

## PERIODIC REVIEW AND REAUTHORIZATION OF ACADEMIC UNIT INSTITUTES/CENTERS (AU I/C) **GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**

Coupled with strategic planning, periodic peer review for reauthorization is essential to advancing academic excellence, and ensuring that the AU I/C are well positioned to successfully respond to opportunities and to support the needs of faculty who desire to contribute to cross-cutting, interdisciplinary scholarship and innovation.

For discipline-centered departments and colleges, the Academic Program Review is the primary means to maintain and improve quality, where the intent is to be a periodic self-examination process that includes peer feedback and provides guidance on ongoing strategic actions to realize future opportunities. For AU I/C, the objective of the Periodic Review is similar: a process designed to provide a clear assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the institute/center, and to guide the future direction of activities therein.

An effective periodic review is beneficial to the Institute/Center in planning for the future. It fully engages the faculty and administration in the development of the self-study, includes external peer review, reinforces performance expectations, and provides for the unit response and the subsequent implementation of the recommendations. As a result, Institutes/Centers can realize many benefits and outcomes from a quality review tailored to the scope and scale of its activities, including:

- An examination of the quality and value of the Institute/Center's activities by the faculty and students.
- A clarification, evaluation, and perhaps revision, of the Institute/Center's goals, strengths, challenges, and opportunities.
- An improved source of information to help guide the Institute/Center's future actions, activities, and decisions on resources.
- An assessment of Institute/Center's objectives and how they enable achievement of the College's and University's strategic priorities and goals.

As delegated by the President, the Senior Vice President for Research is responsible for the oversight and documentation of the periodic review and reauthorization processes of all Institutes/Centers. As such, the office for Research, Innovation & Impact (RII) serves as the main point of contact for this process, although the periodic review and reauthorization is a collaborative process with senior university administrators, college deans, and department heads whose faculty are AU I/C members. NOTE: The AU I/C is responsible for all expenses incurred by the Periodic Review process. It is incumbent upon the academic unit head, whether College Dean, Department Head, or other supervisor to provide an FRS account number to cover any expense incurred by the Periodic Review process.

## 1. Periodic Review

All AU I/C are expected to undergo periodic review for reauthorization after its initial establishment period (no more than 5 years) and also after each renewal period (no more than 7 years). The office for Research, Innovation & Impact (RII) initiates the review by informing the Cognizant Academic Unit Administrator (CAUA) (College Dean, Department Head, or other supervisory official) of upcoming expiration of the AU I/C authorization. In extenuating circumstances, the CAUA can request in writing an extension of up to one year from the Senior Vice President for Research. In the absence of timely completion of the periodic review process, the AU I/C will be suspended and "sunsetted". In such instances, the AU I/C then will no longer be considered a campus unit and is not permitted to continue to act as a campus unit from that time onward.

The CAUA is expected to conduct a periodic review of the Institute/Center in coordination with RII (see "Sample Calendar of Activities" outlining the review process). Typically, there are three components to the periodic review:

- Internally-generated Self-Study Report;
- External peer review of the Institute/Center that produces an Evaluation Report with recommendations for the Institute/Center;
- External Review Response outlining specific actions the Institute/Center will take to address the Evaluation Report's recommendations over the following performance period.

Self-Study Report. The Self-Study Report (see *Self Study Report Sample Outline*) should reflect on the Institute/Center's past accomplishments and present needs to refine its future mission, achieve its goals and expand impact. The Director coordinates with Institute/Center staff, faculty, and affiliate members in the preparation of the Self-Study Report. The Report will be submitted to RII with the re-authorization request.

External Peer Review. The external peer review should be conducted by a team of individuals who have national expertise in areas that are common with the Institute/Center. The external review team is appointed by the CAUA whose composition will vary among Institutes/Centers, but should be reflective of the university's core value of diversity in perspectives, and thus will typically include: 1) at least two individuals who are employed at other peer or similarly well-regarded institutions, agencies, or industries (faculty or similarly qualified professionals) outside of the University of Arizona; and 2) two faculty member from the University of Arizona who are not affiliated with the academic unit Institute or Center.

The external Review Team is required to review the Self-Study Report and conduct a campus visit that includes meetings with relevant administrators, faculty, staff, students, affiliate and advisory members to gain a more thorough understanding of the Institute/Center to conduct their evaluation (see *External Review Team Guidelines* for more information). Exit meetings with the Director and relevant dean(s) and any other pertinent academic unit administrators should be considered to provide preliminary evaluation of and recommendations for the Institute/Center. The Institute/Center is responsible for providing suitable meeting space and logistical support during the Review Team campus visit.

Within 30 days of the campus visit, the Review Team shall submit a written Evaluation Report. The Evaluation Report should focus on recommendations to strengthen the Institute/Center within existing resources and operating context, as well as suggestions for investment that would have the greatest impact to advance its mission. The Evaluation Report shall include:

- Brief Introduction.
- Strengths and Weaknesses.
- Recommendations that are specific, concrete, and feasible that can be reasonably implemented within the resources currently in place.
- Suggestions for collaborative/synergistic activities with other entities.
- Other sections at the Team's discretion.

External Review Response. After the External Review Evaluation Report is received, the AU I/C Director and CAUA should meet to discuss its recommendations and mutually identify actions and timelines to address them. These should be summarized in an External Review Response which is submitted as part of the reauthorization request to the Senior Vice President for Research.

Institute/Center faculty, staff, students, affiliate and advisory members are expected to be actively engaged in all phases of the review process. They are expected to be familiar with the Self-Study Report, participate in the Review Team's campus visit, and actively participate in the development of the Institute/Center response.

## 2. Reauthorization of AU I/C

Reauthorization may be requested by the CAUA following either the initial 5-year or ongoing 7-year performance periods. Following completion of the Periodic Review, the CAUA submits a request for reauthorization to the Vice President for Research that includes:

- Cover letter with the following information:
  - o Summary appraisal of the AU I/C performance and future strategy for success;
  - o Desired period of reauthorization (up to 7 years);
  - o (as appropriate) Request for modification in the type, mission or purpose of the Institute/Center and description of the proposed changes as described in the *Guidance on Establishment and Modification of Academic Unit Centers and Institutes*.
- Copies of the periodic review supporting documents (Self Study and External Review Reports, review response, etc.).

If the Periodic Review recommends the AU I/C proceed into the next performance period without significant modifications from the previous authorization period, only a brief review by the Senior Vice President for Research will be necessary. If substantive changes in the type, mission or purpose are requested, a more intensive review will be conducted appropriate to the nature and scope of the

requested changes. For major and fundamental changes to the AU I/C, the CAUA may be requested to submit material as described in the *Guidance on Establishment and Modification of Academic Unit Centers and Institutes* which may include review by the Senior Vice President for Research.

The Senior Vice President for Research makes the final determination of reauthorization. The office for Research, Innovation & Impact is responsible to disseminate this determination to the CAUA, Institute/Center Director, and others as appropriate.

### 3. **Modification or Termination of an AU I/C**

The CAUA may request to modify or terminate an AU I/C by submitting a written request to the RII Institute/Center Coordinator that describes the desired change and rationale for the modification. These requests will be reviewed by the Senior Vice President for Research, and an appropriate action, including a review process, will be taken tailored to the nature of the request.

When requesting modification or termination of an AU I/C, consideration should be given to the termination or transfer of any contractual obligations, the employment status of any employees, the transfer of any capital equipment or space, and the transfer or reassignment of any funds, including foundation accounts.

### 4. **AU I/C**

AU I/C are required to follow the same periodic review process as university-level institutes/centers including the three components listed above: Self-Study Report, External Peer Review Evaluation Report and External Review Response. However, the Cognizant Administrator may tailor the specific scope and depth of these components to the context of the individual academic unit. For example, we encourage AU I/C to use the Self-Study Report Sample Outline as a baseline template to maintain consistency of required information but it could be customized to address strategic themes specific to the academic unit. As the AU I/C is an autonomous unit under the authority of the CAUA, the recommendation for reauthorization from the CAUA will be given greater weight.

### 5. **Periodic Review in Conjunction with Academic Program Review (APR)**

The CAUA may request from the office for Research, Innovation & Impact (RII) that the periodic review be conducted in conjunction with an academic unit Academic Program Review (APR). In the case of a combined review, primary coordination responsibility is through the Provost's Office but RII should participate in coordination meetings as needed. The APR Self Study Report must include a separate section for the AU I/C following the *Self Study Report Sample Outline*. Selection of the external review team should follow the Provost's Office *APR Procedure Manual* but should reflect expertise inclusive of the AU I/C to effectively evaluate its contribution to the department or college.