

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTERS (URC)

Last edited 8/13/2019

Definition and purpose:

- Non-departmental research units established for the purposes of facilitating collaborative research across the University and with other universities.
- Involve a cohort of faculty conducting research within the institution. Must involve at least 10 faculty members from across at least 4 academic programs.
- Focus is on research and technology transfer.
- URCs involve faculty and students from various academic programs in multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and technology transfer activities with well-focused projects tailored to address the needs of local, state, and federal agencies, and the private sector, and to achieve a national reputation of scholarly excellence.
- URCs report to the VCR.

Proposal for new URC:

- Follow CRR 050.010 and Guidance Memorandum-03.
- URCs can be proposed by any group of faculty as well as the Deans, the Provost, and the VCR. Proposals should include:
 - Name and title of the person(s) proposing creation of the URC.
 - The unique value of the program to the University, and the distinction to any similar URCs in Missouri (not just S&T).
 - Description of how the URC fits with S&T's strategic plan.
 - Information on the Director position and the organizational structure (see section "Leadership of University Research Centers" below).
 - Identification of faculty (or qualifications of type of faculty), other personnel, and academic programs that will be involved with the URC (initially and over a three year period).
 - Staff involvement, if any (initially and over a three year period).
 - Student involvement, if any (initially and over a fi three ve year period).
 - Annual budget for the URC or the estimated expenditures per year (see budget section below) (initially and over a three year period).
 - Estimated fiscal resources and potential sources of funding (e.g., state, private, endowment, grant, contract, or other).
 - Space and equipment needs of the URC and a description of how they will be met.
 - Description of administrative control and lines of authority for the URC.
 - The metrics to be used to evaluate the URC's feasibility at its five-year review.
 - How the website will be maintained.
- URCs must have: A vision and a mission, a strategic plan with metrics for success, budget request
- Review of new URC proposal:
 - Applications for new proposals must address all the points listed above.

- Order of Approvals
 - Department chairs involved
 - Deans involved
 - Vice Chancellor of Research
 - Chancellor
- A new, approved URC will hold probationary status for three years, after which it will be evaluated by an external advisory board (described below) on the sustainability of its research productivity and its strategic relevance to the University. If after this evaluation a probationary URC is determined to be productive and strategically significant, it will become an official University Research Center, and will be evaluated on a five-year cycle with the other URCs. The five-year review cycle begins after the successful three-year probationary review.

Leadership of University Research Centers

- Director:
 - Directors of URCs must be recognized leaders in their fields with international reputations. Directors may be recruited from the current faculty members or recruited as URC directors from outside.
 - Appointed by the VCR for 5 years, contingent on annual performance reviews with the VCR and serving at will and reporting to the VCR.
 - Role: Administratively responsible for day-to-day operations, staff, and budget. Main function is to grow the URC: pursue large grants, develop and nurture internal and external collaborations, organize technology transfer activities (seminars, webinars, national and international conferences) to grow the visibility and reputation of the Center and the University. Meet with Program Managers; promote the URC; respond to Federal announcements for large grants and lead multi PI proposals; mentor faculty in the URC; pursue opportunities to add research capabilities by securing funding for equipment acquisition; ensure facilities are available to URC faculty; work with staff to provide training and oversee safety of laboratory facilities managed by the URC; represent URC to State and Federal agencies; work across the System; work across S&T. Responsible for setting and meeting metrics.
 - Works closely with the office of VCR for all relevant research issues: limited submission review, attending funding agency meetings/workshops, responding to RFI and RFP announcements, strategic planning of research direction for S&T. Responsible for URC compliance, in cooperation with the office of the VCR. Responsible for budget and expenses.
- Associate Director:
 - May be needed for larger URCs.
 - Duties can be defined by Director

- Appointed by VCR for 3 years after recommendation by URC Director. Reappointed every year. Serves at will.

Budget

- General
 - URCs will receive base funding from the VCR. URCs may increase their funding through their F&A return or by meeting negotiated targets.
 - URCs may carry forward no more than 10% of their base allocation
 - If more needs to be carried forward, URC Directors must provide a justification to the VCR of how they intend to use such accumulated funds.
 - URC funds may be used for:
 - Salaries of staff that support the research mission of the URC.
 - Complete or partial support of facilities and equipment.
 - E&E, software licenses, memberships, etc.
 - Salary for undergraduate researchers.
 - Stipend and tuition plus mandatory fees for GRAs.
 - GRAs should be appointed at least 25% FTE.
 - An effort should be made so that GRAs who are partially funded by the URC receive additional support through a GA, GTA, or GRA to reach a 50% FTE appointment and tuition support.
 - Salaries of postdoctoral associates and research scientists.
 - Travel for the Director and select URC faculty and staff to visit Program Managers, funding agencies, funding agency workshops, etc.
 - Funds to support lecture series.
 - Funds to support conferences or workshops organized by the URC.
 - Conference travel.
 - Publication costs.
 - Seed funds, as approved in the budget of the URC.
 - Base funding for a URC may NOT be used for:
 - Membership of URC faculty in professional associations.
 - Matching funds for grants.
 - Faculty salary (with the exception of the Director and the Associate Director).
 - Anything not explicitly approved in the annual budget request by the URC
- F&A Distribution
 - URCs will be funded through F&A return to the VCR

- URCs will receive a 7% return of the F&A they generate through grants that carry full F&A allowed by sponsor. This F&A will come from the F&A received by the VCR.
- URC strategic plans could propose a varying F&A return based on their performance. The performance-based return may be an increased F&A percentage, or a base allocation increase, always based on goals met.
- Director compensation:
 - URC Directors will receive one month summer salary.
 - The URC Director's Department and College will receive funds to cover a course release.
 - A salary supplement will also be provided depending on the size and complexity of the URC, with the funds supplied by the VCR to the URC used as proxy.
 - For URCs receiving \$150,000 or less a year: 2.5% administrative stipend
 - For URCs receiving \$300,000 or less a year: 4%
 - For URCs receiving \$450,000 or less a year: 5.5%
 - For URCs receiving more than \$450,000 a year: 7.5%
 - Director compensation outside the parameters described above may be negotiated with the VCR.
 - URC Directors are expected to maintain active scholarly activities.
 - Associate Director compensation to be negotiated; will be fully covered through URC recovered F&A.
- Budget oversight:
 - The URC Director is responsible for the URC budget and its expenditures.
 - Only the expenditures of the URC Director need to be approved by the VCR.
 - Semi-annually the URC budget will be audited for adherence to its original budget request and allocation.

URC Evaluation, Growth, and Evolution

- URCs should define in their strategic plan and also in their annual budget request their goals in terms of measurable performance criteria. These criteria should include:
 - Requested funding through proposals and number of total proposals
 - Diversity of funding sources
 - Expenditures
 - F&A return
 - Number of students supported by level
 - Number of students supported who graduated also by level
 - Number of research faculty supported

- Number of faculty associated with the Center with their departments and Colleges
- Number of peer-reviewed publications
- Number of non-peer-reviewed publications
- Number of keynote presentations
- Number of invited presentations
- ROI: royalties+F&A generated+gifts, etc. divided by base funding+F&A returned to the URC+other centralized funding.
 - To receive continued base support a URC should have a 1.00 ROI as a minimum. Successful URCs should aspire to at least a 7.00 ROI. This will be computed over a three year sliding window.
 - URCs without a 1.00 ROI averaged over 3 years may be required to submit a realignment research plan, and may be lose their designation as URC and no longer receive campus funds.
- URCs are required to engage in a systematic and systemic cycle of planning, assessment, analysis, and implementation, demonstrating a data-informed decision process.
 - Directors of URCs submit an annual report to the VCR summarizing the Center performance on the criteria mentioned above and also relating to the Center's strategic plan.
 - URCs must link their outcomes to the University's Strategic Plan goals to provide the supporting linkage to the mission of S&T.
- Every five years a URC will undergo a formal review to ensure viability and need for continuation. The formal review will be performed by experts outside S&T (new URCs will go through a review after three years).
 - An intermediate review may be requested at any time by a Dean, Provost, or VCR.
 - To maintain campus wide consistency, the Office of the VCR will facilitate and fund the 5-year reviews. This office will notify units when it is time to conduct the 5-year review, work with the URC to ensure the thoroughness of the review, and serve as the single collection point for the review materials.
- The URC directors will meet with the VCR quarterly to discuss the progress of their URCs and express concerns and suggestions.

Terminating URCs

- A URC may be terminated through:
 - The five-year review process (three years for new URCs)
 - The VCR because of not meeting the 1.00 ROI goal
 - A budget reduction
 - A recommendation by the URC director, a Dean, the Provost, the Chancellor, the System, or the VCR. In that case the URC may request an additional external review.

- Consideration should be given to the termination or transfer of any contractual obligations; the employment status of any URC employees; the transfer of any capital equipment or space, and the transfer or reassignment of any funds, including Foundation accounts.

Additional Considerations

- Faculty members associated with a URC will retain all rights and privileges of their home academic unit. All salary, promotion, and tenure considerations will be made by their home department and college within the regular review and evaluation process. The URC director may be asked for input.
- The home academic unit's annual review of faculty associated with a URC may include contributions of the faculty member to the URC. A faculty member's research and other contributions to a URC may also be considered in their promotion and tenure decisions. A faculty member who serves as the URC Director may request a letter from the VCR to include in the annual review materials.
- Exempt and non-exempt staff may be assigned to a URC. Any URC staff position supported fully or partially by the URC is dependent on the availability of URC funds. Each staff member must receive an annual evaluation from the URC director or other URC supervisor.
- In collaboration with the appropriate chair and Dean, and with the permission of the Provost, a URC may offer short courses and workshops on URC-specific topics; such activities would be self-funded with negotiated return.