



University of North Alabama

Employee Policy Manual and Handbook

Centers and Institutes: Policies and Guidelines

The University recognizes the contribution that centers and institutes can make in (a) enriching teaching, research, and service within the academic community and/or (b) advancing institutional goals within the service mission of the institution beyond academics. They also often assist the University in leveraging external funding. Proposals for the establishment of such units require a careful review of their need, role within the institution, and relationship to the mission of the university. The guidelines herein are to be followed for the proposal of a center or institute and an ongoing review of its viability to the university.

Proposals

Any administrative unit of the university may submit a proposal for the creation of a center or institute. The terms centers and institutes are used interchangeably but institutes typically reflect a broader institutional scope.

ACADEMIC	NON-ACADEMIC
Proposals that are academic in nature must have the endorsement of the appropriate department chair(s) and college dean(s). Proposals then are submitted via Courseleaf to the Council of Academic Deans (COAD) for review and initial approval. A proposal with COAD and Provost endorsement next is submitted to the university Executive Council for review and approval.	Proposals for centers or institutes that are non-academic in nature are submitted by the appropriate vice president to the university Executive Council for review and initial approval.
The President has final authority for the approval of centers and institutes.	
The creation of any new center will be shared with the Board of Trustees as a matter of information.	
The creation of any new academic center will be submitted as a formal notification to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE).	ACHE notification is not required for non-academic centers.

A proposal must include the following items:

- Purpose of the center or institute;
- Relation to mission of the university;
- Organization chart (to include a reporting structure);
- Budget;
- Objectives;
- External funding partners (if any);
- An advisory board (if needed); and
- Evaluation procedures.

All fundraising, including the establishment of current use and endowment funds, must follow the gift acceptance, spending, and investment policies of the UNA Foundation.

These guidelines recognize that units of the institution that provide ongoing administrative and academic support are often referred to as centers. The guidelines described herein are not applicable to those units.

Structure

Each center and/or institute should have a director (or co-directors). The designation of those individuals(s) shall occur in conjunction with the initial creation of the center or institute and have the approval of the department chair and cost center head/dean. The director is responsible for working with colleagues (and an advisory board, if needed) to meet the mission and purpose of the center or institute and demonstrate compliance with reporting requirements. Periodic evaluation of the performance of the center or institute is the responsibility of the appropriate cost center head/dean, and in the case with academic centers or institutes, in consultation with the chair of the department in which the director resides. Should the performance of the director fail to meet the needs of the center or institute, the cost center head/dean can, in consultation with the department chair and/or advisory board, take action as needed, including the removal of the director. For centers with a multidisciplinary mission, any personnel action shall be collaborative among the respective cost center heads/deans and department chairs.

In the event there is a need for the replacement of a center or institute director, Appendix A outlines the process to be followed.

The creation of advisory boards is encouraged, but not required. The membership of such shall be coordinated by the director with approval by the cost center head/dean and department chair. Advisory boards do not exercise administrative authority over the center or institute.

Reporting Procedures

Centers and institutes are considered a part of the organization structure of the university. As such, the director must compile and submit annual and periodic reports compliant with the guidelines outlined by the university Institutional Effectiveness Committee, utilizing the online process and template.

Periodic Review

Centers and institutes will conduct an audit of their activities and contribution to the university's mission every five years. The report of that audit will be reviewed by the COAD and/or Executive Council to determine continued viability. Should a center or institute be deemed non-viable, it will be afforded the opportunity to provide an improvement plan. A subsequent review after one year will be conducted and a final recommendation will be made to the President by the COAD or Executive Council to either continue the center or institute for an additional four years or discontinue it.

Approved by Executive Council: February 19, 2024

Minor clarification edits by President's Office concerning ACHE notifications: March 11, 2024