UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
RESEARCH CENTER GUIDELINES

Research Center Mission

Research Centers at the University of Massachusetts Lowell further the mission of the University and advance the research objectives set forth in the strategic plan- UMass Lowell 2020. The Research Centers differ from one another in focus, scope, and staffing, but each contribute in unique ways to the common goals of expanding knowledge, generating new discoveries, and/or having a positive impact on society through informing policy and systemic change. Communities of researchers and staff in Research Centers provide a stimulating environment that encourages early researchers and challenges the experienced researcher. Research Centers also contribute to the education and training of the researchers of the future by serving as learning environments for students. Interdisciplinary collaborations are promoted by the Research Centers both within the University and among institutions external to UMass Lowell.

Research Center Criteria

- Research Centers have a clear mission and goals that are aligned with the mission and goals of UMass Lowell and can identify strategies to advance goals of the Research Center
- A new research center must add value to the University beyond what already exists
- Research Centers have the potential to elevate UMass Lowell as a leader in their specific research and scholarship areas among peer institutions and have the capacity to enhance the reputation of the University
- Research Centers strive for regional, national, and international recognition
- Research Centers serve as an umbrella for a critical mass of activity related to a particular area of scholarship/research (e.g. multiple grants, publications, projects)
- Research Centers show evidence of scholarly activity. All members of the Research Center contribute to the scholarship of the Center and actively generate a body of knowledge in the research focus area
- Research Centers successfully generate external research funding to further the mission of the Center
- Research Centers involve and benefit students by serving as a learning environment
- Research Centers report to the Academic Deans within the Colleges/Schools in which the Center is established to ensure integration with the academic mission and infrastructure.
Guidelines for the Establishment of New Research Centers

1. Organize a group of researchers who have expertise in the focus of the proposed Research Center. Each member should have a background that will further the mission of the Research Center and be able to demonstrate a history of research studies, funding, and publication in the research area. Research Centers that bring together researchers from several disciplines are preferred, as they have the capacity to enhance diversity and interdisciplinary research opportunities. A Center Director and Co-Director (if appropriate) should be identified.

2. The Research Team should meet to establish the mission and goals for the Center, as well as determine space and administrative support needed to enhance sustainability.

3. A proposal for a new center must be submitted to the appropriate Academic Deans, Chairs, and the Vice Provost for Research prior to a meeting with the Vice Provost for Research. The proposal must include:
   - The name of the proposed Center
   - The researchers, University rank, Department and expected contribution to the Research Center of each member, including strengths that the researchers bring to the Center
   - Director or Co-Directors
   - The mission and goals of the proposed Research Center.
   - The need for the Research Center and an explanation of why the Research Center structure is required to complete the planned research activities. Include a description of the strength that establishing a Research Center would bring to the University and the value that is added to the University by the Center.
   - Interdisciplinary research activities that provide evidence of the potential for collaboration of researchers within the Research Center
   - A biosketch of each Center researcher, not to exceed 4 pages per researcher.
   - A record of past funding and the potential for attracting external funding, including sources of potential funding to further the goals of the Research Center.
   - Resources that have been secured from external sources and a rationale for resources requested of UMass Lowell

4. The appropriate Chairs and Academic Deans should be engaged in discussion about the Research Center to seek support, including commitment regarding space, funding, and administrative support.

5. Following obtaining support from the appropriate Academic Dean(s), a meeting should be planned with the Vice Provost for Research to engage in a discussion related to the support required from administration, if the new center is approved.

6. Inform the University community about the proposed formation of the new center to encourage feedback and additional membership through web-based communications and by hosting a seminar for University faculty, administration, and staff related to the goals, proposed research, and plans to address the goals of the Research Center.
7. Decisions about approval of the Center will be made by the Vice Provost for Research with input from a Research Center Advisory Committee. The 7-10 faculty member Research Center and Institute Advisory Committee will be appointed annually by the Vice Provost for Research upon recommendations of the Deans of the Colleges.

**Annual Research Center Report**

University Research Centers will be reviewed by the Research Center and Institute Advisory Committee every three years once the designation of Research Center is formally approved. New Centers may be asked to undergo full review in 1 or 2 years. Full reports are required for seed centers, proposals for new centers, and existing entities interested in being elevated to University Center status. Existing University research or engagement centers are encouraged to submit an annual report summarizing their activities and goals for purposes of University promotional activities.

The Annual Research Center Report should include the following using the Annual Report template:

- The Center Mission, noting any changes in mission, goals, or focus of research activity that have occurred over the previous year
- Progress toward goals from the previous year
- Activities to forward Center goals that are proposed for the following year
- List of all researchers and staff involved in the Center over the past year, including a summary of how each person contributed to the Center’s goals. Each researcher should describe contributions to the body of scholarship supported by the Center and benefits derived from the Center. List student involvement in the Center and community and industry partnerships.
- Publications and professional conference presentations that are a part of the Center’s programs for the previous year (please do not include articles or presentations prior to the past year). List articles that are published or in press only.
- A listing of new research funding received, including source, amount, and title of project for the past year only.
- Total amount of current internal and external funding
- A listing of up to 10 highlights that reflect the accomplishments of the Center over the previous year that should be promoted by the University internally and externally

**Three-Year Review of Existing Research Centers**

All Research Centers will be reviewed by the Research Center and Institute Advisory Committee, Academic Dean(s), and the Vice Provost for Research every 3 years. Any annual reports from the previous three years will also be reviewed. A letter from the Director of the
Research Center to the Academic Dean(s) of the College and the Vice Provost for Research summarizing the accomplishments and work of the Research Center over the previous 3 years should be submitted with the Annual Report in the Center review year. The 3-year review will provide feedback on whether the Center continues to meet Research Center criteria. Those Research Centers who are no longer meeting Research Center criteria will be issued a warning letter from the Vice Provost for Research with recommendations for action to meet Research Center status. The Research Center with warning status will then undergo review in 1 year and action on continuation of Research Center status will be determined by the Vice Provost for Research, with recommendations from the Academic Dean(s) and the Research Center and Institute Advisory Committee.

The purposes of the Research Center 3-year review are:

- To provide feedback to Research Centers for self-evaluation
- To provide feedback to administration on the performance of Research Centers
- To recognize active Research Centers to justify future support or expansion
- To assess appropriate utilization of resources
- To assess inclusiveness of members across Departments and Colleges as appropriate, including new faculty involvement