



Organized Research Center Guidelines

Definition and Purpose

Units within SUNY, other than departments, colleges and schools, may be established for the purposes of undertaking research. These units may: conduct research programs; provide facilities and assistance for research or scholarly work, or provide funds or advice (or both) for researchers. These units cannot offer degrees or regular curricula.

Binghamton University's Organized Research Centers (ORC) are units established by the University to provide a supportive infrastructure for interdisciplinary research. The functions of ORCs are to facilitate research and research collaborations; disseminate research results through research conferences, meetings and other activities; strengthen graduate and undergraduate education by providing students with training opportunities and access to facilities; and seek extramural research funds. An ORC must be complementary to the academic goals of the University, but does not have jurisdiction over courses or curricula and cannot offer formal courses or make faculty appointments.

An ORC must include three or more faculty working in a critical realm from one or more departments. ORCs are established based on the determination that the nature of the proposed center's research and scholarly activities goes beyond the collaborative effort between two or more faculty members and that the existence of the ORC is necessary in order for the center to be successful in achieving its goals and objectives. ORCs are established with internal start-up funding and should generally become self-sustaining within three to five years. An ORC may not be established if research objectives are essentially the same as those of an existing department or research unit.

Appointment of Director

The Director of an ORC, who must be a tenured faculty member, is appointed by the Vice President for Research after consultation with the Advisory Committee on Scholarship and Research (ACSR). The Director is responsible for the administrative functions of the ORC and for guidance of the unit's activities in accordance with its established goals. It is expected that the Director will be appointed for a 3-5 year term subject to renewal. A brief succession plan should be in place in the event that the director retires or leaves the director position. Directors who transition to a Bartle Professorship may continue to serve as the center director, but will need to appoint a tenured co-director as part of the center's succession plan. ORCs may also recommend the appointment of a tenure-track faculty or staff member as an interim director with the explicit approval of the Vice President for Research and the Provost during transitional periods until a permanent tenured faculty can be appointed.

Advisory Committee

An ORC may develop an Advisory Committee. Representatives should be recognized leaders in the research field of the ORC and may come from both inside and outside the University. The Advisory Committee, if one is appointed, may participate in setting the unit's goals and in critically evaluating its effectiveness on a continuing basis.

Administrative Operations

The ORC reports to the Vice President for Research and must follow administrative review and approval processes set forth by the Vice President and/or campus policy. ORCs are expected to follow all Binghamton University policies related to academic responsibilities, including teaching and service workload within the faculty's respective home academic units, faculty commitment of effort and/or compensation, honoraria, travel and sabbatical leave. Prior to approval of an ORC, an organizational plan must be developed and any assurances related to administrative services, space and facilities must be finalized between the ORC and related academic units.

Application and Review Procedures for New Centers

Review of new ORC proposals will be carried out following an annual Call for Proposals. An ORC may not be established if research objectives are essentially the same as those of an existing department or research unit. New proposals are submitted to the Assistant Vice President for Strategic Research Initiatives and will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee for Scholarship and Research (a subcommittee of the Graduate Council). Recommendations are forwarded to the Vice President for Research who may consult with the President and then establish the research unit

Budget and Financial Considerations

Activities of ORCs may be funded by University budget allocations, extramural funds, and/or philanthropic donations. The University may provide core administrative support in the form of personnel, allocations for supplies and expenses, equipment and facilities, and general assistance during the five-year start up phase. No University funding is available for teaching buy-outs or summer salary. It is the intent of the ORC program that University funding seeds the development of new Centers in the first five years after which the Center become self-sustaining.

Program Review

Once designated, ORCs are required to submit an annual report to ACSR that discusses the Center's achievements during the previous year. The review shall assess the ORCs activities with regard to its stated purpose, present functioning, future plans and continuing development to meet the needs of the field. A decision concerning continuation of the Center is made by the Vice President for Research based on a review of the Center's progress and its alignment with University priorities. Some centers may not be renewed based on loss of critical mass, decline in productivity or shift in University priorities. The establishment or renewal date for all ORCs will be July 1.