



## PROCEDURES FOR RESEARCH UNITS

As per *Policy on Research Units* ([VPRGS-8](#))

Last Updated – April 2010

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These Procedures are related to the *Policy on Research Units* ([VPRGS-8](#)) and reflect current practices concerning:

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### **University Recognition of Research Units**

Proposal for recognition: A [Proposal for University Recognition for Research Units](#) may be submitted at any time to the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (OVPRGS) with a copy to the Faculty Dean. The information provided in the Proposal must be comprehensive enough to allow the merits and feasibility of establishing a Research Unit to be assessed. The OVPRGS will conduct a general screening as to whether the unit meets the general criteria of a University-recognized Research Unit as outlined in the *Policy on Research Units* ([VPRGS-8](#)) and will communicate with the Faculty Dean.

If certain criteria are not met, the OVPRGS may request complementary information. When all criteria are met, a recommendation will be made to the SRC for approval of a term-limited recognition, usually for five years, with continuation of the recognition subject to a review process.

Approval process: The authority to establish a University-recognized Research Unit resides with the University Senate as delegated to the Senate Research Committee (SRC). All approved dossiers shall be presented to the University Senate for ratification.

Notification: Upon approval by the SRC, the Research Unit Director will receive formal notification of the recognition indicating the terms and reporting requirements. If University funding is attached, the amount and conditions will be indicated. A copy of the Proposal and related documentation will be kept in the OVPRGS/Office of Research.

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### **Directorship of University-recognized Research Units**

#### Responsibilities and Term of the Director

A Director (or Co-Directors) is the appointed head of each University-recognized Research Unit. The Director is responsible for the scientific direction and administration of the Research Unit. In addition, the Director oversees the coordination of the activities including student training, outreach and special events, as well as managing communications both within the unit and externally to partner institutions, external members, funding agencies, and the community.

Accountable to the VPRGS on matters pertaining to the activities of the unit, and working closely with the appropriate Associate Dean Research, the Director is administratively responsible for the Research Unit and exercises general supervision over its operations.

The Director has the day-to-day responsibility for staff operations of the unit, as well as ensuring that the unit conforms to the relevant Collective Agreements and policies in effect within the University.

The Director is responsible for the budget of the unit and for preparing the annual report and review material for renewal of the recognition. A plan for securing external and internal funding for the unit's operations, as well as research activities, should be developed and revised on a continuous basis.

In accordance with the process set out below, the Director shall be appointed for a three year term and normally may be re-appointed for one additional three-year term, for a total of six years. With the concurrence of at least 80% of the members of the Research Unit, the Director may be re-appointed for additional three year terms.

#### Process for the Search and Appointment of the Director

The formal process of searching for a new Director will begin at least six months prior to the date at which the current Director's term ends. In cases where there is no current Director, an interim appointment may be recommended by the Advisory Board (or equivalent) for a period of up to one year.

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Description of the Director position: The Advisory Board of the Research Unit will prepare a description of the Director position and a profile of the ideal candidate. The Director must be a full time faculty member at the University and the administrative centre be located at the University. The description and profile must be approved by the OVPRGS and the hosting Faculty(ies).

Once the description and profile have been approved, the OVPRGS will authorize the Director to inform all members of the unit (in writing) that a search committee will be struck to choose a new Director. The Director will also circulate the description and profile of the ideal candidate.

Search Committee: The Advisory Board will decide upon the composition of the Search Committee. Usually, a Search Committee will have a number of faculty members from the Research Unit, a representative of the graduate students, one member appointed by the OVPRGS, and one by the Faculty. The Chair of the Search Committee will be selected by and among the Search Committee members. It is recommended that partnering organizations be represented on the Search Committee.

Following the announcement of a search for a Director, there will be a period of at least ten working days during which the members of the unit may nominate representatives to the Search Committee. Nominations will only be accepted if the nominee gives a written consent to serve. In the week following the nomination process, an election will be held, if necessary, in person or by email. All regular faculty members of the unit are entitled to vote for faculty member representatives to the Search Committee. Graduate student members may elect a student representative.

Call for nominations: The Chair of the Search Committee will circulate a call for nominations, open for at least ten working days, for the Director position to all members of the unit. If an individual who had been elected to serve on the Search Committee is subsequently approached about standing for the Director position, the individual must resign from the Search Committee and a replacement be elected.

Deliberations: Once all nominations have been received, the Search Committee will solicit the candidates' cv's and shortlist up to three nominees. The Search Committee will then proceed to interview the shortlisted nominees. Prior to interviews, the Search Committee will invite all members of the unit to appear before the committee if they wish, or to submit written statements about the nominees. As part of this process, the Search Committee will interview the

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outgoing Director about the past experiences and solicit his/her advice regarding priority issues for the future.

Recommendation and Appointment: When the Search Committee has interviewed the nominees and completed its deliberations, it will select the preferred candidate through voting. The result of the vote together with a reasoned recommendation will be forwarded to the VPRGS for decision. The VPRGS will make the final decision with respect to the appointment of the new Director and will prepare the appointment letter.

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### Review of Research Units and Renewal of Recognition

To ensure that the activities of all University-recognized Research Units are consistent with the goals of the University, and reflect positively on its reputation, a review will be undertaken periodically. A positive review will result in the renewal of recognition for another term.

#### Annual Reporting Requirements

Research Units which are receiving institutional funds under the *Infrastructure Support for Research Units Program* are required to submit an annual report to the OVPRGS with a copy to the Faculty Deans by May 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. The report should provide an overview of the activities during the past year and its financial status (a budget for the past year and a budget forecast for the coming year).

The internal funding will be released on June 1 or later, upon receipt and review of the annual report.

Research Units which are not receiving institutional funds are not required to submit annual reports.

#### Review and Renewal of University Recognition

Review process: Notice of the review for renewal will be communicated to the Director of the Research Unit by the OVPRGS during the last year of the term. In response to this notification, the Director will submit a review package with the following material to the OVPRGS:

- an updated [Proposal for Recognition](#) covering a period of five years
- Letters indicating support from appropriate department heads and Faculty Deans
- If applicable, letters of support from external members and partnering organizations

On the basis of the information provided in the review package and the past annual reports, if applicable, the OVPRGS will conduct a general screening as to whether the unit continues to meet the criteria of a University-recognized Research Unit.

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If certain criteria are not met, the OVPRGS may request complementary information or, in some cases, strike a special review committee with members from the SRC for a detailed review and call for a meeting with the Director and members of the Research Unit.

Renewal decision: If all criteria are met, a recommendation will be made to the SRC for renewal of the recognition. The SRC decision may be:

- continuation with review in five years; or
- continuation with review in one, two, or three years; or
- that the recognition will expire upon completion of the current term.

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### **Discontinuation of Recognition and Research Unit Closure**

Reasons for discontinuation: The activities of a Research Unit are often carried out on a project basis and changing factors such as funding opportunities, partnerships, and members might lead to fewer activities. In general, Research Units may be discontinued for the following reasons:

- a renewal application is not submitted and the recognition expires upon completion of the current term
- the members of a unit collectively agree to withdraw its recognition
- the University decides to discontinue the recognition for financial exigency or other reasons

Process for discontinuation: If the Research Unit wishes to be discontinued, the Director must contact all members of the unit and request their written consent. If a majority of the membership agrees to cease the unit's operations, the Director must inform the VPRGS and the Faculty Dean, in writing, without delay that the unit is discontinued.

The University, through the SRC, reserves the right to discontinue the recognition at any time for financial exigency or other reasons. If there are grounds for a discontinuation, the OVPRGS will strike a special committee with members from the SRC to meet with the Director and the Advisory Committee seeking solutions for maintaining the recognition. If a solution cannot be reached, a letter will be sent from the SRC informing the Director about the reasons for discontinuing the unit's recognition and the date it will be in effect.

Upon discontinuation of recognition, any legal agreements or obligations that affect the status of the Research Unit must be taken into consideration. Equipment and facilities under the responsibility of the Research Unit will be transferred to the hosting Department(s)/Faculty. A planned dismantling and re-allocation of the physical resources should take place in collaboration between the Director and relevant Departmental head(s). A Research Unit may not sell, donate or otherwise dispose of any equipment or material that was acquired with research funds.

Staff positions of discontinued Research Units will be managed according to the University Human Resources policies, collective agreements and contractual agreements.

Approved by the VPRGS and the Faculty Deans on April 16, 2010