reside within the bases of their host institutions. Additional budget requests must be reviewed by the Council of Academic Vice Presidents and only those with a

positive recommendation are carried forward to the Board of Governors for consideration.

2. UF centers and institutes must be approved by the relevant dean(s), the relevant vice president(s), the Vice President for Research, the Provost, and the President. Because centers and institutes require a formal proposal process and review and approval by the participating departments, the college and the offices of the Vice President for Research and Provost, only those entities that have gone through this process may call themselves a 'center' or 'institute'. Exceptions such as federal awards that require the naming of the activity as a "Center" should be discussed with the appropriate administrators.

The university is responsible for notifying the Board of Governors' office about the establishment of any university center or institute within 30 days of such action. The notices of establishment shall include the center or institute name, the type of center or institute, and a brief description of how the center or institute will enhance the university's activities. In cases where more than one university is participating, the host university is designated to handle reporting and evaluation of the center or institute.

- H. Forms to apply for a center or institute can be obtained from the UF Academic Support site at <https://ir.aa.ufl.edu/academic-support/center-and-institute/starting-a-new-center/>

V. Guidelines for Submission of Annual Reports by Centers and Institutes:

The Office of Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Research and the Florida Board of Governors require that all centers and institutes submit an annual activity report. When more than one university is affiliated with a center or institute, the host university is responsible for submitting a comprehensive report.

A. Annual reporting requirements to the Florida BOG (for all centers and institutes)

An annual report (July 1 through June 30) is to be submitted for each center and institute, including Centers of Excellence. The annual expenditure reports will be coordinated through Institutional Planning and Research. No later than December 1 of each year, expenditure information for the prior fiscal year shall be provided to the Board of Governors' office. The instructions and reporting templates for these annual requests will be determined by the Chancellor. Annual reports must be approved by the Board of Trustees of the host university prior to submission to the Board of Governors' office.

1. Directory information and mission and areas of focus

- a. Provide the name of the center or institute. Provide the name of the director, the address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address, and web site address for the center or institute.
- b. Indicate the type of center or institute.
- c. Indicate the academic discipline(s), by 6-digit Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code(s), most closely affiliated with the center or institute.
- d. Provide a list of all universities that are affiliated with the center or institute.
- e. Provide a brief mission statement for the center or institute (75 words or fewer).
- f. Identify key terms/phrases that indicate the major areas of focus for the center or institute. These terms will be used as identifiers in a searchable database.

2. Staffing and budget information

- a. Provide actual expenditures and number of FTE positions for the prior fiscal year. (Separate position and budget data should be submitted for each university when more than one university is affiliated with a center or institute).
- b. Provide estimated expenditures and number of FTE positions for the next fiscal year. Separate position and budget data should be submitted for each university when more than one university is affiliated with a center or institute).

B. Additional reporting guidelines for State of Florida centers and institutes

In addition to the annual expenditure information, in general, annual reports for State of Florida centers or institutes must include the information set out below. Annual reports for the State of Florida centers and institutes should be sent to the appropriate state agency with a copy to Institutional Planning and Research

1. Mission and areas of focus for the centers or institutes

Summary of how the center or institute coordinates intra- and/or inter-institutional research, service, and training activities that supplement and extend existing departmental instruction, research, and service programs--that is, how the center or institute allows faculty/staff/students to do what they could not do solely in a departmental or divisional setting.

2. Activities - prior year

Provide an evaluation of accomplishments related to the prior year's goals and any recommendations that emanated from a review of the center or institute. Include an overview of the prior year's research, service, and/or teaching and training activities. Attach any supporting documentation (e.g., scholarly activities and published research by primary authors, external funding sources, non-funded outreach, conferences).

Note: goals/activity information should be included for each university when more than one university is affiliated with a with a center or institute.

3. Activities - coming year

Provide a statement of proposed goals and activities for the next fiscal year--for example, proposed research and scholarly activities; teaching and training activities; service and outreach; internal (e.g., with departments, colleges, or other university units) or external networking (e.g., with other universities, community colleges, public schools; public-private partnerships); opportunities for students (e.g., assistantships, service learning); or financial goals (e.g., levels of external funding, potential contracts).

Note: goals/activity information should be included for each university when more than one university is affiliated with a with a center or institute.

4. Position data

Provide an organizational chart that delineates the functions of all faculty and staff and includes any advisory boards. Provide a list of current advisory board members. Also provide copies of relevant governance documents. For proposals involving more than one institution, include such information for each participating institution as well as give the statewide structure.

C. Additional reporting requirements for University of Florida centers and institutes

In addition to the annual expenditure report information, UF centers or institutes are required to provide annual reports as required by the dean of the college or unit vice president to whom they report. The format and information required for these reports are specified by the deans of the respective colleges or vice presidents of the respective units.

VI. Guidelines for Evaluation of Centers and Institutes

The university administration will evaluate centers and institutes on a cyclical basis. The Provost and Vice President for Research will evaluate each State of Florida center and institute every five (5) years. Deans or unit vice presidents are responsible for verifying and approving all evaluations of University of Florida centers and institutes assigned to their respective colleges or units every seven (7) years. The dean or unit vice president may assign an internal evaluator to conduct the evaluation. Copies of all evaluation/review information shall be submitted to the Board of Governors' office.

The university must provide a summary of the evaluation/review to the Board of Trustees and certify that the evaluation/review contained all of the required components using a template provided by the Chancellor. A copy of the summary must be submitted to the Board of Governors' office within 30 days after the Board of Trustees' review. (Please note, this differs from the annual expenditure reporting coordinated by Institutional Planning and Research).

The submission deadline for all evaluations will be approximately August of each year. Institutional Planning and Research maintains the schedule of evaluations of all centers and institutes and will coordinate the process with the respective deans or unit vice presidents. Completed evaluations should be submitted to Institution Planning and Research.

State of Florida centers and institutes shall be reviewed based on criteria and procedures established below and within the memorandum of understanding. External consultants may be used in the review process. At a minimum, each State of Florida center or institute shall be reviewed every five years by the host institution. A copy of the review will be provided to the Council of Academic Vice Presidents to inform any related budget recommendations.

University centers and institutes must be reviewed according to university policies. Evaluations will focus on the mission and stated objectives of the center or institute. At a minimum, all evaluations/reviews shall include the following components:

- A determination of the center's or institute's progress against defined goals and objectives within the context of the center's or institute's mission, the participating university's mission, and the current Board of Governors' strategic plan.
- An assessment of the return on investment of state dollars, if applicable.
- The need for continuation of the center or institute.
- Possible changes in mission or organizational structure.
- Budget reduction or expansion.
- Recommendations for change of classification (State of Florida center or institute, or university center or institute), if applicable.
- Recommendations for status change (active, inactive, terminated), if applicable.

Additional relevant items may be included.

- Funded/proposed teaching/training grants in area of focus
- Funded/proposed research project grants in area of focus
- Investment of C/I funds in generating pilot data for grants
- Promoting and funding seminars with C/I funds (not customary department seminars)
- Promoting and funding major conferences in area of focus
- Educational core or elective courses offered in area of focus
- Funding graduate students from C/I funds
- Funding travel for students from C/I funds
- Providing core lab support for research of members
- Mentoring junior faculty
- Fundraising accomplishments
- Public programs and results of those programs
- National or international recognition received
- Exchanges, agreements or planning initiated

The evaluation should provide a brief critical review and evaluation of the center or institute's progress within the context of UF's mission of research, education, and service; and where possible, to the strategic goals of the Florida Board of Governors. The review should also include an assessment of the return on investment of state dollars, if applicable. The center or institute should demonstrate how it adds value to the university that cannot be provided at the college, department, or division level.

Annual expenditure reports submitted by each UF center and institute to the Board of Governors (Section V.A) will also be used as a component of the evaluation.

The Vice President for Research (or designee) will review each dean's or unit vice president's evaluation of their respective university centers and institutes and will make recommendations on each center's or institute's continued operation.

VII. Guidelines for the Disbanding of Centers and Institutes

Disbanding a State of Florida center or institute

State of Florida centers and institutes shall be disbanded at the recommendation of the Council of Academic Vice Presidents and upon the approval of the Board of Governors. When a center or institute that includes two or more state universities is disbanded, the host university shall notify the Board of Governors' office. In the event that a disbanded center or institute has been funded by the legislature, the university must provide documentation to ensure that legislative intent has been achieved and that the center or institute is no longer required. Fiscal information must be provided as part of the annual reporting process if the center or institute expends any funds during the fiscal year in which it is disbanded.

Disbanding a UF center or institute

UF centers or institutes shall be disbanded by and at the recommendation of the dean of the college or vice president of the unit to which it reports, with the approval of the Provost and the Vice President for Research. University centers and institutes that include two or more state universities shall be disbanded at the request of the host university with the agreement of participating universities. When a center or institute is disbanded, the host university shall notify the Board of Governors' office. The university is responsible for notifying the Board of Governors' office about the termination of any university center or institute within 30 days of such action. Indirect costs

received by the disbanded center or institute will then be returned to the college initially charged with the indirect costs. If a disbanded center or institute has been funded by the legislature, the university must provide documentation to ensure that legislative intent has been achieved and that the center or institute is no longer required. Fiscal information must be provided as part of the annual reporting process if the center or institute expends any funds during the fiscal year in which it is disbanded.

Adopted by the University of Florida Board of Trustees June 13, 2008

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