

Establishing a Named Research Entity (e. g., Institute or Center) Administrative Guidelines for Approvals

The Office of the Provost seeks to facilitate the development of new research units that cut across traditional disciplinary boundaries. This document specifically provides guidance on the creation of multi-investigator collaborative units, commonly referred to as institutes, centers, programs, and laboratories. This document pertains to long-lasting organizational units that convene research activity around a particular scholarly topic, and that operate continuously for several years. This guidance also applies to units created with names that do not include “center” or “institute” but act as centers or institutes.

Organized activities for professional development or training, as well as workshops or policy labs, are outside the scope of these guidelines. Similarly, research initiatives that are explicitly temporary, or ad hoc research groups that convene for short time periods, or are organized only periodically, are also outside the scope. Any new organized activities at Yale naturally should avoid assuming names or web presences that might lead to confusion with existing units and other programming at the university, and deans are expected to exercise oversight in consultation with the Provost’s Office toward that end.

The primary goal of this guidance is to ensure that new research units are initiated with the best chances for success, with a common understanding of their structure, mission, resources, responsibilities, and metrics for success. Part of this goal is to ensure that new units are initiated in a manner complementary to existing units, rather than in competition either in name or in mission.

The creation of centers and institutes, as well as named research programs and laboratories, already requires provostial approval as outlined in the current Provost Policy “Establishing a Named Academic Entity.” This document contains guidelines for establishing such units and applies to all units initiated on, or after, DATE.

Exceptions to these guidelines may be granted at the discretion of the Provost.

Definitions

Institute: The largest of entities with substantial resources invested and has the primary goal of research. The activities should be extensive in scale, have substantial external funding or endowment, involve at least two departments, and be directed by tenured faculty. Such units may only be established with prior approval of the Yale Corporation.

Center: Smaller entities than Institutes, Centers should have an identifiable research focus and a clear rationale for establishment. Centers should have ongoing funding that includes multiple grants or contracts, or a commitment of internal funding, and involve more than two faculty.

Program: Typically housed within one department and involving more than one faculty member. Programs should have a concise research focus and clear justification for creation.

Laboratory: In some disciplines it is common practice to name individual research laboratories (e.g. Social Perception and Communication Lab). Named Laboratories will typically include only one faculty member and have a well-defined research focus.

Guidelines for Establishing Research Centers and Institutes

Research Institutes and Centers provide focus on specific areas of scholarship that are not restricted by the traditional departmental structure. They typically cross the boundaries of traditional departments and require effort by faculty from various disciplines. Because of their programmatic focus and their facilitation of multidisciplinary research, they help strengthen the research enterprise and attract external funds. They may also create incremental demands on University resources in the form of funding, space, and/or administration. The impact of newly proposed Institutes and Centers must be carefully considered before they are approved.

Those seeking to establish an Institute or Center should prepare a document that addresses the following elements. Each numbered element should be addressed in a separate section and clearly labelled for ease of evaluation.

1. What are the proposed activities and objective(s)? Include the following:
 - a. The activities enabled by the unit.
 - b. An explanation of how the activities support the University's current initiatives and long-term goals.
 - c. A description of other units that may have a similar function or name and how the proposed unit is different.
 - d. Verification that other similar units have been notified of request for the creation of the new unit (optional).
2. Which departments and schools will participate in the unit? Include the following:
 - a. A list of faculty who may participate in the unit.
 - b. Short letters of support from departments/schools with participating faculty (optional).
3. What are the expectations for the unit and director? Include the following:
 - a. To whom the director reports and how the director will be selected.
 - b. The term of the directorship and whether it is renewable.
 - c. Anticipated criteria for participating scholars (faculty, students, visitors, etc.).
4. What are the required resources? Include the following:
 - a. The anticipated organizational structure, noting key roles and responsibilities.
 - b. Any administrative needs (operations manager, financial assistant, administrative support, etc.).
 - c. Expected funding, both anticipated operating costs and a plan for funding for the first 3-5 years.

- d. Space requirements for the unit, if any. Note whether space has been identified for the unit and if that space will require renovations to facilitate activity.
5. What is the expected lifecycle of the unit? Include the following:
 - a. Plans for review of the unit, and conditions under which the unit would be closed.
 - b. If the funding is time-limited, indicate the explicit plan for the end of the funding period.

This document will be reviewed by the Dean(s) of the faculty requestors and then, upon approval, forwarded to the Vice Provost for Research for consideration. After consideration, the Vice Provost for Research will make a recommendation to the Provost, who must also approve prior to formation of the unit.

Note that the creation and naming of new Institutes, as well as the formation of any endowed entity, must be reviewed and approved by the Yale Corporation.

Guidelines for Establishing Named Research Programs and Laboratories

Programs and Laboratories are typically housed within a single department or school and sometimes within a single faculty lab or an existing research center. Before creation of a new named research Program or Laboratory, a short letter describing the elements above, as appropriate, should be forwarded to the Dean for review, consulting the department chair when the entity would be within a department. After approval the Dean should forward to the Office of the Provost for final review and approval. The request will be reviewed by the Office of the Provost to ensure that the proposed name does not create confusion. The proposed name will be compared with the current list of named entities to ensure no conflict with existing or planned future entities.

Evaluating and Closing Institutes, Centers, Programs and Laboratories

Institutes, Centers, Programs and Laboratories must be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure they are meeting their objectives and are financially stable. The directorship of each unit will be evaluated on a regular basis, as defined in the document defining establishment, but may be reviewed more frequently if determined necessary by the unit providing oversight. Directorship of Institutes, Centers, Programs and Laboratories will be either renewed or changed at the close of each term, depending upon the results of evaluation of the unit.

If the Institute, Center, Program or Laboratory is not financially solvent, in order to limit financial exposure, the overseeing unit may choose to close the Institute, Center, Program or Laboratory. This action may be taken even if initial funding was not described as time-limited and a plan for closure not proposed.