

College of Engineering Guidelines for Establishing Centers and Institutes

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- The primary role of centers and institutes is to provide a mechanism to bring faculty and students together to collaborate in teams with the goal of stimulating research and scholarly work, attracting external resources, providing unique opportunities for participants, and enhancing visibility. Infrastructure development should be a major consideration in the center and institute goals.
- Centers and Institutes should be composed of two or more (usually more) collaborating entities which could include internal units, departments, colleges, and/or external units, company members, national laboratory divisions. The activities should be extensive in scale and scope.
- Centers should:
 1. have a clearly articulated mission or focus (Centers are not responsible for curriculum.);
 2. have an identifiable faculty, engaging multiple faculty and students;
 3. have a record of external funding from multiple sources and a budget plan for expanding the resource pool to fuel the center.
- Center personnel should initially consist of a Director or an Interim Director and secretarial help. Centers should have one state supported secretarial staff member. The Director or Interim Director should hold an appointment within the academic departments with teaching duties determined by the appropriate department chair.
- Center personnel may also include technical staff, management/leadership staff, and faculty associates. Tenure track faculty hold appointments in departments and choose to associate with centers to enhance their productivity.
- College of Engineering (COE) centers report to the dean unless other compelling arguments can be made. Other reporting channels may be appropriate for centers with a major interdisciplinary component.
- Centers/Institutes generally begin as “c” centers within the COE and after 3-years of development apply for state recognition, with “C” status, if appropriate.
- All newly formed “C” centers/institutes will be reviewed at regular intervals based on metrics and using processes defined by the Office of Academic Affairs or its designee. The COE will use corresponding processes and review cycles for “c” entities. Low performance may lead to a phase-out recommendation.
- All proposals for Institutes and Centers consisting primarily of COE faculty and staff are reviewed by the College Administrative Committee (CAC) prior to submission to the Research Office. Pre-proposals should be submitted to CAC as concepts for centers emerge for a preliminary review and possible incorporation into the college’s strategic plan. Submission dates are open.
- Special consideration may need to be given for the formation of a center or institute if:
 - A funding agency mandates a particular title; e.g. a Center Grant from the NIH.
 - A development opportunity evolves around the formation of a center or institute, and the donor wishes a particular designation for the entity.
- Also refer to *Centers & Institutes* available from the Office of Research, UNC Charlotte for additional information concerning university policies and procedures.