

McGill University

POLICY ON RESEARCH CENTRES

<i>Repealed (Replaced by Policy on Research Entities):</i>		
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Board of Governors	December 14, 2023	Minute 13
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<i>A full history appears at the end of this document.</i>		

Regulations for McGill University-recognized Research Centres

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POLICY ON RESEARCH CENTRES

1. Preamble

Research centres play an integral role in advancing McGill's research mission and in attracting and retaining leading researchers. They contribute significantly to the academic life at McGill in terms of research output, visibility, and overall training of students. As well, they complement the University's academic unit structure.

There are presently different types of units referred to as research centres at McGill. Some are established organizations with formal governance structures, shared research infrastructure, and strengths in intellectual property, while others are temporary groups formed for the purpose of a specific project. Despite the striking differences between these entities, they have all, over the years, become categorized as "centres."

In consultation with Faculties and senior administration in the relevant sectors of the University, the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations) (VPRIR) led a working group with the mandate to review the policy on research centres and recommend revisions.

This document, which is the product of their recommendations, supersedes the previous policy document *Regulations for Creating, Recognizing, and Maintaining Research Centre Status* (approved May 25, 2005 by the Board of Governors).

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide criteria and specify University-wide principles for McGill-recognized research centres, including designation of University recognition, governance and support, resource allocation, and phasing out or ending the designation status. It also sets out transparent procedures for the reporting and review of McGill research centres on an ongoing basis.

3. Definition

A Research Centre is as defined by the University's official Nomenclature¹.

¹ The Report of the APC Workgroup on Nomenclature, currently being considered by APC for presentation to Senate, defines Research Centres as follows: **Under the purview of one or more Deans, and the Vice-Principal Research and International Relations, a McGill-based research centre is an entity, approved by the Board of Governors, which is engaged in research. It is subject to the Policy on Research Centres. A research centre does not offer for-credit courses and degree programs. Students are not registered in research centres. Members of a research centre hold appointments in academic teaching units.**

4. Criteria, requirements and expectations

The Policy on Research Centres describes the internal principles that govern all types of units which meet the criteria of a “McGill Research Centre”, independent of their relationship to, or support by, external sponsors.

For purposes of this policy, the following criteria for research centres apply:

RESEARCH CENTRE

A McGill University-recognized Research Centre is expected to:

- Focus primarily on research and research-related activities (including research training, outreach, and dissemination);
- Be led by a director appointed for a time-limited term;
- Have a formal governance structure with a board;
- Exist continuously and have clearly identified goals and objectives;
- Bring together a critical mass of scholars under a coherent research program and add value to the research activities beyond what could be expected from the individual members separately;
- Be financially secure, with sufficient funding to support its operations and research activities (e.g. through external grants, contracts, or donations);
- Maintain a high level of research productivity.

In addition, a McGill University-recognized Research Centre will ideally:

- Have a core of permanent membership and long-term collaborations between the members (including but not limited to co-publications and co-supervision);
- Enhance the training of post-doctoral fellows and students, particularly at graduate levels;
- Cooperate with scholars at other universities and/or institutions, and create collaborations with industry partners or community groups;
- Possess its own designated resources, such as space, administrative and technical staff, or shared equipment.

McGill University-recognized Research Centres may not offer undergraduate or graduate programs or courses for credit². A McGill University-recognized Research Centre may offer non-credit instructional activities, such as summer school or special non-credit courses.

PROVISIONAL RESEARCH CENTRES

A research team may seek recognition as a “Provisional McGill Research Centre” prior to meeting all criteria of a McGill University-recognized Research Centre. Provisional status may be the first step toward University recognition status, but it can also be temporary. Provisional status is valid for up to 24 months, non-renewable. If the research centres have not initiated the process of becoming a McGill University-recognized Research Centre within 24 months, the status will be lost. However, provisional status remains in place during the Senate approval process.

² Members of a research centre may develop specialized for-credit courses tied to the research mission of a Research Centre as part of their regular appointment within a teaching unit. Such courses must be approved by departmental and faculty curriculum committees and APC in the normal way. It remains the prerogative of department chairs/directors of schools and institutes to assign academic duties to professors who hold appointments in their respective units and who also are members of Research Centres.

EXCLUSIONS

The following are not governed by the Policy on Research Centres: institutes that offer for-credit courses and programs,³ research centres in McGill affiliated hospitals, hospital research institutes, research teams, groups, networks, platforms, initiatives, laboratories, and other entities known as “centres” whose role is to provide support to the academic activity of the University.

5. Designation of a McGill University-recognized Research Centre

1. The creation of a new research centre is usually initiated by a group of faculty members who wish to formalize existing collaboration under the umbrella of an organized unit. To obtain University-recognized status, the research centre must apply for designation following the guiding principles in this policy.
2. A research centre is established under the authority of:
 - The Senate and the Board of Governors for official McGill Research Centres
 - A Faculty or Faculties for Transitional Research Centre
3. A research centre that seeks formal recognition by McGill must first obtain endorsement from deans of the lead and other relevant Faculties. Next, it must be recommended for approval by the Research Advisory Council (RAC) and then the Academic Policy Committee (APC), before it is presented to Senate and, ultimately, the Board of Governors for final approval.
4. Provisional McGill Research Centre status will be granted at the Faculty level only under the authority of the dean of the Lead Faculty. The provisional status is valid for up to 24 months and is non-renewable. If the research centre has not initiated the process of becoming a McGill University-recognized Research Centre within this timeframe (i.e. sent a proposal to RAC), the status will be lost. The provisional status remains in place during the Senate approval process.

To seek provisional status, the following steps must be followed:

- A short proposal (maximum three pages) must be presented to the dean of the Lead Faculty. The proposal must include pertinent details, such as: objectives and goals of the new centre, governance model, Faculties involved and membership, research program, graduate training, secured funding, and general financial plan. If the provisional centre is linked to an external funding source for centres, networks, or teams, the grant application may be attached as a supporting document.
- The Office of the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations) must receive copies of Provisional McGill Research Centre proposals.
- At the discretion of the dean, an annual report may be required. If the Provisional McGill Research Centre is linked to an external funding source, it is recommended that the reporting requirement corresponds to the reports produced for the external sponsor (e.g. a granting agency).

³ Research institutes that do not offer for-credit courses and programs and that are created around a thematic focus are subject to approval under the Policy on Research Centres.

5. McGill University-recognized Research Centres in existence at the time of the adoption of these revised regulations will maintain their status and be inserted into the six-year cycle of renewals under the previous policy. At the time of their review, their bylaws will be amended to bring them into conformity with these new regulations.
6. Only McGill University-recognized Research Centres may use the McGill name and logo in combination with their research centre name and/or logo. The names of “McGill University Research Centre X” or “Centre X, a McGill University Research Centre” are recommended but not mandatory.
7. Research centres continue to have the option of naming themselves in honour of founders or benefactors provided they comply with the University’s *Policy Relating to the Naming of University Assets* (<http://www.mcgill.ca/files/secretariat/NamingofUniversityAssetsPolicyfor.pdf>). Regulation number 3 will still apply.

6. Governance and accountability

8. All research centres must be formally connected to one or more Faculties and must report to the dean of the Lead Faculty. In the case of centres situated in more than one Faculty, the deans, in consultation with the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations), shall decide among themselves which Faculty becomes the Centre’s reporting Faculty, i.e. the “Lead Faculty.” The designated Lead Faculty can be changed (e.g. alternating) at any time, providing that the affected deans are in agreement.
9. A research centre is accountable to the dean of its Lead Faculty.
10. Research centres must have bylaws that address, at minimum, the following issues: physical location, Faculty or Faculties to which it reports, management, membership of the board, procedures for election to the board, meetings of the board, appointment of the director, annual report, categories of membership, election of members, resource allocation, and budget.
11. A McGill University-recognized Research Centre must have a board, which oversees its functions according to an approved set of bylaws. Initial bylaws must be approved as part of the research centre’s certification by the University. Subsequent modifications must be reviewed as part of the centre’s cyclical review. The board will normally be chaired by the dean (or delegate) of its Lead Faculty. The membership of the board must be made available to all members and to the McGill community, e.g. posted on the centre’s website. The membership of the board will include:
 - Dean of the Lead Faculty (or delegate);
 - Director of the research centre;
 - Vice-Principal (RIR) (or delegate);
 - Provost (or delegate);
 - Two active full members of the research centre;
 - At least one graduate student and, if appropriate, one postdoctoral fellow;
 - One external member (who is not a member of the research centre);
 - As appropriate, the board can also include other membership categories, such as chairs or directors from related departments (schools, institutes) or representatives from the other contributing Faculties.

12. When a research centre is seeking University recognition for the first time, the proposed director must be identified in the initial proposal. Subsequent appointments to the director position are the responsibility of the board. The board recommends the appointment of the director and, if necessary, an associate director to the dean of the Lead Faculty for approval.
13. The board of the research centre must meet at least once a year to receive the annual report, review activities and membership, approve the budget, and help resolve any difficulties that may have arisen during the past year.
14. The director of a McGill University-recognized Research Centre must hold a faculty appointment in an academic unit at McGill. In cases where there are co-directors, at least one of the co-directors must hold a faculty position at McGill. A director is normally appointed for a term of up to six years, renewable. Accountable to the dean of the Lead Faculty, the director is administratively responsible for the research centre and exercises general supervision over its operations.
15. The research centre shall develop criteria for different classes of membership. The nomenclature may vary depending on the context in which the centre operates. Membership in the centre is endorsed by its board and is renewable, with each term always for a finite length of time, up to six years.
16. If a research centre wishes to restrict eligibility for full membership to individuals who are not simultaneously full members of another research centre, this must be clearly stated in its bylaws. In the absence of such a provision in the bylaws, full membership shall be deemed open to individuals who are also full members in a different research centre.

7. Resource allocation

17. As noted above under “Criteria, requirements and expectations,” a McGill University-recognized Research Centre is expected to obtain sufficient funding to support its activities. The on-going direct and indirect research costs associated with a research centre, such as operating expenses and the funding of researchers, postdoctoral fellows, and students, will typically require external funding.
18. Support for research centres is a line item on the Faculty compacts. McGill University-recognized Research Centres may access institutional funding through the Lead Faculty. It is the prerogative of the dean of the Lead Faculty to determine the level of funding for each eligible centre and communicate it annually to the centre director.
19. In the case of multi-Faculty centres, the deans of the respective Faculties must reach an agreement on funding.
20. The Lead Faculty will report annually on its financial support of individual research centres to the Provost and the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations), usually in conjunction with the annual reports.
21. Space allocation at McGill for a research centre must be negotiated with the appropriate dean and any other authorities concerned. Space allocation will be reviewed in the cyclical review of the centre.

22. The positions of director and associate director of the research centre do not involve any teaching release. Decisions on teaching and administrative release are the responsibility of the chairs and/or directors of the relevant home unit(s) and should be considered part of the support to the centre.

8. Annual reporting, review, and renewal

23. McGill University-recognized Research Centres are required to submit an annual report describing their operations and financial status to the dean of the Lead Faculty, with copies to the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations), Provost, the deans of the contributing Faculties, and relevant Departments/Schools/Institutes.
24. All midterm and cyclical reviews will take place at the decanal level. The dean will then present recommendations to the Research Advisory Committee and to the Academic Policy Committee.
25. To renew its recognition, a research centre will be subject to a detailed review in the final year of its mandate. A research centre shall be judged on how well it achieves its goals, which should complement and enhance established units at the University. The review includes consideration of how well its current activities align with the strategic priorities of the University. Upon a positive review, the recognition will be renewed for another term.
26. University recognition of a research unit may be renewed an unlimited number of times.

9. Phase-out and termination of University-recognized designation

27. Outside the renewal cycle, fundamental performance problems, including problems of reporting, may lead to the withdrawal of the McGill University-recognized Research Centre status and any associated resource allocation before the end of the term. If the research centre no longer satisfies the requirements described in this policy, the dean of the Lead Faculty or the Vice-Principal (RIR), with the approval of APC, can recommend to the Provost that the research centre be phased out.
28. Research centres will also lose their University-recognized status if there is no apparent activity over a consecutive two-year period. This includes if annual reports are not forthcoming after two consecutive years. If a centre is not able to provide a dean with an annual report, it must communicate immediately with the dean. If justified, exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis.
29. A McGill University-recognized Research Centre may choose to terminate its status at any time. The director must inform the dean of the Lead Faculty, the Provost, and the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations) without delay if it is no longer active. To voluntarily close the centre, written consent by a majority of the membership is required.
30. The University reserves the right to phase out or immediately terminate the University-recognized status of a research centre at any time because of financial exigencies, non-compliance with regulations, or other reasons, with due consideration of human resources, policies, contractual obligations, and employment standards.

31. Once a centre is deemed closed, it loses the right to use the designated name of “McGill Research Centre.” A phase-out period of up to one year from its dissolution may be granted to conclude its affairs.

10. Consultation

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Date</i>
Research Centres Task Force	Consultation	February 2009 – August 2010
Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations) leadership team	Consultation	August 2010
Research Advisory Council (RAC)	Consultation	December 1, 2010
Research Centres Policy Working Group	Discussion, preparation	January 2011 – April 2011
Research Advisory Council (RAC)	Consultation and first revision	May 2011
Research Centres Policy Working Group	Review (following recommended revisions requested by RAC)	May 2011
Research Advisory Council (RAC)	Consultation and second revision	November 2012 April 2013
Associate Provost, Policies, Procedures, and Equity	Consultation	September 2013
Deans (through Deans’ Working Group)	Consultation	Various 2013
Research Advisory Council (RAC)	Final review and recommendation	September 2013
Academic Policy Committee (APC)	Review and approval	October 2013

APPENDIX I: Proposed sample guidelines of *Bylaws for the Operation of a Research Centre*

This is a template for a set of bylaws that conform to the principles provided in these regulations. Each research centre has to adapt their final bylaws to their individual situation. In all cases, the bylaws will be reviewed and approved by RAC and APC.

1. Name and Location

The name of the research centre, in the form “McGill University Research Centre X” or “Centre X, a McGill Research Centre” should be clearly stated. The physical location of the research centre should be clearly identified, for example, by a suitable plaque near the entrance to the research centre in compliance with the University’s *Policy on Exterior Signage* (<http://www.mcgill.ca/files/secretariat/exterior-signage.pdf>).

2. Purpose

The specific research area or areas to be addressed by the centre should be identified, as should the disciplinary fields that will be advanced through its operation. In addition, the bylaws should outline the purpose of the research centre’s work and the means by which it aims to achieve that purpose.

3. Management

The governance of the research centre is the responsibility of its board. The director of the research centre is responsible for the management and reports to the dean of the Lead Faculty, who – or whose delegate – acts as chair of the board. In the event of an extended absence of the director, an associate director can manage the research centre.

4. Membership of the Board

The membership of the board of the research centre will include the dean or deans (or delegates) of the Faculty or Faculties most concerned, the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relation) (or delegate), the Provost (or delegate), the director of the research centre, two active full members, a graduate student, a postdoctoral fellow, and at least one person from outside the University who is not directly involved in the research centre. (Add others if appropriate.) The dean (or delegate) of the Lead Faculty will assume the chair of the board.

The board members who are also members of the research centre, and who do not serve *ex officio*, will be elected by their appropriate constituencies. The terms of appointment of the board members, other than the dean(s), Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations), or their delegates, will normally be three years for faculty and one or two years for students and postdoctoral fellows.

5. Appointment of the Director

Recommendations for nomination of the director and, if necessary, the associate director of the research centre will be made to the board by a subcommittee consisting of at least the dean, two active full members of the research centre, and one other member of the board. If necessary, the board may decide to conduct an open search for a director. The recommendation of the board for the appointment of a director and, if necessary, an associate director, will be conveyed to the Provost by the dean of the Lead Faculty. The Provost has the responsibility of approval of the appointments. In the case of appointments across multiple Faculties, the deans of all Faculties affected must be consulted. The appointment of the director and, if necessary, associate director, will normally be for a term of up to six years.

6. Annual Report

The director of the research centre will prepare the annual report, which will include all financial details of the operation of the research centre, along with the centre’s measurable goals for the coming year. This will be presented to the board for approval. Following its approval, the annual report will be submitted to the Provost, the Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations), and the deans of all contributing Faculties.

7. Membership of the Centre

The centre will have classes of membership. The nomenclature can vary, as well as specific privileges and commitments. Commonly used categories of membership:

- (i) Full member: a senior researcher with a major research affiliation with the centre;
- (ii) Associate member: an established researcher, such as a faculty member, with significant research affiliation with the centre;
- (iii) Visiting member: a visiting scholar, appointed to the research centre for a limited term;
- (iv) Postdoctoral scholar/research associate member;
- (v) Graduate student member.

Nominations for new full and associate members of the research centre must include full *curricula vitae* and letters of support. They must be submitted to the board for approval. Terms of membership are renewable, and each term will be up to six years for full and associate members, up to two years for student members and postdoctoral scholar/research associate members, and up to one year for visiting members.

If a research centre wishes to restrict eligibility for full membership to individuals who are not simultaneously full members of another research centre, this must be clearly stated in its bylaws. Absent such a provision in the bylaws, full membership shall be deemed to be open to individuals who are also full members of other research centres.

8. Research Resource Allocations and Budget

The research centre's budget is prepared by the director for approval by the board.

Recommendations for the allocation of research centre resources to members will also be made by the director to the board. Full and associate members can bring appeals concerning resource allocation to the board, whose decision will be final.

9. Annual General Meeting

There will be an annual general meeting of all members of the research centre, during which the annual report will be presented and approved. (Insert rules for who is allowed to vote.)

10. Meetings of Board

The board must meet at least once a year to receive the annual report, review activities and membership, approve the budget, and help resolve any difficulties that may have arisen during the past year. It may meet more often if necessary.

An extraordinary meeting of the board will be convened if a written request to do so, signed by at least two-thirds of the full and associate members of the research centre, is submitted to the chair of the board.

11. Research Agreements, Contracts, Grants, and Gifts

The research centre does not have the right to sign and enter into research agreements, grants, or contracts that require McGill institutional approval from authorized University signing officers. Similarly, gifts to the centre must be managed through the appropriate University channels.

APPENDIX II: Template for a Research Centre Proposal

I. Identification

- Name of the research centre
- Proposed director – name and affiliation
- Lead Faculty and other Faculties involved
- Physical location of the research centre (office space, laboratories, etc.)

II. Rationale

- Context and background for creating a research centre (disciplinary, societal, institutional)
- Overall purpose of the research centre
- Past history (research collaborations, grants obtained, publications, and other evidence of collaboration)
- Recommendations (internal and external) – reference attached letters of support

III. Research program

- Long- and short-term goals and specific objectives
- Description of the proposed centre and the value added (contributions to the discipline, promotion of research, facilitation of connections, etc.)
- Description of the research program – axes of research
- Contribution to training (graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, research associates, etc.), if applicable
- Funding for research activities

IV. Strategic positioning

- Positioning in relation to other research units and groups at McGill, in Quebec and Canada, and internationally (as deemed relevant)
- Added value and importance in relation to the strategic plans of the University, the Lead Faculty, and other schools, departments, or institutes
- Future development plans

V. Governance

- Description of the governance structure, including roles and responsibilities of committees and key positions
- Organizational chart, if applicable
- Proposed inaugural membership of the board and other key committees
- Frequency of board meetings and other committee meetings, as well as the timing of the annual general meeting, as deemed relevant

VI. Membership

- Description of the classes of membership (See sample in Section B.)
- If a research centre wishes to restrict eligibility for full membership in the centre to individuals who are not simultaneously full members of another research centre, this restriction should be clearly stated and justified here. Absent such a provision, full membership shall be deemed to be open to individuals who are also full members in other research centres.

- List of members in the defined categories. (If applicable, the centre might indicate membership in multiple centres by listing the percentage of time a member dedicates to the centre in question.)
- Description of the process for accepting new members in the centre and any applicable terms and expectations related to the members (e.g. time-limited term, access to shared infrastructure, co-supervision of students, etc.)

VII. Lab facilities and other resources

- Existing shared research infrastructure (e.g. labs and other physical space, equipment, computing capacity, databases, archives, or library resources)
- If applicable, term and conditions of using shared infrastructure (e.g. user fees)
- Support staff (e.g. technical, administrative, professional)
- Plans for future expansion of infrastructure

Note: Any designated space for a centre has to be confirmed in a letter of support by the dean of the Faculty where the space is located.

VIII. Budget

- Overview of operational budget (e.g. staff salaries, operation and maintenance of shared infrastructure, director stipend, centre-run workshops and conferences, etc.)
- Operational expenditures over five years, with a detailed list for the first year and an estimated plan for the following years
- Sources of funding for the operational expenditures, internal and external (e.g. network grants)
- Plan for securing future funding for operational expenses

Note: In most centres, the members are responsible for obtaining research support through grants and contracts for research projects related to the activities of the centres.

IX. Appendices:

A. Bylaws

B. Letters of support (must include deans of Faculties involved)

POLICY ON RESEARCH CENTRES

Legislative History:

Repealed (Replaced by: Policy on Research Entities):

Senate	November 15, 2023	Minute IIB2
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(The current "Policy on Research Centres" replaced the following regulation)

Regulations for Creating, Recognizing, and Maintaining Research Centre Status

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Senate	May, 1995
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