



**University
of Victoria**

AN OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO UVIC RESEARCH CENTRE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 2009/10

INTRODUCTION

The university has undergone a broad consultation and review related to its policies and procedures for approving the establishment, administration, and review of research centres. This document provides a brief background to the review process, the key recommendations that resulted from the review, and links to draft revised policies/procedures.

The Vice President Research is seeking further input and advice from the university community prior to submitting the changes to Senate and the Board of Governors for approval in the fall of 2009. This document also contains information about the process for providing feedback on the proposed revisions and additions to these policies and procedures.

BACKGROUND

Currently, there are sixteen approved Research Centres at UVic, each with a unique interdisciplinary focus and history. Beyond their substantive areas of research interest, the centres vary with respect to parameters such as:

- fit and involvement with graduate and undergraduate academic programs;
- the sources and availability of resources such as funding and space;
- number of members and the intensity of their involvement;
- research productivity and profile;
- sense of ownership, perception of added value, and level of support by constituent academic departments;
- degree of inter-disciplinarity.

Given this variability and the fact that all centres are expected under university policies to cut across the vertical administrative structures of Faculties, Schools, and Departments, it is no surprise that they experience varying degrees of tension over everything from resource allocation (e.g. funding and space) to academic accountability and attribution for their members' research.

In response to the identification by Deans and Centre Directors of a number of challenges to the integration of Research Centres into the academic mission of the university, a Working Group was established in 2007 by the Vice President Research to consider these matters. This group undertook extensive consultations across the university and beyond.

The overall goal of the working group was to make recommendations on how Research Centres and academic units (Faculties, Schools, Departments, Divisions) can more effectively work together to support the educational and research missions of the University. The review resulted in recommendations with respect to the: organizational structure; strategic planning; communications; graduate research training; fiscal sustainability; and policy revision. The full report can be found at

<http://www.research.uvic.ca/VPRE/assets-VPRE/documents-VPRE/Research%20Centres%20review%20final%20repor29Oct08%20SP.pdf>

The Report of the Working Group on Research Centres was considered at December 2008 Senate Committee on Planning where it was agreed to establish an advisory committee to develop a new model for research entities at the University of Victoria and update the existing policy accordingly. This advisory committee produced a set of recommendations to guide the redevelopment of the policies and procedures, which had as its central focus the need for more flexible and proportionate approach toward the establishment and review of research centres. A small working group then drafted revisions to the policies and procedures that were iteratively reviewed and critiqued by the Senate Committee on Planning, the Council of Centre Directors, the Research Advisory Committee, Deans' Council, and Executive Council. The resulting revised draft policies are now ready for broader comment by the university community.

KEY FEATURES OF A PROPORTIONATE MODEL

Taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the working and advisory groups, and after further consultation across the university, a proportionate approach to the establishment, administration and review of Research Centres was developed as a framework to revise the current policies and procedures. It was decided to change the term Research "Centres" to Research "Entities" to be more flexible and inclusive and acknowledge the different names that can be given to groups of researchers (e.g. institute, centre, group, laboratory etc).

The existing policies and procedures set out a "one size fits all" approach and what is being proposed allows more flexibility and a proportionate approach that takes into account the variability among the types of Research Entities such as:

- Focus, breadth, and depth of the research program
- Resource and administrative requirements
- Location and breadth of its constituencies
- Complexity of organizational structure

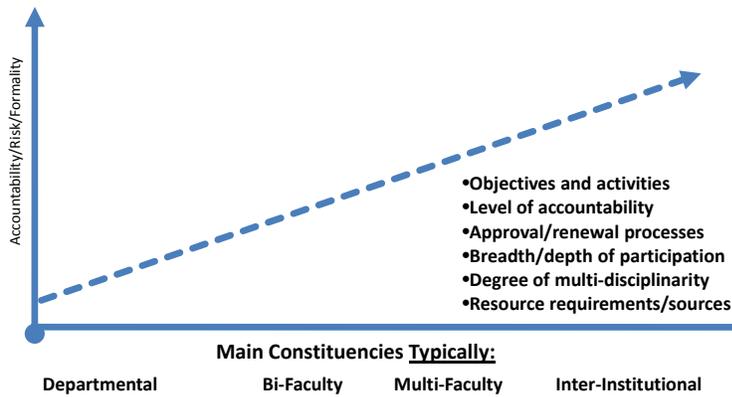
The proposed policies and procedures recognize that administrative requirements, approval and renewal processes, breadth of activities, and other aspects of Research Entities should occur along a continuum that is appropriate. This proportionality is primarily based on the extent and location of the majority of the membership and the complexity of the activities of the entity. The resulting proportionate model *approximately* parallels a department-faculty-university structure:

- i. Intra-faculty/departmental - membership and activities normally within a single department, a non-departmentalized Faculty, or between departments in a single faculty
- ii. Inter-faculty - membership and activities normally between 2 faculties
- iii. Multi-faculty - membership and activities normally between 3 or more faculties
- iv. Inter-institutional - membership and activities between multiple universities

It is important to note that the proportionate approach to categorizing Research Entities is intended to be inclusive and non-hierarchical. All existing centre and future entities will be Research Entities of the University of Victoria. The new approach recognizes that Research Entities exist along a continuum

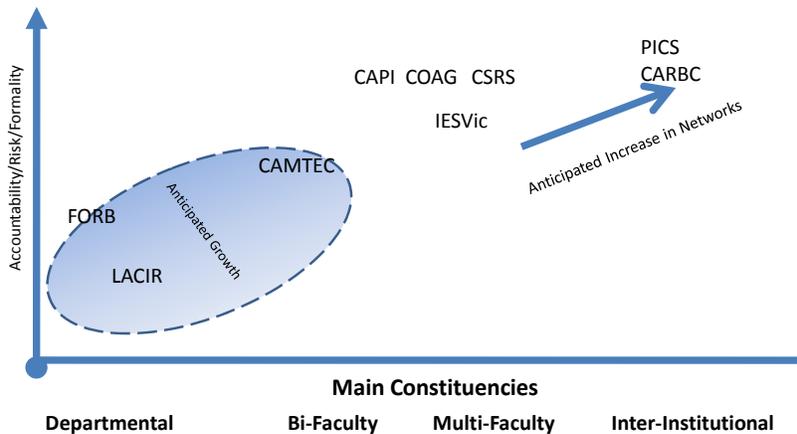
ranging from relatively small and simple to large and complex in structure and function, with many falling somewhere in between these extremes (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Proportionate (and flexible) approach to research entities



The various policies and procedures have been revised to reflect the proportionate approach. One of the major changes is that Deans will have the authority to establish, and the administrative responsibility for, the Research Entities that have constituencies in one or two faculties. This change is intended to make the establishment and review of entities and appointment of directors less onerous. Procedures for the multi-faculty and inter-institutional entities are similar to the existing policies and procedures, but attempts have been made to simplify them. It is anticipated that the proportionate approach will result in an increase in smaller, more focused, interdisciplinary and disciplinary Research Entities and that it will encourage more inter-institutional relationships. Using the current research centres, the proportionate continuum could be (example only!) illustrated as below in Figure 2:

Figure 2: An illustration of the proportionate (and flexible) approach to research entities based on some current Research Centres



CONSULTATION PROCESS TO FINALIZE THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Vice-President Research Website

The updated policies and new procedures are now online and accessible by the University community for review and comment http://www.research.uvic.ca/VPRE/Research_Centre_Policies_Review.htm. Comments should be sent to Sally Eshuys, Executive Assistant to the Vice-President Research, vprea@uvic.ca. The documents will be online until early September 2009.

Open Forum

In early September 2009 an open forum will be held to allow discussion of the revised policies and procedures. The Vice-President Research will make a presentation about the revisions and encourage discussion of issues and concerns.

Approval Process and Implementation Date

After the broader, university-wide consultation process, the suite of Research Entity policies and procedures will be revised and brought back to the Research Advisory Committee, Council of Centre Directors and Deans' Council for endorsement before being submitted to Senate Committee on Planning, Senate and the Board of Governors for final approval in 25 November 2009. It is hoped that the revised policies and new procedures will become effective on 1 January 2010.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO OUR CURRENT RESEARCH ENTITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Below are some highlights of the policy and procedure revisions and additions:

[Revised Policy on the Establishment and Review of Research Entities](#)

Existing policy

- Change of title to "Research Entities"
- Introduction of the proportionate approach into each section of the policy
- Inclusion of a description of the 4 types of Research Entities that occur along the continuum
- Minor changes to wording of "purposes of a Research Entity"
- Separation of procedures related to establishment and review of research into new document (see below)

[New Procedures for the Establishment and Review of Research Entities](#)

- Includes an updated version of the approval and revision sections of the old policy – specified for each type of Research Entity
- Information reflects new administrative and reporting arrangements for Research Entities
- Introduction of the proportionate approach into each section of the policy so that the establishment and review procedures for intra and inter faculty entities are much less onerous than for the complex and multi-institutional entities

[New Guidelines for the Review of Research Entities](#)

- These guidelines have been created to assist entities and review panels with the five-yearly Research Entity review process and they reflect the changes to the purpose of a Research Entity

[Revised Policy regarding Duties and Responsibilities of Research Entity Directors \(1069\)](#)

[Existing policy](#)

- Change of title to “Research Entities”
- Change to wording of duties and responsibilities of Directors to reflect changes to purposes of a Research Entity

[Revised Procedures for Appointment and Review of Research Entity Directors \(1068\)](#)

[Existing policy](#)

- Change of title to “Research Entities”
- Changes to make the procedures more flexible and simple, particularly for intra and inter faculty Research Entities