PROV-025

Establishing Academic Centers and Institutes

Effective Date Friday, November 22, 2013

Status Final

Last Revised Tuesday, July 28, 2026

Policy Type Executive Vice President & Provost

Contact Office Executive Vice President and Provost (Office of the)

Oversight Executive
Executive Vice President and Provost

Applies To Academic Division and the College at Wise.

Table of Contents

Policy Statement
1. Centers Reporting to the Executive Vice President and Provost
2. Centers Reporting to the Dean of a School
3. Centers Established in a Non-School Unit
4. Gift Agreements
5. Academic Curriculum
6. Five-Year Review

Procedures

Reason for Policy

Establishes uniform guidelines governing the approval, creation, oversight, operation, review, and discontinuation of academic centers and institutes.

Definition of Terms

Academic Center or Institute

Description

An organization (other than an academic department or administrative unit) formed within a school or a unit reporting to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, or as a collaborative initiative involving more than one school or unit, to enhance the educational, research, and/or service missions of the University. Organizations formed outside a school or unit reporting to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost are also considered an academic center or institute if their activities will involve academic faculty members and their mission is to enhance the educational, research, and/or service missions of the University.

Policy Statement

The University does not distinguish between centers and institutes; any reference to centers in this policy refers also to institutes. All schools and units reporting to the executive vice president and provost and any center established at the University that will involve academic faculty members must adhere to this policy.

Academic centers exist to enhance the educational, research, and/or service missions of the University. In most instances, they are established within a school or unit reporting to the executive vice president and provost.

1. **Centers Reporting to the Executive Vice President and Provost:**
   The executive vice president and provost (provost) may, at their discretion establish a center reporting to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost provided the center's mission and activities:
   a. Engage faculty and/or students from multiple schools of the University; and
   b. Advance a University-wide strategic priority.

2. **Centers Reporting to the Dean of a School:**
   Any school that wishes to establish a new academic center may do so with the approval of the dean (or deans, if the center is to involve more than one school) and a notice of establishment in accordance with the procedures below to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost at least three months prior to establishing the center.

   If the proposed center is contingent upon the receipt of grant funding, the dean must submit a notice of establishment to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost within thirty (30) days of the notice of award.

3. **Centers Established in a Non-School Unit:**
   Any other unit that wishes to establish a new academic center must submit a proposal in advance in accordance with the procedures below to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost. The provost's written approval is required before the center can be established. Centers proposed as part of a grant application must be approved by the provost before the grant application can be submitted.
4. **Gift Agreements:**
   The proposal of a new academic center as part of a gift agreement, regardless of whether the center will be established in a school or other unit, must be approved in writing by the executive vice president and provost or her/his designee before the gift agreement is executed. A proposal to establish a new academic center as part of a gift agreement must be submitted to the executive vice president and provost in accordance with the procedures below.
5. **Academic Curriculum:**
   Proposals that impact the academic curriculum (i.e., create a new degree, merge existing degrees, significantly alter curricular offerings) must be approved in advance in writing by the executive vice president and provost and, if the center is to reside within a school or schools, the relevant dean(s). Such proposals may require additional approvals, including the Faculty Senate, the Board of Visitors, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC), and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV).
6. **Five-Year Reviews:**
   Unless specified otherwise in writing by the provost or their designee, established centers will be reviewed by the dean or unit head within five (5) years of establishment and either granted an extension for an additional five (5) years or discontinued. The dean or unit head must submit a letter to the executive vice president and provost summarizing the outcome of the review and the dean's or unit head's recommendation as to whether the center should be renewed or discontinued. Centers that do not receive an approved extension will be discontinued automatically after five (5) years.

Procedures

A school wishing to establish an academic center should submit a notice of establishment to the vice provost for academic affairs at least three months prior to establishing the center. The school may not establish the center until after receiving confirmation from the Provost's Office that the necessary notifications have been completed. Proposals that impact the academic curriculum may require additional approvals and additional review time.

A unit other than a school that wishes to establish an academic center should submit a proposal to the vice provost for academic affairs for approval at least three months prior to the desired establishment date.

A notice of establishment or a proposal must include the following elements

- mission/purpose of the center and rationale for its establishment;
- organizational structure within the school or unit and the proposed structure of the center;
- proposed activities, noting in particular any impact on the curriculum;
- impact if any on existing faculty and personnel;
- proposed financing plan (including operating budget, funding sources and fundraising plan); and
- assessment plan that specifies measures of success.

Proposals may be submitted only by the Dean's Office of a school or the office of the unit director or vice president and should be directed to the attention of the vice provost for academic affairs.

A proposal to establish a center reporting to the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost must originate with the executive vice president and provost or their designee.

Major Category Executive Vice President & Provost Policies

Next Scheduled Review Saturday, July 28, 2029

Revision History
Confirmed 7/26/28.

Approved By Executive Vice President and Provost

Approved Date Friday, November 22, 2013