

## Handbook of Operating Procedures

### ORGANIZED RESEARCH UNITS

---

#### A. Purpose

This policy outlines procedures and criteria for establishing, reviewing, and terminating Organized Research Units (ORUs) at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV).

#### B. Persons Affected

This policy applies to all faculty, staff, and administrators involved in the application, review, approval, operation, or administration of Organized Research Units at UTRGV.

#### C. Policy

1. UTRGV is dedicated to the enhancement and support of research activities through the establishment of Organized Research Unit(s) at UTRGV. ORUs are subject to all policies and procedures of UTRGV and The University of Texas System, and ORUs may be subject to institutional or external reporting or auditing requirements. ORUs may be terminated by the appropriate Provost or Vice President, Research Vice President, or President at any time.
2. The functions of an ORU include the following:
  - a. facilitating research and research collaborations;
  - b. disseminating research results through conferences, meetings, and other activities;
  - c. supporting and strengthening graduate and undergraduate education by providing students with training opportunities and access to research facilities;
  - d. seeking extramural funding; and
  - e. carrying out UTRGV and public-service programming related to the ORU's research focus.

#### D. Procedures

1. *Designation of an Organized Research Unit*
  - a. Faculty member(s) seeking to establish a new Organized Research Unit must submit a proposal to their respective dean(s). The following information must be included in the new ORU proposal:
    - i. The purpose(s) and benefit(s) of the ORU in supporting or enhancing the mission and goals of UTRGV.
    - ii. Past achievements and performance of participating faculty, criteria for eligibility of faculty, expectations for faculty participation, and the proposed administrative organization.

- iii. The research and other activity plans of the ORU, and how the plans complement and enhance UTRGV's research portfolio and productivity.
  - iv. Proposed location and new space requirements of the ORU.
  - v. Financial plan for the ORU over a 5-year period, including projected budgets and revenue sources.
  - vi. The significance of the ORU to undergraduate and graduate education.
  - vii. Any external service functions of the ORU.
- b. The proposal to establish a new ORU must carry the approval of all relevant department chair(s) and dean(s). Upon approval of the proposal, the dean(s) will then route the proposal to the Research Vice President and appropriate Provost or Vice President, who will collaboratively review the proposal and determine whether the proposal should be approved. The Research Vice President and appropriate Provost or Vice President may consult with the President in reviewing and making determinations on proposals. The Research Vice President will be responsible for notifying all relevant faculty and administrators of whether a proposal is approved or denied.

## *2. Reporting Structures and Appointments*

- a. If an Organized Research Unit's disciplines are contained within a single college, the ORU will report through the college dean to the appropriate Provost or Vice President. If an ORU's disciplines span more than one college, the ORU will report to the Research Vice President.
- b. The director and any associate directors of an ORU will be appointed by the individual to whom the ORU reports (college dean or Research Vice President).
- c. An ORU should have an associated department ID code in PeopleSoft and the ORU name should be included in the proposal submission and routing process to be eligible for allocation of indirect cost (IDC) revenue. Institutional IDC allocation and distributions policies and procedures will determine allocations and distributions.
- d. Before being affiliated with an ORU, an individual faculty member must have an academic appointment in a college. Recommendations for initial faculty appointments, promotions, or tenure (if applicable) must originate in the college in which the faculty member's appointment is proposed or, for a current faculty member, in the department in which they hold their faculty appointment, and not the ORU. Requests for appointments, promotions, and tenure must follow established department, college, and institutional policies and practices.

## *3. Naming*

Organized Research Units normally carry a designation such as "Center," "Institute," or "Laboratory." A proposal to name an ORU for an individual or entity must comply with the provisions of [Rule 80307](#) of the *Rules and Regulations* of the Board of Regents of The

University of Texas System, which relates to honorific and gift-related naming, and must be recommended through the appropriate channels to the President. When selecting a name for an ORU, the ORU leadership must first ensure that there are no other existing UTRGV organizations that already use the same name, abbreviation, or acronym to minimize confusion. The naming of an ORU will only be maintained for as long as the ORU is active.

#### *4. Funding*

Funding for Organized Research Units should be primarily or exclusively from external sources. Exceptions may be made for new units requesting a small amount of funding for start-up activities, including proposal development, course releases, temporary staff, and maintenance and operating expenses. ORUs are eligible for allocation of IDC revenue consistent with institutional IDC revenue allocation and distributions policies and procedures. Gift and endowment solicitations or requests must comply with ADM 10-803 Gifts - Solicitation, Acceptance, Processing and Acknowledgment and other applicable UTRGV or UT System policies.

#### *5. Periodic Reviews*

- a. All Organized Research Units must submit an activity report at the end of every fiscal year by November 30<sup>th</sup> of the following fiscal year to the college dean or Research Vice President, depending on the ORU's reporting structure. The report format and any related annual data will be provided by the Division of Research to the ORU director to be further edited and submitted for annual review. The annual performance review process will be facilitated by the Division of Research.
- b. ORUs are not permanent units and will be reviewed periodically by the Research Vice President, appropriate Provost or Vice President, and the President to determine whether their continued existence is justified and in the best interest of UTRGV. While all ORUs submit annual reports, new ORUs will be comprehensively reviewed at the end of their first three (3) fiscal years of existence and then every five (5) fiscal years thereafter.
- c. The comprehensive review of an ORU will be based on an evaluation of the annual reports and the proposal upon which the ORU was formed. Additional written information may be requested from the ORU director as part of the review. The Research Vice President and appropriate Provost or Vice President will coordinate a review and evaluation process of the material provided, and the initial comprehensive review will be shared with the related dean(s) and department chair(s) for comment prior to finalizing the comprehensive review. The President or Research Vice President may request a comprehensive review at any time if in their judgment circumstances so warrant.
- d. If an ORU is evaluated to be ineffective after either an annual or comprehensive review, it can be immediately terminated by the appropriate Provost or Vice President or Research Vice President. The Research Vice President or appropriate Provost or Vice President may consult with the President in making termination decisions.

- e. Key considerations in reviewing ORUs will include (without limitation) whether the goals of the ORU remain relevant and consistent with institutional goals and priorities; whether the ORU is meeting its goals; the ORU's ability to sustain capacity to innovate; and whether the ORU is efficient and effective in its use of institutional resources.

**E. Definitions**

1. College – an academic unit organized within UTRGV, which is usually comprised of many departments or provides programs in multiple academic specialties/professional instruction. This academic unit may be referred to as a college or school and is led by a dean reporting to a designated Provost or Vice President.
2. Department – an academic unit organized within a college, usually devoted to a particular academic discipline. This academic unit is usually referred to as a department or school and the unit's head (usually a chair or director) reports to the dean of the college.
3. Fiscal Year – September 1 to August 31.
4. Organized Research Unit (ORU) – means a research center, institute, or laboratory that enhances the research activity of UTRGV and complements the instructional and research goals of college(s), department(s), and other unit(s).
5. Provost or Vice President – The chief academic officer with administrative authority over an individual college and its faculty.
6. Research Vice President – senior UTRGV administrator reporting to the President with overall responsibility for institutional research administration, integrity, and policy.

**F. Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies or Standards**

University of Texas System Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, [Rule 60302](#), Advisory Councils of an Institution

University of Texas System Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, [Rule 80307](#), Naming Policy

[Office of General Counsel – Model Bylaws for an Advisory Council](#)

[UTRGV HOP ADM 10-803 Gifts - Solicitation, Acceptance, Processing and Acknowledgment](#)

**G. Dates Reviewed or Amended**

Not applicable.