

RESEARCH GROUPS AND CENTRES



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APPROVAL DATE	October 5, 2018
AUTHORITY	Board of Governors
PRIMARY CONTACT	Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies

POLICY

Purpose:

Thompson Rivers University encourages the establishment of Research Groups and Research Centres that advance, enhance and facilitate scholarly activity, innovation and knowledge transfer.

Research Groups and Centres at Thompson Rivers University enhance interdisciplinary connections by promoting research interaction and collaboration among faculty, between faculty and students, and with research collaborators in the community and in other institutions. Research Centres and Groups are entitled to:

- (1) identify themselves as a part of Thompson Rivers University and to use the imprimatur of the University in the conduct of their activities;
- (2) solicit external grants and contracts in the University's name, subject to the University's Signing Authority Policy;
- (3) request University budgetary accounts specific to the Research Group or Centre; and
- (4) request assistance of Human Resources in hiring employees.
- (5) request the allocation of physical space from the University Space Allocation Committee

In addition, as recognized hubs of research activity, Groups and Centres receive focused attention on the Research Website, in research blog posts and newsletters, and in the Research and Graduate Studies Annual Report.

Each Research Group and Centre is subject to all applicable Thompson Rivers University policies.

REGULATIONS

Definitions:

Research Group: A Research Group is an association of university scholars who share research interests and who engage in collaborative or closely related research and

scholarly/creative activities. The purpose of a Research Group is to promote and facilitate communication and collaboration among its members. A Research Group may form along a parallel structure to a Research Centre, but represents either a new topic or initiative of limited focus or duration, or serves as a pilot for the development of a Research Centre.

Research Centre: A Research Centre is a formally structured organization established to address an area of research, scholarship and/or the production of creative works; generate new knowledge; provide unique training opportunities for students in a way that enhances and does not compromise the role of academic departments, schools and faculties; and facilitate the dissemination of research and the transfer of innovation, technology and knowledge in a variety of forums and formats.

Research Centres are linked to an area of strategic development as articulated in the University Strategic Research Plan, TRU Academic Plan, or an emerging research area with a reasonable potential to be a future area of strategic research development.

Approval Process – Research Groups:

A proposal for the establishment of a Research Group must be submitted to the Associate Vice-President of Research and Graduate Studies (AVP RGS) which will take the proposal forward to the Research Committee of Senate for consideration and recommendation to the Provost and Vice-President Academic (PVPA) for final approval. The approval process for Research Groups will normally take no more than 2-3 months to complete.

Approval Process – Research Centres:

Establishment of a Research Centre has implications for departments, schools and faculties, and confers University endorsement. As such, establishment of a Research Centre requires the endorsement of the Chairs and Deans involved, and approval of the Board of Governors on the recommendation of Senate.

Proposals for the establishment of a Research Centre must be submitted to the AVP RGS which will take the proposal forward to the Research Committee of Senate for consideration and advice; the Research Committee of Senate will forward the proposal and its recommendations to the Academic Priorities and Planning Committee for consideration and final approval. The approval process for a Research Centre will normally take no more than 4-5 months to complete.

Reporting and Organization – Research Groups and Centres:

Reporting: Research Groups and Centres are formally constituted units of Thompson Rivers University and report to the AVP RGS. Research Groups and Centres will provide an annual report to the AVP RGS by June 1. The AVP RGS will present annual reports to the Research Committee of Senate for its review. Annual reports will be used to promote research at TRU, help identify opportunities for further support of research, and in the ongoing evaluation of Groups and Centres.

Membership: Research Groups and Centres will bring together multiple faculty members and/or staff. Membership may include faculty members and staff from across multiple departments or faculties, and may include support staff, associate, adjunct or visiting scholars.

Other external partners may include community organizations, industry, government, non-governmental organizations, or other academic institutions.

Fundraising: A Research Centre must obtain approval from the Dean, Vice-President (Advancement), and the AVP RGS for fundraising activities directed at external donors so that these activities can be properly coordinated and presented.

Grants, Sponsored Research, Contracts, and Other Agreements: Any agreements for grants, sponsored research, contracts, partnerships or other agreements defining obligations, liability, or affiliations with respect to the activities of, and participants in, the Research Group or Centre require approval of the AVP RGS, and must comply with the signing policies and authorities of Thompson Rivers University.

Review – Research Groups:

A Research Group is normally approved for up to five years, subject to yearly review as outlined below. A Research Group will not be automatically renewed at the end of its term. Instead, a Research Group that wishes to continue beyond the current term should submit a new application prior to the expiration of the term.

Research Groups will be reviewed annually by the AVP RGS and the Research Committee of Senate based on the annual report that is submitted.

Review – Research Centres:

A Research Centre is normally approved for up to five years subject to yearly review at the time of the submission of the annual report. The yearly review process is outlined below. A Research Centre that wishes to continue beyond the current term should submit an application to renew prior to the expiration of the term.

Initiation: Review of a Research Centre shall be initiated by the AVP RGS at least 12 months in advance of the expiry of the current term.

Review Process:

Review Committee: A Review Committee will be established and comprised of three reviewers, at least one of which must be an expert in the research area of the Centre and external to TRU. The members of the Review Committee will be recommended by the AVP RGS in consultation with the Director of the Research Centre. Members of the Review Committee must not be directly associated with the Research Centre.

Submission of Self-study: The Research Centre will submit a self-study that includes information on the contributions that are directly attributable to the Centre such as:

- The Annual Reports: The annual report for the year in review, and copies of previous reports since the last review.

- Achievements: This may include;
 - Contributions to the creation of new knowledge and understanding of benefit to people,
 - Promotion and facilitation of collaborative and interdisciplinary research and enhancement of research networking,
 - Improved research equipment or related infrastructure, Success in securing external funding,
 - Contributions to the research experience of students,
 - Contributions to University priorities as indicated in the Strategic Research Plan and the University Academic Plan,
 - Transfer and dissemination of knowledge, technology and innovation, Enhanced connections with the public and private sectors.

Submission of Support Letters: Indication of continued commitment to the Research Centre from appropriate Chairs and Deans.

Submission of a 5-Year Plan: A description of the research plan for the Research Centre and directions and financial plan for the period of renewal.

Criteria for Evaluation: A recommendation by the Review Committee to renew the Research Centre will be based on success in achieving the projected outcomes of the Centre, including the caliber of activities of the Centre, management, benefits to the University, contribution to the student research experience, caliber of the members and quality of internal and external collaborations, barriers to future success, and the quality and feasibility of future plans. The Review Committee will comment on the performance of the Centre, identify strengths and weaknesses, comment on the future directions, and make recommendations for strengthening the Centre. The Review Committee will forward its report to the AVP RGS along with one of the following recommendations:

- 1) continuation of the Centre,
- 2) conditional continuation of the Centre for a restricted period of time to meet particular requirements or objectives, or
- 3) closure of the Centre
- 4) reversion to Group status.

Disposition of the Report: The Review Committee will forward the report to the AVP RGS who will provide a copy to the Director of the Centre for a response on any issues raised by the Committee. The AVP RGS shall make a recommendation based on the report and comments provided by the Director, and forward a copy of the report, comments and recommendation to the Research Committee of Senate for consideration. The Research Committee of Senate will forward to the PVPA for recommendation. The PVPA will forward its recommendation to Senate and the Board of Governors.