

POLICY 7.17 – Establishment, Governance and Review of Core Research Facilities

Policy Category:	Research
Subject:	Establishment, Governance and Review of Core Research Facilities
Approving Authority:	Board of Governors on recommendation of Senate
Responsible Officer(s)	Vice-President (Research)
Responsible Office:	Office of the Vice-President (Research)
Related Procedures:	Procedures for the Establishment, Governance and Review of Institutional Core Research Facilities
Effective Date:	July 1, 2024
Supersedes:	

A. PURPOSE

- 1.00 The University is committed to research excellence and innovation. The University's strengths as a research-intensive institution have derived, in good measure, from the efforts of individual scholars. With ever-increasing needs by scholars for expensive, complex, or specialized research infrastructure, there is a need to enhance the functionality of research facilities, to consider economies of scale, and to ensure a coordinated effort to maximise efficient use and impact within the University. As a result, the University is establishing Core Research Facilities and providing for their governance and review.

B. DEFINITION AND SCOPE

- 1.00 **Core Research Facility (CRF):** A unit within the institution that provides users with access to state-of-the-art research services, analyses, instruments, technology, expertise, resources, and/or training that are typically too expensive, complex, or specialized to be maintained by individual researchers. A CRF typically operates on a fee-for-service basis, supports multiple users, and is available to qualified users without any requirement for

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collaboration or co-authorship. A CRF is recognized and supported by the University, has a sustainability plan, and a clear governance and management structure. A CRF provides benefits such as financial savings through economies of scale, expert operators, training opportunities, and reduced duplication of services and effort within the institution.

- 2.00 This policy recognizes two types of CRF: (i) Faculty and (ii) Institutional. A Faculty Core Research Facility (FCRF) receives oversight and administration from a Faculty and/or Department. An Institutional Core Research Facility (ICRF) is primarily administered within its respective Faculty(s), while receiving additional oversight provided by the Office of the Vice-President (Research) through a structured governance framework. The formalized institutional oversight and assessment process can serve as a significant factor for external funding agencies when evaluating large-scale infrastructure proposals (e.g. Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) Major Science Initiatives Fund, Innovation Fund). An ICRF may be defined by the scale and diversity of services it provides, the complexity of equipment, utilization that transcends disciplinary boundaries, or influence on a provincial, national, or international scale.

C. ESTABLISHMENT AND RENEWAL

1.00 Establishment of a Faculty Core Research Facility

Proposals to establish an FCRF are submitted to the relevant Dean(s). The Dean will ensure that the proposed FCRF meets the requirements and is aligned with Faculty interest and priorities. The Dean will also review sources of funding and resource requirements to ensure that requirements can be supported by the Faculty and that liabilities are minimized. For FCRFs to be recognized, once per year the Dean will submit a report to the Vice-President (Research) listing the FCRFs that are currently active within their Faculty, providing for each FCRF: its name, the name and contact information for the director, its website, and a list of services or equipment provided by the FCRF.

2.00 Terms and Renewals for a Faculty Core Research Facility

Terms and renewals for FCRFs are managed by the relevant Dean(s).

3.00 Establishment of an Institutional Core Research Facility

Proposals for ICRFs are submitted to the Vice-President (Research) in accordance with the requirements enumerated in the [Procedures for the Establishment, Governance and Review of Institutional Core Research](#)

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Facilities. Proposals will be reviewed by the Core Planning Group (CPG) to assess alignment with the definition and purpose of ICRFs. Proposals that are supported by the CPG will be forwarded to the Vice-President (Research) for approval. Establishment of an ICRF will be reported to the University Research Board (URB) and, through it, to Senate for information.

4.00 Terms and Renewal for an Institutional Core Research Facility

The initial term shall normally not exceed five years. Upon application, additional terms, each normally not exceeding five years in duration, may be granted by the Vice-President (Research) in consultation with the CPG, and subject to the satisfactory review of performance and impact, alignment with the University's strategic research priorities, and the business model of the ICRF. Renewal or expiration of the term of an ICRF will be reported to the URB and, through it, to Senate for information.

D. GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING

1.00 All CRFs are expected to adhere to general practices of good governance with administrative structures that utilize expert advice and which ultimately inform the Faculty Dean(s) and the Vice-President (Research) as to their activities and performance.

2.00 Director

A CRF is led by a Director, who will typically hold a research-eligible appointment at the University (e.g. faculty, adjunct, clinical, institute scientist). The term of the Director of an ICRF will typically coincide with the term of the ICRF. The Director will normally hold an academic appointment and report to the appropriate Dean and Chair with respect to their academic responsibilities. The Vice-President (Research), in consultation with the appropriate Dean(s), will be responsible for the search and appointment of an ICRF Director. The appropriate Dean(s) or Department Chair(s) will be responsible for the search and appointment of an FCRF Director.

3.00 Manager

A CRF will normally employ a Manager, who reports to the Director, and is responsible for supervising the day-to-day operations of the CRF and its staff.

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4.00 Advisory Board

All CRFs are expected to incorporate expert advice to guide their activities. For ICRFs, this advisory process will be formalized through the formation of an Advisory Board, by the Director, as appropriate to the ICRF. The Advisory Board is chaired by the Director and its mandate is to advise on the overall direction and operations of the ICRF. It will meet at least once per year. The Advisory Board will receive an annual report from the Director on the status, progress, and immediate future plans of the ICRF.

E. REVIEW, RENEWALS, RESTRUCTURING OR DISSOLUTION

1.00 Review of Institutional Core Research Facilities

A renewal application for an ICRF is submitted to the Vice-President (Research) in accordance with the requirements enumerated in the [Procedures for the Establishment, Governance and Review of Institutional Core Research Facilities](#).

If the renewal deadline has been reached and no renewal application is forthcoming (and no extension has been approved), the Vice-President (Research), after consultation with the CPG, will inform the URB about the dissolution of the ICRF. Decommissioning of the ICRF may involve consultation with Institutional Planning and Budgeting, the Vice-President (Research), Faculties and other stakeholders as required.

ICRFs will be reviewed by the CPG in accordance with the [Procedures for the Establishment, Governance and Review of Institutional Core Research Facilities](#). The CPG will prepare a report for the Vice-President (Research) that summarizes the overall performance of the ICRF and Director and includes recommendations with respect to the renewal, restructuring or dissolution of the ICRF, renewal of the incumbent Director and comments about the proposed plan for a next term. After considering the information presented by the CPG, the Vice-President (Research) will decide whether to renew the ICRF (with specific recommendations to be implemented over the next term); dissolve the ICRF; or restructure the ICRF into an FCRF. If the ICRF is recommended for renewal, the Vice-President (Research) will also assess the details of the term for the Director.

2.00 Re-Appointment of or Search for a Director

If the ICRF is to be renewed, the Vice-President (Research) will either renew the Director's term or launch a search for a new Director.

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F. BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO CORE RESEARCH FACILITIES

1.00 CFI John Evans Leaders Fund (JELF)

The CPG is expected to allocate a proportion of Western's CFI JELF funding for applications from CRFs.

2.00 Internal Assessment of Proposals

CRF status is a factor that will, as appropriate, be considered by internal evaluation committees when considering applications for programs with limited institutional funding (e.g. CFI Innovation Fund).

3.00 Research Support Fund (RSF)

CRF status is a factor that will be considered by Institutional Planning and Budgeting, the Vice-President (Research) or Faculties when allocating RSF funding.

4.00 Western Research Leadership Chairs

ICRF Directors are eligible to be nominated for a Western Research Leadership Chair.

5.00 Alternative Workload

Departments and Faculties may consider alternative workloads for CRF Directors commensurate with the additional administrative responsibilities associated with the CRF.

6.00 Institutional Support

CRF status will, as appropriate, be considered in the allocation of institutional resources, including CFI Infrastructure Operating Funds and funding specifically allocated to support CRFs, as such funding becomes available.

7.00 Personnel Hiring and Retention

Recognition, support, and stability of CRFs will help establish the University as a destination of choice for the Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) that are critical for the operation of CRFs.

8.00 Budget Unit

An ICRF may request to become an ancillary budget unit, subject to approval from Institutional Planning and Budgeting, the Vice-President (Research), and

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the associated Faculty Dean. Such designation can be used to allocate research overhead in accordance with MAPP 7.7.

9.00 Recognition and Discovery

Information about CRFs will be used to develop a web portal that will enable potential users to identify services available from CRFs.

G. GENERAL CONDITIONS

1.00 Adherence to University Policies

All CRFs are expected to adhere to all applicable University policies and procedures, financial and otherwise.

2.00 Incorporation

Requests for incorporation by a CRF will be entertained only in the most exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the Board of Governors of the University. Should such approval be granted, a formal Affiliation Agreement shall be established between the CRF and the University, the terms of which are subject to the approval of the Board of Governors. In any incorporated entity, the members of the governing board of the CRF shall be approved by the University's Board of Governors, and/or a majority of the members of the governing board of the CRF shall be appointed by the University.

3.00 Fundraising

All fundraising activities proposed by CRFs shall be undertaken in consultation with, and subject to the approval of, the Vice-President (University Advancement) and the Faculty Dean for FCRFs or Vice-President (Research) for ICRFs. All charitable income tax receipts will be issued in the name of the University and by the University.

4.00 Contracts

The University shall be solely responsible for the negotiation and approval of research contracts involving CRFs or their members, unless stipulated otherwise under the terms of a written and active agreement with the University.