DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY	*Policy Sponsor:* Senate	*Approval Date:* Senate: June 20, 2019 Board: June 25, 2019
Research Centres and Institutes Policy	*Responsible Units:* University Secretariat, Office of Vice President Research & Innovation	*Revisions:* Senate: June 14, 2021; April 27, 2026 Board: June 22, 2021; October 13, 2026

A. Background & Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide structure, accountability and transparency for groups of researchers who wish to be formally recognized by the University (in communications, webpages, funding applications, etc.) by the special designation “Centre” or “Institute”.

Formal recognition of Research Centres and Institutes is intended to strengthen, coordinate, or facilitate collaborative scholarly purposes or activities not readily undertaken within the University's departmental and unit structures, and is intended to offer new areas of activity consistent with the University's research mission, including the strategic direction and priorities.

The University recognizes formal creation and recognition of Research Centres and Institutes as indicative of the vitality, creativity, and inventiveness of its research community, and fully supports such enterprise.

The University encourages the establishment of Research Centres and Institutes to:

- Provide a structured environment for diverse disciplines to collaborate on complex challenges that transcend traditional departmental boundaries;
- Enhance the visibility of new research areas to attract funding and partnerships;
- Provide strategic focus and collaborative capacity for sustained research agendas, allowing for broader impact over time;
- Provide interdisciplinary research mentorship and professional development opportunities for trainees outside of traditional department structures;
- Serve as incubators for new technologies, startups, and patents, helping translate academic research into real-world applications;
- Share research resources to improve efficiency and reduce duplication of effort.

The University values the strengths and many contributions of existing Research Centres and Institutes and seeks to ensure their ongoing success.

To this end and in keeping with good governance, the University has a responsibility to establish the appropriate mechanisms to assure the relevance and continued viability and value of each Research

Centre and Institute in a changing environment, and to acknowledge the high demands for accountability and transparency.

For purposes of orderly functioning, this Policy sets out definitions and principles for Research Centres and Institutes, including their establishment/termination and review.

B. Application

This Policy applies to groups of researchers who wish to be formally recognized by the University (in communications, webpages, funding applications, etc.) by the special designation of "Centre" or "Institute."

This Policy does not apply to situations where the name of a Research Team is required by a funding organization, or the Research Team is operating in an *ad hoc* and/or collegial manner and wishes to use a designation other than "Centre" or "Institute".

C. Definitions

For purposes of this Policy:

a. **Centre** means a Research Team established pursuant to this Policy that involves research activities, primarily in one Faculty, that complement and enhance the work of three or more faculty members and could involve multi-disciplinary and multi-faculty work that has been approved by the University.

b. **Institute** means a Research Team established pursuant to this Policy that involves research activities that complement and enhance the work of many researchers across more than one Faculty and involves multi-disciplinary and multi-faculty work that has been approved by the University.

c. **Governing Council** means the body responsible for the oversight of the operations of the Centre or Institute. In the case of a Centre, the Governing Council will consist of the Dean of the relevant Faculty, and others at the Dean's discretion. In the case of an Institute, the Governing Council will consist of the Deans of all Faculties involved, and Vice President Research and Innovation (VPRI), or their designate.

d. **Research Sub-Committee** means the Research Sub-Committee of the Senate Academic Programs and Research Committee (SAPRC).

e. **Research Team** is a group or cluster of researchers who have aligned research interests which is not a division, department or college, but which is established for the pursuit of research.

D. Policy

1. The Associate Vice President, Research (AVPR) is responsible for implementation of this Policy.
    a. The AVPR is responsible for the development and publication of appropriate protocols to address:
        i. Creation of a new Research Centre or Institute
        ii. Regular review and lifecycle management of a Research Centre or Institute
        iii. Validation efforts to ensure compliance with this Policy
    b. The AVPR shall ensure that standardized processes and document templates are established and published in conjunction with the developed protocols
    c. The AVPR shall advise and provide guidance on matters relating to this Policy as required

2. The Governing Council is responsible for operational oversight (including financial oversight) of the Research Centre or Institute.
    a. The Chair of the Governing Council (normally the Dean of the relevant Faculty) is responsible for:
        i. Reviewing and implementing terms of reference for the Governing Council
        ii. Appointing the Governing Council members
        iii. Ensuring the Governing Council meets at least once annually to review the activities of the Research Centre or Institute
        iv. Ensuring that Annual Reports are submitted to the AVPR each year

    b. The Governing Council is responsible for formally approving and appointing the Director of the Centre or Institute following a nomination process guided by the Faculty(ies) involved and in accordance with applicable University policies. In all cases:
        i. There shall be a Director or Acting Director at all times.
        ii. Failure to appoint a Director within 18 months of the creation of a Research Centre or Institute shall trigger the process for closure of the Research Centre or Institute.
        iii. Directors shall normally operate on a limited term, not exceeding five years, with possibility of renewal at the discretion of the Governing Council for one additional term.

3. The Director of a Research Centre or Institute is responsible for:
    a. the strategic direction, operation and oversight of Research Centre or Institute activities;
    b. providing opportunities for public engagement (including members of the Dalhousie community more broadly) to support transparent communication of its activities;
    c. maintaining a public-facing website with contact information for interested parties to engage with the Research Centre or Institute and enquire about membership; and

d. fulfilling Research Centre or Institute reporting requirements to Senate.

4. Members of a Research Centre or Institute are responsible for following all applicable University policies when conducting activity on behalf of the Centre or Institute.

5. Senate may close a Research Centre or Institute on the recommendation of the SAPRC.

E. Administrative Structure

1. Authority This Policy falls under the authority of Senate and is administered by the VPRI and the University Secretariat. The VPRI may delegate to a designate any responsibilities assigned to the AVPR under this Policy.

2. SAPRC The SAPRC shall be responsible for:

   a. Maintaining a published governance framework for Research Centres and Institutes;
   b. Considering and making recommendations to Senate regarding the creation, conversion, renaming and closure of Research Centres and Institutes;
   c. Advising on assessments for reports and reviews of Research Centres and Institutes;
   d. Receiving annual reports from Research Centres and Institutes as well as renewal requests;
   e. Receiving a general summary annual report concerning Research Centres and Institutes from the AVPR; and
   f. Reporting to Senate on matters pertaining to this Policy and related Procedures.

3. Research Sub-Committee of SAPRC The Research Sub-Committee shall be responsible for:

   a. Reviewing proposals to create, convert, rename and close Research Centres and Institutes and making recommendations to SAPRC;
   b. Other activities to support this Policy as assigned by the SAPRC;
   c. Reviewing and advising the AVPR annually on the Protocols document.

4. Record-keeping The record keeping pertaining to this Policy will be the responsibility of the University Secretariat and will follow the University's Records Management Policy.

5. Reporting The SAPRC will provide an annual summary report to Senate concerning the creation, conversion, and closure of Research Centres and Institutes.

6. Review This Policy shall be reviewed every three years or earlier if deemed necessary by the Vice-President Research and Innovation.

7. The Vice-President Research and Innovation, in consultation with the General Counsel & University Secretary, may amend templates attached as Schedules to the Protocols associated with this Policy.

F. Procedures

1. Research Teams seeking to use the designation “Centre” or “Institute” and thereby creating a new Research Centre or Institute must:
    i. Receive a recommendation for approval from the Faculty Council(s) of relevant Faculty(ies);
    ii. Be approved by Senate, on the recommendation of the SAPRC; and
    iii. Be approved by the Board of Governors.

2. Research Centres or Institutes shall operate on a limited term, not exceeding five years, and may apply for renewal at the recommendation of the Governing Council and, when applicable, following a favorable review by a Review Committee. Where the Governing Council does not recommend applying for renewal, the Research Centre or Institute will be closed.

3. Existing Research Centres or Institutes also seeking to reclassify or rename an existing Research Centre or Institute must, in concert with the renewal process:
    i. Receive a recommendation supporting the reclassification or name change from the Governing Council; and
    ii. Have the name change or reclassification approved by Senate, on the recommendation of the SAPRC; and
    iii. Have the name change or reclassification approved by the Board of Governors.

4. Research Centres or Institutes seeking to be renewed for an additional term must:
    i. Receive a recommendation supporting the renewal from their Governing Council;
    ii. Have the renewal approved by Senate, on the recommendation of the SAPRC; and
    iii. Have the renewal approved by the Board of Governors.

    Renewal of a Research Centre or Institute will not be unreasonably denied by Senate or the Board of Governors. If renewal is denied, a substantive and compelling rationale must be provided.

    Research Centres or Institutes that are not recommended for approval to renew for an additional term will be closed. The closure process does not limit the group’s ability to continue its activities as a Research Team. Names, branding, and public materials must be updated to reflect the new status and must not imply formal Research Centre or Institute designation.

5. A Research Centre or Institute’s request for reclassification or renaming will trigger a renewal process, if it is not already underway.