



Origination	11/2024	Owner	Bryant Smalley: AVP for Research & Discover Development/ADR
Last Approved	N/A	Area	Research & Economic Development
Effective	Upon Approval	References	SBHE Policy
Last Revised	06/2026		
Next Review	3 years after approval		

## Establishment and Review of Centers and Institutes

### POLICY STATEMENT

The University of North Dakota (UND/University) establishes centers and institutes to advance the University's mission through research, education, service, and public engagement. UND requires a formal proposal and review before any unit uses the title "Center" or "Institute," operates as a University-recognized center or institute, or seeks approval from the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) when required. UND requires regular reporting of centers and institutes and conducts periodic reviews to confirm ongoing quality, viability, and mission alignment. UND may discontinue a center or institute when it no longer meets established criteria, fails to sustain operations, duplicates existing functions, or no longer aligns with University priorities or external requirements.

### REASON FOR POLICY

UND recognizes that centers and institutes support interdisciplinary collaborations, innovation, and external engagement that advances the University's mission and strategic priorities. Clear and consistent procedures help ensure these entities operate with defined purpose, effective leadership, and sustainable resources, while avoiding unnecessary duplication of existing programs. SBHE policy 307.1 requires board approval to create or discontinue a center or institute. This policy establishes the framework to meet those requirements and clarifies responsibility, authority, and accountability for the oversight and management of centers and institutes.

# SCOPE OF POLICY

- President
- Vice Presidents & Associate/Assistant Vice Presidents
- Deans, Directors & Department Heads
- Area Managers & Supervisors
- Faculty
- Staff
- Others: Center and Institute Directors

# CONTACTS

Specific questions should be directed to the following:

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Department/Office E-Mail Web Address
<b>Policy Clarification</b>	Associate Vice President for Research and Discovery Development		bryant.smalley@UND.edu

# DEFINITIONS

<b>Center</b>	A unit housed within an academic unit (department or college/school) representing an assembly of faculty and/or staff focused on research, training, and/or community engagement surrounding a unified topic. Centers may involve faculty and staff from multiple academic units, but are organizationally housed within a specific academic unit. Centers typically report to a department chair, associate dean, or dean.
<b>Institute</b>	A unit housed at the University level representing an assembly of faculty and/or staff focused on advancing research, training, and/or community engagement in a broad, multidisciplinary focal area that typically engages multiple colleges/Schools. Institutes typically report to a vice president or designee.

# PRINCIPLES

Centers and institutes fulfill an important role in higher education, centralizing efforts surrounding a focal area in research, training, and/or community engagement. In doing so, they directly support UND's mission and strategic plan, providing opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to collaborate toward a common goal. Given this important role, it is the responsibility of UND to monitor centers and institutes, to ensure the continued relevance and impact on the University, and to ensure adherence to SBHE policy 307.1. Moreover, UND centers and institutes, whether internally or externally funded, must adhere to UND policies and procedures. This includes alignment with Human Resources policies governing faculty and staff effort allocation, responsibility adjustments, position development and classification, titling and compensation.

Consistent with SBHE policy 307.1, this policy only applies to centers and institutes that have a primary function or activity in academic instruction, research, and/or service beyond the immediate institution community. This does not include units that simply have the word 'center' in their title, or units that provide non-academic services to the university community, such as dining centers. Similarly, this policy does not apply to centers or institutes that function as an academic department (e.g., departmental home of faculty, offering of academic degrees).

## PROCEDURES

### Use of Term "Center" and "Institute"

No unit or initiative subject to the provisions of this policy may use the term "center" or "institute" in its name unless it has received University approval through this policy.

### New Center and Institute Formation

Proposals for new centers and institutes must follow the UND template, and will include discussion of the following at minimum:

- Proposed name of the center or institute. Please note that the name of a proposed center or institute should be distinct from existing centers, institutes, departments, schools, and colleges
- Vision, purpose, and objectives of the proposed center or institute
- Organizational structure of the proposed center or institute, including its placement within UND reporting lines
- Relevance of the proposed center or institute to the UND strategic plan
- Discussion of the qualifications and experience of the proposed director(s) of the center or institute
- UND departments and other units, faculty, and staff that will be immediate participants in the center or institute
- Anticipated activities over the first two years
- Anticipated space needs over the first two years
- Projected financial plan, including startup expenses and full fiscal year ongoing finances, including sources of funding and letters of commitment from internal funding sources
- Sustainability plan describing strategies to maintain adequate financial support for the center's or institute's activities at 2-, 5-, and 10-year horizons
- How the center or institute will work with other complementary units on campus and a description of how the new center or institute is not duplicative of or competitive with existing units with similar focus areas

Proposals will be reviewed for endorsement sequentially at each of the following levels: Department chair (as appropriate), dean (as appropriate), Center and Institute Review Committee, provost and vice president for research and economic development (VPRED), and president (or designees). If any level other than the Center and Institute Review Committee chooses not to endorse the proposal, it will not

move forward for additional review until modifications have been made to the satisfaction of that level of review. Following endorsement by the president (or designee), the VPRED (or designee) will submit the proposed center or institute to SBHE for final approval. (See table below for illustration.)

1.	Originating Faculty or Staff Member	Creates proposal and submits to appropriate first-level reviewer (department chair, dean, or VPRED/provost)
2.	Department Chair	(For department-housed centers) endorses, denies, or requests changes
3.	Dean(s)	(For all center proposals) endorses, denies, or requests changes
4.	VPRED and Provost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (For research-based proposals) VPRED, in consultation with the provost, endorses, denies, or requests changes</li> <li>• (For training and community engagement proposals) Provost, in consultation with the VPRED, endorses, denies, or requests changes</li> </ul>
5.	President	Makes final determination on endorsement or denial (VPRED coordinates submission of president-endorsed proposals to SBHE for official approval.)

## Proposing Creation of Centers and Institutes as Part of External Funding Requests

Prior to submitting an external funding proposal that includes the creation of a formal center or institute as a component of the application, the submitting faculty must receive approval through the level of the provost and Office of the VPRED adhering to the process described above (see [New Center and Institute Formation](#)). If funding is subsequently received, upon the recommendation of the president, the Office of the VPRED will then request formal approval for the creation of the center or institute with SBHE. Please note: this only applies to external funding proposals that propose the creation of a formal center or institute as a new UND unit. Procedures related to "center grant" applications that do not involve the creation of a new unit are detailed below (see [Center Grants](#)).

### Center Grants

Center grants typically focus on implementing a large, multi-faceted initiative or building capacity and collaboration around a central theme. Awarding of a grant to UND that is designated by the funder as a center grant does not automatically authorize creation of a formal unit and does not automatically grant center or institute status. All requirements laid out in this policy must be followed for a center grant to result in the creation of a formal center or institute. Center grants that do not propose to create a formal unit may use the term "center" in their name upon approval of a written request submitted to the Office of the VPRED detailing the funds that have been awarded and the importance of using the term "center" in the name of the initiative. Such approval will be at the discretion of the VPRED and provost, or their designees.

# Existing Centers and Institutes

Centers and institutes in existence at the time of implementation of this policy that meet this policy's definition of a center or institute are not required to follow the center and institute formation procedure described above and are allowed to retain their existing name (e.g., use of "center" even if operating at the University level). Existing centers and institutes must follow the [Center and Institute Review](#) procedures described below, including the requirement to submit an initial comprehensive report with a deadline determined by the VPRED and provost.

## Center and Institute Review Committee

The VPRED and the provost will jointly appoint a Center and Institute Review Committee composed of select associate deans, existing center and institute directors, and other relevant administrators. The Committee will be chaired by the associate vice president for research and discovery development. This advisory Committee will be responsible for reviewing proposals for creation of new centers and institutes and providing a recommendation to the VPRED and provost regarding the proposal. The Committee may also be asked to provide feedback to the VPRED and provost on comprehensive reports.

## Center and Institute Review

### Annual Reports

Annually, all centers and institutes must submit a narrative report covering the prior calendar year as the reporting period. This report must be submitted to the appropriate dean(s), the provost, and the VPRED (or their designees). In addition, department-level centers must submit their report to the appropriate department chair.

The annual report must highlight the center's or institute's activities and accomplishments in research, training, and community engagement, describe goals for the upcoming calendar year, and provide a brief financial report. If concerns regarding a center's or institute's performance arise during the annual report review, improvement action steps may be recommended. In such instances, a report on action steps taken toward improvement must be included in the next annual report. Alternatively, a comprehensive report may be requested, or if concerns are sufficiently severe, a request for discontinuation may be initiated following the process described below.

### Comprehensive Reports

Every four years, each center and institute must submit a comprehensive report following the UND template that will include details regarding activities and accomplishments, goals and objectives, operational/financial details, and other information as requested within the template. This report must be submitted to the appropriate dean(s), the provost, and the VPRED (or their designees). In addition, department-level centers will submit their report to the appropriate department chair. The provost and/or VPRED may request input from the Center and Institute Review Committee regarding a comprehensive report.

If concerns regarding a center's or institute's performance arise during the comprehensive report review,

the center/institute may be asked to take steps to remedy those concerns. In such instances, a report on action steps taken toward improvement must be included in the next annual report. Alternatively, if concerns are severe, a request for discontinuation of the center or institute may be initiated following the process described below.

Newly-formed centers and institutes must submit their first comprehensive report two years following their creation, after which they will transition to a 4-year comprehensive report cycle.

## Center and Institute Discontinuation

If a center or institute is determined to be inactive, inconsistent with the provisions of this policy, underperforming, financially unsustainable, no longer strategically relevant, or otherwise operating in a way that is not in the best interests of the University, a request for discontinuation may be made by the relevant department chair, dean, the provost, the VPRED, or the president. Requests to discontinue a center or institute that continues to have adequate funding to maintain its operations should not occur other than in unusual circumstances.

To discontinue a department-level center, the relevant department chair must submit a request for discontinuation to their dean, who will determine if the request should proceed to the provost and VPRED for review. A request for discontinuation of a department-level center may also originate with the relevant dean. The provost and VPRED must review the request for discontinuation, and upon their concurrence, submit the request for discontinuation to the president. Upon the president's concurrence, the VPRED (or designee) submits a formal request for discontinuation to the SBHE.

To discontinue a college-level center, the relevant dean must submit a request for discontinuation to the provost and VPRED. The provost and VPRED must review the request for discontinuation, and upon their concurrence, submit the request for discontinuation to the president. Upon the president's concurrence, the VPRED (or designee) submits a formal request for discontinuation to the SBHE.

For institutes, the relevant vice president may submit a request for discontinuation to the president. Upon the president's concurrence, the VPRED (or designee) submits a formal request for discontinuation to the SBHE.

While the procedure described above is the typical path for discontinuation of a center or institute, the University reserves the right to directly recommend to SBHE the discontinuation of a center or institute at any time if it is determined that the continuation of the center or institute is not in the best interests of the University.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

<b>President</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make final assessment regarding formation and discontinuation of centers and institutes</li> </ul>
<b>Vice President for Research and Economic Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee and administer policy</li> <li>• Review center and institute proposals and reports</li> <li>• Collaborate with the provost to make</li> </ul>

	<p>recommendations to the president regarding the creation and discontinuation of centers and institutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit requests for creation and discontinuation of centers and institutes to SBHE</li> </ul>
<b>Provost</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review center and institute proposals and reports</li> <li>• Collaborate with the VPRED to make recommendations to the president regarding the creation and discontinuation of centers and institutes</li> </ul>
<b>Deans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review center proposals and reports</li> <li>• Make recommendations to the provost and VPRED regarding the creation and discontinuation of centers</li> </ul>
<b>Department Heads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review department-level center proposals and reports</li> <li>• Make recommendations to the appropriate dean regarding the creation and discontinuation of department-level centers</li> </ul>
<b>Center and Institute Directors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit timely reports as specified in the policy</li> </ul>

## RELATED INFORMATION

- [SBHE Policy 307.1 - Institutional Organization Notice and Approval](#)

## FORMS

There are no forms associated with this policy.

## APPENDICES

There are no appendices associated with this policy.

## Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Campus Comment	Jennifer Rogers: Director of University Policy	Pending
Executive Council (1st	Jennifer Rogers: Director of	06/2026

Reading)	University Policy	
Policy Advisory Group	Jennifer Rogers: Director of University Policy	06/2026
Policy Office	Jennifer Rogers: Director of University Policy	02/2026
Policy Owner	Bryant Smalley: AVP for Research & Discover Development/ADR	02/2026

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