

Guidelines for Three-year Comprehensive Review of University-designated Research Centers
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Applicability

These guidelines apply to the following centers and institutes that are designated “University Research Centers” by the University Office of Research and Innovation:

Center for Earthquake Research and Information	TN State Center of Excellence
Center for Applied Psychological Research	TN State Center of Excellence
Center for Research in Educational Policy	TN State Center of Excellence
Center for Research Initiatives and Strategies for the Communicatively Impaired	TN State Center of Excellence
Institute of Egyptian Art and Archaeology	TN State Center of Excellence
Institute for Intelligent Systems	University Research Center
MD2K	NIH Center of Excellence in Mobile Data to Knowledge

Purpose

The University requires a comprehensive review of University Centers to be held every three years to evaluate Center effectiveness in fulfilling the research and educational missions of the University of Memphis. Effectiveness is evaluated by considering benchmarks in teaching, mentoring, service, outreach, and particularly, research. Auxiliary factors such as laboratory facilities and quality of Center leadership are also considered for determining effectiveness.

Comprehensive review of research centers is just as important as review of academic departments and degree programs for a Tier 1 research university. These guidelines build on the five-year review process that academic departments currently undergo throughout the University that stress external evaluations. Evaluations by peer external reviewers carry considerable weight in validating the success or uncovering problems that a particular research center may experience.

Procedure

Currently, all University Research Centers prepare an annual Center, Institute, or Bureau (CIBs) performance statement that is reviewed by the office of the Vice President of Research and Innovation (VPRI). The third-year review will consist of a virtual site visit of an external advisory committee who will use these annual reviews and associated feedback to prepare answers to a detailed rubric on Center effectiveness. The rubric will be developed by Center leadership in

conjunction with the office of the VPRI. Advisory committee reports will be evaluated by the VPRI, members of the University Leadership Council, and other parts of the University Administration for making decisions on the appropriate courses of action, if any, concerning the Center.

Center External Advisory Committee

Each University Research Center is encouraged to form a permanent External Advisory Committee (EACom) consisting of 3 to 5 external peers who are familiar with Center mission and goals. A permanent Advisory Committee can be consulted by Center leadership when needed but should formally meet with Center personnel at least once annually. This may be done electronically or by a site visit. The third-year review will consist of a virtual site visit by the EACom.

If a University Center chooses not to have a permanent EACom, then it must form a committee of 3 to 5 peers every three years for the express purpose of the review.

Each Center is responsible for defining the criteria and terms of membership on the EACom and to put forward candidates for approval by the VPRI.

The Third-year Review

The third-year review will be scheduled in consultation with the office of the VPRI, Center leadership, and the Center EACom. It will consist of a virtual site visit with personnel of the Research Center and University leadership. In preparation for the site visit, Center Leadership will provide materials to the EACom addressing the performance of the Center over the past 3 years, specific material supporting questions in the evaluation rubric, and all past EACom evaluations. The purpose of the visit is primarily for the EACom to give its feedback to the University on answers to the rubric and/or to clarify issues that the EACom has identified. It is to be expected that the EACom will complete its report at or shortly after the site visit. A copy of the report and rubric will be forwarded to Center leadership and the VPRI. Members of the EACom will be offered a modest honorarium for their work.