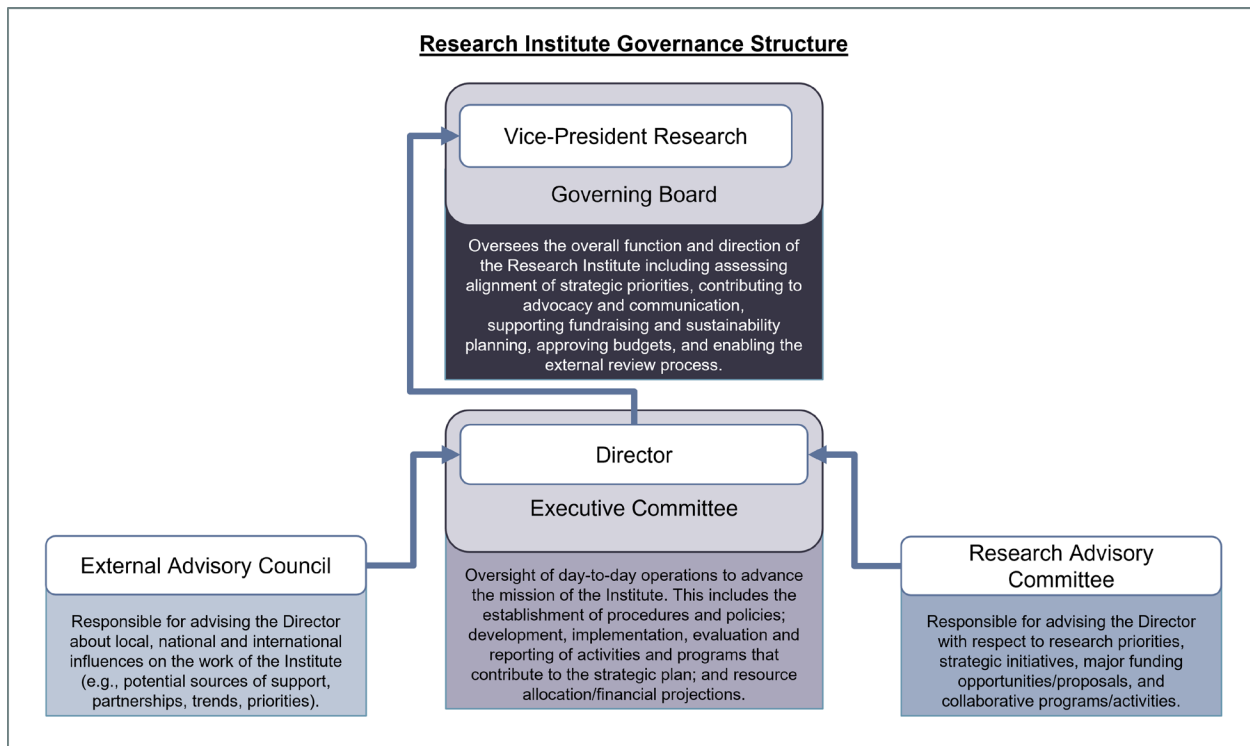


# Western Research Institute Research Advisory Committee Terms of Reference Guideline

Western Research Institutes are required to have an Executive Committee (EXEC), a Research Advisory Committee (RAC), and an External Advisory Council (EAC) as components of their core governance structure (see diagram below).



In this document, you will find terms of reference guidelines that include information about the mandate, composition, and processes for the RAC. The Director of each Western Research Institute uses these guidelines to develop unique terms of reference that reflect the needs of the community they serve.

Support in establishing these core structures is available by contacting the Director of Western Research Institutes. Visit <https://www.uwo.ca/research/about/directory/index.html> for contact details.

## Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

### Mandate

The Research Institute's Research Advisory Committee (RAC) is responsible for advising the Director regarding Institute scientific and/or scholarly priorities. This includes:

- identifying strategic priority grand challenges, deep problems, wicked problems and associated research questions;
- suggesting innovative approaches to mobilize Institute experts and resources (e.g. investigators, staff, trainees, equipment/infrastructure) to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, knowledge exchange and impact;
- engaging knowledge users/stakeholders (e.g. supporting linkages to and the inclusion of external experts and partners from other university units, teaching hospitals, research institutes, governments, non-government organizations, community organizations, consumer and private-sector representatives) to improve relevance, uptake and use of research projects and solutions;
- contributing to applications for major funding that support Institute strategic priorities in research, innovation, training; and/or knowledge exchange;
- enabling connections to or leading provincial, national, and international research teams and networks as a means of supporting large multi-centre initiatives; and
- providing guidance with respect to any other matter that may be brought forward by the Director.

### Composition

RAC membership will normally include **up to 12 members** that represent research areas, programs and/or facilities that are key to advancing the strategic plan of the Institute. To the greatest extent possible, membership will be diverse in terms of expertise, home Faculty/Department, stage of career (e.g., senior/mid-career/early career investigators, post-doctoral/graduate trainees), gender, culture, and sectors.

- The **Director** serves as the Chair. In accordance with Western University's Manual of Administrative Policies and Procedures (MAPP), policy 7.9 section 2.01 (June 26, 2014), the Director is responsible for appointing RAC members based on the recommendation of the EXEC (refer to MAPP 7.9 for the grassroots nomination process).
- **Members at large** will be appointed by the Director to serve a **one to three-year term** that is renewable once. Members at large will not be remunerated.

To maintain continuity, appointments will be staggered so that only one-third of members will be considered for replacement or re-appointment each year. The Research Institute Administrative Officer is a non-voting, ex-officio members of the RAC.

## Meetings & Decision Making

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The RAC will meet at least every quarter in person and/or virtually. The Director may call additional meetings, re-schedule or cancel meetings as needed/required. Formal minutes will not be taken, but summary of discussion points and action items will be compiled by the Administrative Office to guide the work of the RAC and administrative team (made available to the Vice-President (Research) and/or the Director of Western Research Institutes upon request). On all matters relating to the Institute and its function, the RAC advises and supports the performance of the Director who reports to the Vice-President (Research). The RAC will strive to operate by consensus where each member, including the Chair, may contribute to the consensus-making process.

## Conflict of Interest

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Members are: (a) required to disclose any conflict or potential conflict, and (b) prohibited from discussing/voting on any matter in which there is a conflict. Potential conflicts of interest should be disclosed prior to meetings and/or prior to discussion of the specific issue in conflict. Members in conflict will normally be expected to leave the meeting while the issue is discussed.

## Evaluation and Revision of the Terms of Reference

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RAC terms of reference and membership shall be reviewed annually by the Vice-President Research with the Governing Board to ensure adequate adherence to Western Institute requirements. The current terms were drafted March 2022. Institute specific terms must be approved by the Vice-President Research.