
RESEARCH CENTRES AND GROUPS

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AUTHORITY	BOARD OF GOVERNORS
PRIMARY CONTACT	ASSOCIATE VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

POLICY

Purpose:

Thompson Rivers University encourages the establishment of Research Centres that advance, enhance and facilitate scholarly activity and innovation and knowledge transfer.

This policy sets out the procedures for the establishment, monitoring and review of Research Centres, and the rights and responsibilities of the Centres and their members.

Definitions:

Research Centre: A formally structured, continuing organization approved according to the process set out herein, and established to address an area of research, scholarship and/or the production of creative works; generate new knowledge; provide unique training opportunities for students in a way that enhances and does not compromise the role of academic departments, schools and faculties; and facilitate the dissemination of research and the transfer of innovation, technology and knowledge in a variety of forums and formats.

Research Centres are either linked to an area of strategic development as articulated in the University Research Plan, or University Strategic Plan, or an emerging research area with a reasonable potential to be a future area of strategic research development. As such, it is expected that several faculty members and/or staff will be involved and there will be a sustainability plan.

Membership: Membership may include faculty members and staff from across multiple departments or faculties, and may include support staff, associate, adjunct or visiting scholars. Other external partners may include community organizations, industry, government, non-governmental organizations, or other academic institutions.

Research Group: A Research Group may form along a parallel structure to a Centre, but represent either a new topic or initiative of limited focus or duration, or to serve as a pilot for the development of a Research Centre.

Approval Process

Establishment of a Research Centre has implications for departments, schools and faculties, and confers university endorsement. As such, establishment of Research Centres requires the endorsement of the Chairs and Deans involved, and approval of the Board of Governors on the recommendation of Senate.

Proposals for the establishment of a Research Centre are submitted to the Office of the Associate Vice-President of Research and Graduate Studies (AVP RGS) which will take the proposal forward to the Research Committee for consideration and advice; the Research Committee will forward the proposal and its recommendations to the Academic Priorities and Planning Committee for consideration.

Proposal

Applications to establish a Research Centre or Group should include the following items where applicable:

Name of the Centre: The name should be descriptive of the work of the Centre and sufficiently distinct from other existing entities.

Rationale:

- **Mission and Objectives:** A concise statement of the mission and objectives of the proposed Centre and the relationship to the Strategic Research Plan and priorities and strategies of the University.
- **Justification:** An explanation of why the proposed goals can be best achieved through the establishment of a Research Centre.
- **Scope and Activities:** A description of the activities to be undertaken by the Centre, and its relationship to academic units and degree programs.
- **Benefits and Outcomes:** A description of the outcomes and benefits likely to result from the establishment of the Research Centre, indicating how the proposed Centre will facilitate research among scholars within the University and the wider community, provide benefits for the training of future scholars, and facilitate the creation and dissemination of new knowledge.

Administrative and Financial Structure:

- **Director:** An inaugural Director of the Research Centre should be identified, and will normally be a full-time continuing faculty member of Thompson Rivers University. Formal appointment of the Director is made by the AVP RGS, and the Director reports to the AVP RGS regarding the administration of the Centre.
- **Proposed inaugural members:** List the proposed membership and include curriculum vitae providing the following information for each member: workplace affiliation, degrees held, employment experience, professional activities, research interests, research funding record (last 5 years), and record of major scholarly achievements (last 5 years).
- **Organizational/Administrative Structure:** Provide an organizational structure for the Centre, including roles and responsibilities of individual members.

Resource Requirements

- **Physical Resources:** A listing of current research facilities, including strengths and weaknesses, likely future requirements, and proposed strategies for obtaining additional physical resources.

- **Financial Resources:** Include a detailed budget for the first three years, including any anticipated revenue or support from all sources (i.e., grants, contracts, internal contributions, royalties, overheads, etc.), proposed annual operating costs, and plans for achieving sustainable self-sufficiency through external funding or other sources of revenue.
- **Statements of Internal and/or External Support and Commitment:** Include any agreement to provide space, teaching release or other resources.

Organization and Reporting Procedures for Research Centres

Reporting: Research Centres are formally constituted units of Thompson Rivers University and report to the AVP RGS. Research Centres will provide an annual report to the AVP RGS by June 1. The AVP RGS will present annual reports to the Research Committee of Senate for its review. Annual reports will be used to promote research at TRU, help identify opportunities for further support of research, and in the ongoing evaluation of Centres. The annual report should include:

Report of Activities: A record of Centre-based activities, including abbreviated biography of members highlighting research outcomes facilitated through the Centre, contribution to the research experience of students, and plans for next year and an indication of how these plans might be facilitated by the University.

Financial Statement: A financial statement that includes revenues, expenditures, sources of funding, and a plan for next year.

Identification of Members and Partners: An updated list of members and partners, and any other information that will promote the Centre, and assist the University in tracking external initiatives and promoting TRU's role and significance in the external community.

Fundraising: A Research Centre must obtain approval from the Vice-President (Advancement) and AVP RGS for fundraising activities directed at external donors so that these activities can be properly coordinated and presented.

Grants, Sponsored Research, Contracts, and Other Agreements: Any agreements for grants, sponsored research, contracts, partnerships or other agreements defining obligations, liability, or affiliations with respect to the activities of, and participants in, the Research Centre require approval of the AVP RGS, and must comply with the signing policies and authorities of Thompson Rivers University.

Review

Approval of Research Centres is normally for an initial period of three years, and subsequently every three to five years.

Initiation: Review of a Research centre shall be initiated by the AVP RGS at least 12 months in advance of the expiry of the current term.

Process:

Review Committee: A Review Committee will be established comprising three reviewers at least two of which must be experts in the research area of the Centre and external to TRU. The Review Committee will be recommended by the AVP RGS in consultation with the Director of the Centre and forwarded to the Research Committee for consideration. Members of the Review Committee must not be directly associated with the Centre.

Submission of Self-study: The Centre will submit a self-study that includes information on the contributions that are directly attributable to the Centre such as:

- The Annual Reports: The annual report for the year in review, and copies of previous reports since the last review.
- Achievements: This may include
 - Promotion and facilitation of collaborative and interdisciplinary research and enhancement of research networking,
 - Improved research equipment or related infrastructure,
 - Success in securing external funding,
 - Contributions to the research experience of students,
 - Contributions to University priorities as indicated in the Research Plan and the University Strategic Plan,
 - Transfer and dissemination of knowledge, technology and innovation,
 - Enhanced connections with the public and private sectors.
- Membership: Current membership and governance structure, and any plans for changes.

Submission of Support Letters: Indication of continued commitment to the Research Centre from appropriate Chairs and Deans.

Submission of a 5-Year Plan: A description of the research plan and directions and financial plan for the period of renewal.

Criteria for Evaluation: A recommendation by the Committee to renew the Centre will be based on success in achieving the projected outcomes of the Centre including the calibre of activities of the Centre, management, benefits to the University, contribution to the student research experience, calibre of the members and quality of internal and external collaborations, barriers to future success, and the quality and feasibility of future plans. The Committee will comment on the performance of the Centre, identify strengths and weaknesses, comment on the future directions, and make recommendations for strengthening the Centre. The Committee will forward its report to the AVP RGS along with one of the following recommendations: 1) continuation of the Centre, 2) conditional continuation of the Centre for a restricted period of time to meet particular requirements or objectives, or 3) closure of the Centre.

Disposition of the Report: The Review Committee will forward the report to the AVP RGS who will provide a copy to the Director of the Centre for a response on any issues raised by the Committee. The AVP RGS shall make a recommendation based on the report and comments provided by the Director, and forward a copy of the report, comments and recommendation to

the Research Committee of Senate for consideration. Senate will forward its recommendation to the Board of Governors.

Transition Provision

Any existing research centre may continue as it has for a one year period from the date this policy is adopted to allow that research centre to apply for approval to continue under this policy.