Information

Establishment, Review, and Closure of Centers and Institutes Procedures

Effective

May 5, 2025

Applicability

This procedure applies to all University of Louisville units and individuals with responsibility for managing, establishing, and/or approving an organizational structure identified with the terms "Center" or "Institute," or that otherwise functions in such a manner to meet the criteria as set forth in the Establishment and Review of Centers and Institutes Policy. This procedure does not apply to entities defined as Administrative Centers, except the limits upon naming conventions.

Administrative Authority

Executive Vice President and University Provost, Executive Vice President of Research and Innovation, Executive Vice President for Health Affairs

Responsible Unit

Office of Academic Planning and Accountability
305 Miller Information Technology Center
Louisville, KY 40292
Phone: 502-852-6169
Email: programapproval@louisville.edu

History

Revision Date(s):
Reviewed Date(s):

Categories

Reason for Procedure:

The University of Louisville (the "University") Board of Trustees' (BOT) By-Laws state that the BOT Academic and Student Affairs Committee "shall consider all recommendations for academic centers, institutes, degree granting programs and other academic entities" (BOT By-Laws, p. 7). The University recognizes the importance of organizational structures specifically identified as Centers and Institutes to fulfill the University's research and service mission. Furthermore, given the public prominence of these organizational structures as well as the funding and resource mechanisms available to them, the University aims to clarify the process by which these types of organizational structures are approved and regularly reviewed by the Centers and Institutes Executive Council. Additionally, these procedures establish the criteria utilized during the approval and review process.

Statement:

The Office of Academic Planning and Accountability (OAPA) has been charged with coordinating the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Processes. OAPA provides training, resources, and technical support to Center and Institute administration and staff. Additionally, OAPA coordinates the approval and review processes of the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee and the Centers and Institutes Executive Council.

The Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee is appointed by the Centers and Institutes Executive Council for two-year renewable terms with individuals representing the following functional units:

1. Office of Research and Innovation (one appointee acting as Co-Chair)
2. Office of Academic Planning and Accountability (one appointee acting as Co-Chair)
3. Office of Community Engagement (one appointee)
4. Office of Faculty Affairs (one appointee)
5. Graduate Council (one appointee)
6. Center for Engaged Learning (one appointee)
7. Vice Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Finance or designee (one appointee)
8. Vice Dean of Research in the School of Medicine or designee (one appointee)
9. Faculty Senate (four appointees made by a non-binding recommendation of the Faculty Senate)
10. Current Centers and Institutes Faculty and Staff (four appointees that are broadly representative of the various types of Centers and Institutes with at least one representative from the Health Sciences Center Campus and one from

the Belknap Campus)

This committee serves as the primary organizational structure to make recommendations to the Centers and Institutes Executive Council about the establishment and continued operations of Centers and Institutes.
All Centers and Institutes meeting the definitions set forth in the Establishment and Review of Centers and Institutes Policy must be approved through the Centers and Institutes approval process as set forth in this document.

Center/Institute Status

The following statuses dictate the annualized and comprehensive review procedures for Centers and Institutes:

1. Probationary Status: Centers and Institutes initially approved who have not yet undergone a successful 5-Year Comprehensive Review as well as Centers and Institutes identified as "fix" during their most recent 5-year Comprehensive Review.
2. Reauthorized Status: Centers and Institutes that have had a successful 5-year comprehensive review and are identified as "sustain" or "grow" through the review process.
3. Sustaining Status: Centers and Institutes that have undergone at least two (2) successful 5-Year Comprehensive Reviews demonstrating operational effectiveness are moved to a 10-Year Comprehensive Review cycle.
4. Sunset Status: A Center or Institute that has been recommended for closure. The University Board of Trustees (BOT) must officially approve the closure of any Center or Institute identified to be "sunset." Such determinations are generally made through the Centers and Institutes 5-Year Comprehensive Review process, but the Centers and Institutes Executive Council has the authority to recommend a Center or Institute for closure to the BOT at their discretion due to shifting institutional priorities, inadequate management, lack of funding, or other institutional concerns with the continued operation of the Center or Institute. Additionally, Center or Institute leadership may also propose a Center or Institute be sunset. See Sunset Procedures for more information.

Approval Criteria

The Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee evaluates proposals to establish a Center or Institute according to the following criteria:

- Qualifications of core and affiliated faculty;
- Avoidance of research and/or service duplication;

- Alignment of the Center or Institute's mission, purpose, and/or strategic plan with the University's mission, purpose, and/or strategic plan;
- Demonstrated market and/or societal need, including rationale for why the University and/or the specific unit(s) are uniquely qualified to meet these needs;
- Financial sustainability of the Center or Institute, including identified internal and external funding sources;
- Quality of operational plan, including an identified assessment plan to demonstrate Center or Institute effectiveness and furtherance of the University's mission and strategic plan;
- Resource requirements for operation of the Center or Institute, including but not limited to administrative staff, research/service term faculty, post-doctoral fellows, space, and equipment;
- Availability of appropriate administrative support functions and supervision at the University (e.g., adherence to required safety protocols, grant administration, etc.); and
- Continuity plan to ensure sustainable operations of a Center or Institute at the University. Centers or Institutes approved for expedited approval (see "Expedited Approval" process outlined below) may have altered expectations for continuity, especially in instances when the Center or Institute has been approved for faculty recruitment/retention purposes.

Standard Approval Procedures

Centers or Institutes are approved according to the following standard approval procedures:

1. Centers or Institutes are approved twice a year. For a Center or Institute to be established by the start of the fall semester, a complete Center or Institute proposal with all required documentation must be submitted for approval by November 1 of the previous academic year. For a Center or Institute to be established by the start of the spring semester, a complete Center or Institute proposal with all required documentation must be completed and submitted for approval by July 1 of the previous year. The following are the documents required to be submitted for approval:

a. Executive Summary
b. Needs and Benchmarking Analysis
c. Organizational Structure
d. Core and Affiliated Faculty Qualifications
e. Budget

f. Resource Requirements
g. Letters of Support
h. Operational Plan
i. Data Collection Schedule
j. Implementation Plan
k. Continuity Plan

2. Faculty interested in establishing a Center or Institute must seek approval from their department head and/or academic dean by submitting to them their completed proposal. Where multiple academic units are involved, all academic deans must agree to support the establishment of the Center or Institute. In these instances, the proposer must identify the appropriate senior administrator to whom the Center or Institute will report, as indicated on the organizational chart and reporting lines documentation. Letter(s) of support from the dean(s) of the collaborating academic unit(s) should be submitted as part of the proposal. In cases where the Center or Institute is not Headquartered within an academic unit, the completed documentation is forwarded to the senior administrator of the unit for approval by the academic dean of the unit in which the proposed Center or Institute director is appointed.

3. Once approved by the appropriate senior administrator(s), the proposal is submitted to the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee for review.

4. The Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee submits written feedback to the proposing party based upon the information provided in the Center or Institute proposal.

5. The proposing party has an opportunity to respond to the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee's feedback in writing.

6. The Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee meets with the proposing party. Senior administrators of the Headquartering Unit and/or senior administrators from support units are invited to participate but are not required to attend. This meeting is to clarify any questions the committee may have and to address points of concern.

7. In executive session, the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee generally decides through consensus but may rely on Robert's Rules of Order of whether to recommend the proposal for approval. They may elect to proceed as follows:

a. Approve the proposal;
b. Return the proposal to the academic unit for additional information and clarification of concerns; or

c. Reject the proposal due to insufficient demonstration of need and/or other critical concerns.
8. After the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee reviews the proposal, they provide written feedback with the rationale for their recommendations.
9. Once the proposers receive the recommendations from the committee, the proposers can address questions or concerns posed by the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee. The proposing party has up to one calendar month to provide their response.
10. The Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee submits their recommendation and rationale and the unit's response (if applicable) to the Faculty Senate.
11. Faculty Senate provides a recommendation to the Centers and Institutes Executive Council of whether to uphold the recommendation of Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee.
12. The Faculty Senate recommendation, Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee recommendation, and response from the unit (if applicable) are sent to the Centers and Institutes Executive Council for review.
13. The Centers and Institutes Executive Council determines whether to approve or reject the establishment of the Center or Institute or to request additional revisions from the proposing party.
14. If approved, the Center or Institute proposal is then submitted to the BOT for final approval.
15. All Centers and Institutes are approved with a probationary status until they have satisfactorily met the annual assessment reporting requirements and completed a successful 5-Year Comprehensive Review.

Expedited Approval Criteria
The Centers and Institutes Executive Council may grant, at their sole discretion, an expedited approval process. The following is a non-exhaustive list of the circumstances under which the Centers and Institutes Executive Council may generally grant an expedited approval for the establishment of a Center or Institute to meet an institutional priority:

- The establishment of the Center or Institute is deemed exigent due to the availability of substantial funds from an external agency;

- The Center or Institute is deemed a strategic priority by the Centers and Institutes Executive Council due to faculty recruitment efforts; or

- The Center or Institute is deemed a strategic priority by the Centers and Institutes Executive Council to further institutional priorities.

A request for an expedited approval must be submitted in writing to a member of the Centers and Institutes Executive Council by the senior administrator of the proposed Headquartering Unit. If the Centers and Institutes Executive Council determines a Center or Institute proposal should be granted an expedited approval, they will notify the co-chairs of the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee.

Expedited Approval Procedures

1. The co-chairs of the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee collect feedback from all committee members.
2. Committee members have ten (10) business days to provide feedback from the date the proposal was initially submitted.

3. To expedite the process, the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee is not required to provide a recommendation, but instead provides all collected feedback from committee members to the Centers and Institutes Executive Council to inform the Centers and Institutes Executive Council's decision.
4. If the Centers and Institutes Executive Council requests the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee to provide an official recommendation, the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee will be convened, but this may delay the approval timeline.

The Executive Council may recommend the Center or Institute for approval to the BOT, reject the proposal, request revisions, or re-route the proposal through the standard approval procedures. Centers or Institutes granted an expedited approval have one (1) year from the date of approval to complete the standard approval procedures as outlined in this document.

Annual Reporting Procedures

Directors of Centers and Institutes meeting the definitions set forth in the Establishment and Review of Centers and Institutes Policy must submit an annual assessment report to OAPA. OAPA ensures the annual assessment reports are

distributed to the Headquartering Units of the Centers and Institutes and the appropriate University administrators. The senior administrator of the Headquartering Unit is responsible for reviewing the Centers and Institutes' annual assessment reports to ensure the mission and objectives of the Centers and Institutes are being met. Additionally, all Centers and Institutes' annual assessment reports are submitted to the following University administrators:

1. University Research Institutes and University Research Centers' annual assessment reports are submitted to the Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation.
2. University Community Engagement Centers' annual assessment reports are submitted to the Vice President for Community Engagement.

The Centers and Institutes' annual assessment reports are the basis for the Centers and Institutes' Comprehensive Review to craft the self-study narrative, and they should be used as evidence of operational effectiveness.

If a Center or Institute is designated "fix" or "sunset" or on probationary status, the annual assessment report is reviewed by the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee to ensure the Center or Institute is demonstrating satisfactory progress toward mission fulfillment and addressing identified concerns. Should the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee determine the Center or Institute is not demonstrating satisfactory progress toward mission fulfillment, the Center or Institute may undergo a Comprehensive Review earlier than their next scheduled Comprehensive Review.

Comprehensive Review

All Centers and Institutes must be Comprehensively Reviewed on a regular and recurring cycle. Centers and Institutes are generally reviewed on a 5-year cycle unless they have been granted sustaining status based upon the criteria outlined in this procedure. Centers or Institutes granted sustaining status undergo Comprehensive Review on a 10-year cycle.

The Comprehensive Review assesses the Center or Institute's continued contribution to the University's mission. The Comprehensive Review generally considers the performance of the Center or Institute since the most recent Comprehensive Review as documented in the annual assessment reporting process and should not include any unsolicited letters or appendices with grant proposals, reprints of publications, etc. The request for a Center to become an Institute should be completed as part of the Comprehensive Review.

Comprehensive Review Criteria

- Continued alignment of Center or Institute's mission, purpose, and/or strategic plan with the University's mission, purpose, and/or strategic plan;
- Qualifications of core and affiliated Faculty;
- Demonstrated success of Center or Institute and fulfillment of operational plan submitted during most recent Comprehensive Review/approval;
- Contributions of Center or Institute to the University, community, scholarship in the discipline, etc.;
- Continued demonstration of market and societal need, including rationale for why the University and/or the specific unit(s) are uniquely qualified to meet these needs;
- Financial sustainability of the Center or Institute, including identified internal and external funding sources;
- Quality of operational plan, including an identified assessment plan to demonstrate Center and Institute effectiveness and furtherance of the University's mission and strategic plan;
- Resource requirements for operation of Center or Institute, including but not limited to administrative staff, research/service term faculty, post-doctoral fellows, space, and equipment;
- Availability of appropriate administrative support functions and supervision at the University (e.g., adherence to required safety protocols, grant administration, etc.); and
- Continuity plan to ensure sustainable operation of Center or Institute at the University.

Comprehensive Review Process

1. The Accreditation and Academic Programs (AAP) team within OAPA maintains and makes available to Center and Institute directors and academic deans a schedule identifying the academic year in which each Center and Institute will be reviewed for the next ten (10) years. Centers and Institutes scheduled for a Comprehensive Review are notified by the start of the spring semester preceding their scheduled review. The Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee's work begins in the subsequent fall semester.

2. The Center or Institute prepares a self-study that addresses criteria identified in the Comprehensive Review process.

3. The Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee evaluates the self-study. The Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee may submit written questions and feedback to the Center or Institute director based upon its evaluation.

4. The Center or Institute director responds in writing to the committee's written feedback and questions, as necessary, to provide further clarity and/or address any potential concerns with non-compliance.

5. The Center or Institute director has an opportunity to meet with the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee to provide further clarity based upon the committee's questions and feedback. The committee reserves the right to obtain feedback from external sources if it so deems.

6. After evaluating the self-study documentation and any external input, the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee generally makes its determination by consensus but may rely on Robert's Rules of Order as necessary. The Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee communicates their recommendation to the Centers and Institutes Executive Council. This recommendation will include an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the Center or Institute.

7. The recommendations will be one of the following:
a. Grow: The Center or Institute has demonstrated operational effectiveness through the annual assessment reporting and 5-year Comprehensive Review processes. It has sustained success and seems positioned to greatly further the mission and/or prestige of the University. The Center or Institute is an exceptional, marquee enterprise. The University should prioritize it through Research Infrastructure Funds (RIF), Center Research Infrastructure Funds (CRIF), and other resources during the next 5-year cycle.
b. Sustain: The Center or Institute has demonstrated alignment with University priorities and should continue to operate with similar levels of University support that they have previously received. The Center or Institute meets expectations but is not a marquee initiative for the University. It should strive for continued operational effectiveness through the annual assessment reporting and 5-year Comprehensive Review processes to demonstrate potential for growth and additional funding.
c. Fix: The Center or Institute has demonstrated deficiencies that need to be addressed for continued operation. The Center or Institute must submit its annual assessment report to the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee for

increased monitoring until the Center or Institute is able to demonstrate operational effectiveness. It should strive for operational effectiveness through the annual assessment reporting process to demonstrate stability. If the Center or Institute does not demonstrate improvement within the time specified by the Centers and Institutes Executive Council, the Center or Institute risks being closed through the sunset process described below.
d. Sunset: The Center or Institute has deficiencies that either cannot or have not been remedied, and it should be closed. The closure of operation plan must address the following:
i. How to unwind the research and service activities provided by the Center or Institute to minimize the impact upon faculty and staff, the University, and/or the community.
ii. How to utilize any remaining endowment or similar funds in compliance with the Endowment and Similar Funds Management Policy.
iii. How to reallocate and/or dispose of equipment allocated for the operation of the Center or Institute according to the Inventory Control and Surplus Property Policies.
iv. How to address any necessary reductions in force according to the Reduction-In-Force Policy.
e. Alternative Recommendations:
i. Merge with another Center or Institute that has a similar mission.
ii. Fold a Center under a related Institute.
iii. Other alternative recommendations not otherwise specified.

8. The Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee submits its recommendation and rationale to the Center or Institute director and senior administrator of the Headquartering Unit.

9. The Center or Institute director has an opportunity to provide a written response to the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee's recommendation.

10. The Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee submits a final recommendation based upon the Center or Institute's response along with all Comprehensive Review materials to the Centers and Institutes Executive Council.

11. The Centers and Institutes Executive Council determines whether to approve or reject the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee's recommendation.

Centers/Institutes Required to Undergo an Earlier Review

At any time, the Centers and Institutes Executive Council may require a Center or Institute to undergo a Comprehensive Review regardless of when the Center or Institute is scheduled for its next Comprehensive Review. Generally, an off-cycle review of a Center or Institute is required because of concerns related to the Center or Institute's financial viability, operational effectiveness, leadership, or continued alignment with UofL's mission and strategic priorities. These concerns generally arise from the annual reporting process. However, at any point the Centers and Institutes Executive Council may request any Center or Institute to undergo Comprehensive Review.

If such a request is made, the process shall proceed as follows:

1. The Center or Institute is notified by the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee of the off-cycle review request.
2. The Center or Institute submits all annual assessment reports filed after the most recent Comprehensive Review to the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee for evaluation.
3. Based upon this evaluation, the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee provides a recommendation to the Centers and Institutes Executive Council of whether the Center or Institute should undergo a Comprehensive Review before its next scheduled review.
4. The Centers and Institutes Executive Council makes the final determination if the Center or Institute should have their Comprehensive Review schedule changed.
5. Centers and Institutes that must undergo an earlier Comprehensive Review are notified by the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee by at least one full semester in advance of their rescheduled Comprehensive Review.

Sunset Procedures

Per the Establishment and Review of Centers and Institutes Policy, Centers or Institutes that are closing must file an official closure of operations plan. The closure of operations plan must address how to utilize any remaining endowment or similar funds in compliance with the Endowment and Similar Funds Management Policy. Additionally, the closure of operations plan must address the reallocation and/or dispossession of equipment allocated for the operation of the Center or Institute according to the Inventory Control and Surplus Property Policies. Finally, the plan must include a transition plan for any Center or Institute funded faculty and staff. This personnel transition plan may include a reduction in force plan in accordance

with the Reduction-In-Force (RIF) Policy, as necessary. Official closure of operations plans must be submitted within three (3) months of the Centers and Institutes Executive Council approving a proposal from the Center or Institute to close or approving a determination to sunset a Center or Institute made through the Comprehensive Review process.

The closure of operations plan must be approved by the Centers and Institutes Executive Council after first being reviewed by the senior administrator of the Headquartering Unit and the Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee. The senior administrator of the Headquartering Unit and Centers and Institutes Approval and Review Committee provide the Centers and Institutes Executive Council with a non-binding recommendation to ensure minimal institutional impact due to the closure. The Centers and Institutes Executive Council has sole authority to approve the plan. The Centers and Institutes Executive Council recommends the Center or Institute for closure to the BOT, which must approve any closures.

Related Information:

Establishment, Review, and Operation of Centers and Institutes Policy: https://louisville.edu/policies/policies-and-procedures/pageholder/pol-establishment-and-review-of-centers-and-institutes

Centers and Institutes Guidelines:

The University of Louisville Board of Trustees By-Laws: https://louisville.edu/president/boards/board-of-trustees/governance/bylaws

Endowment and Similar Funds Management Policy: https://louisville.edu/policies/policies-and-procedures/pageholder/pol-endowment-and-similar-funds-management

Reduction-In-Force (RIF) Policy: https://louisville.edu/policies/policies-and-procedures/pageholder/pol-reduction-in-force-rif

Inventory Control and Surplus Policies: https://louisville.edu/surplus/policies

Robert's Rules of Order: https://uofl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1190759264

Definitions:

For this procedure, refer to the Definitions Section of the Establishment and Review of Centers and Institutes Policy to define the following terms:

a. Center/Institute

b. University Research Institute

c. University Research Center

d. University Community Engagement Center
e. Administrative Center
f. Headquartering Unit
g. Core Faculty
h. Affiliate Faculty

Responsibilities:

The Office of Academic Planning and Accountability (OAPA) is responsible for coordinating the Establishment, Review, and Closure of Centers and Institutes Procedures established by the Centers and Institutes Executive Council.
The Executive Vice President and University Provost, Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation, and the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs are responsible for managing, interpreting, and enforcing the Establishment, Review, and Closure of Centers and Institutes Procedures. See the Establishment and Review of Centers and Institutes Policy and associated Centers and Institutes Guidelines for more information.