

# SUNY DOWNSTATE HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**Subject:**

Policy on the establishment & evaluation of  
Research Centers and Institutes


**Prepared by:**

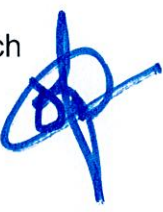
Office of the Senior Vice President for Research

**Committee Approval:**

Research Advisory Council

**Approved by:**

David Christini, Ph.D.   
Senior Vice President for Research

Wayne J. Riley, M.D., MPH, MBA   
President

**No.**

Page 1 of 5

**Original Issue Date:** May 28, 2024**Supersedes:** None**Effective Date:** July 1, 2024**Issued by:** Office of the Senior Vice  
President for Research

---

### I. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the definition, development, and evaluation of research centers and institutes at Downstate Health Sciences University (DHSU).

Research centers and institutes are aimed at bringing together collaborating faculty and researchers to provide a supportive environment and infrastructure for interdisciplinary research. They often provide a centralized administrative framework, facilitating resource sharing and reducing individual researchers' administrative burdens. This structure enhances the efficiency of research activities, attracts larger funding opportunities, and fosters innovative, interdisciplinary collaboration.

The Office of the Senior Vice President for Research (SVPR) will evaluate the establishment of these entities based on their potential to stimulate collaboration and scientific advancement, streamline research processes, maximize resources, and align with DHSU's strategic goals, ensuring that they offer tangible benefits to the research community.

## ***Scope of the Policy***

This policy exclusively governs all new and existing DHSU centers and institutes that fall under the purview of the SVPR. Those centers and institutes whose primary mission is research-oriented and/or are primarily supported by sponsored program funding (e.g. grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements) are under the purview of the SVPR.

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

To ensure clarity and a shared understanding of key terms used throughout this policy, the following definitions are provided. These definitions are crucial for delineating the roles, responsibilities, and scope of activities within DHSU's research centers and institutes.

- **Institute:** An entity within DHSU that represents the highest level of organization for research and scholarly activity. Institutes encompass a broader scope than centers, potentially covering multiple areas of study or disciplines. They may report directly to the Office of the SVPR, and typically possess substantial resources, staff, and infrastructure.
- **Center:** A specialized unit within a DHSU School or College that focuses on a specific area of research or scholarly activity. Centers are characterized by a multidisciplinary approach, often involving collaboration across departments or disciplines. They have dedicated leadership, staff, and resources, and may engage in a wide range of activities including research, education, and community outreach.
- **Program:** A structured set of activities or initiatives at DHSU designed to achieve specific research goals. Programs typically have dedicated resources and staff but may operate under larger organizational units like departments, centers, or institutes.
- **Affiliate:** An individual or organization that is formally connected to DHSU, but is not a direct part of its internal structure. Affiliates may contribute to or benefit from the research centers and institutes.

## **III. DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH CENTERS AND INSTITUTES**

### **A. Establishment Criteria**

All proposed new research centers and institutes at DHSU must be pre-approved by the SVPR. A high bar exists for the establishment of new research centers and institutes. Proposals are required to demonstrate innovative contributions to research, outlining unique agendas or methodologies that distinguish them from existing departments or research units. The creation



of a center or institute with objectives that substantially overlap with those of existing departments or research units is not permitted.

Emphasis should be placed on collaborative opportunities both within and outside DHSU, enhancing research capabilities. A comprehensive justification of necessary resources, aligning with DHSU's resource management strategies, is essential. Additionally, proposals must align with DHSU's strategic goals, ensuring that the establishment of new centers or institutes contributes meaningfully to the university's mission and vision.

## **B. Proposal and Approval Process**

This section outlines the steps involved in proposing and obtaining approval for a new center or institute, starting from the initial submission of a concept to the final approval. The process is structured to guarantee thorough evaluation, encouraging innovation and feasibility in line with DHSU's research priorities.

1. **Initial Proposal Submission:** Researchers interested in establishing a new center or institute must submit an initial pre-proposal to the SVPR's office. This proposal should include the center's or institute's objectives, anticipated contributions to the field, and potential collaborative opportunities. See *Center/Institute Proposal Template* in the *Appendices* section.
2. **Review by SVPR:** The SVPR's office reviews the initial pre-proposal, assessing its alignment with DHSU's strategic goals, innovative aspects, and resource requirements.
3. **Detailed Proposal Requirement:** If the initial pre-proposal is favorably reviewed, researchers are asked to submit a detailed proposal. This should include a comprehensive budget, resource justification, staffing plans, a detailed research agenda, and the envisioned impact of the proposed entity.
4. **Advisory Committee Evaluation:** An advisory committee, constituted by the SVPR, evaluates the detailed proposal. The committee considers the proposal's feasibility, potential impact, and alignment with DHSU's broader research objectives.
5. **Feedback and Revision:** The committee provides feedback to the proposers, who may need to revise their proposal based on this feedback.
6. **Final Approval:** After satisfactory revisions, the proposal is submitted for final approval by the SVPR, who will make a recommendation to the President for final authorization. Upon approval, the center or institute can commence operations, subject to regular reviews as per DHSU policy.

## **C. Roles and Responsibilities**

This section outlines the key roles within research centers/institutes and their associated responsibilities to ensure effective functioning and governance.

- **Center/Institute Director(s):** Responsible for the day-to-day management of the center or institute, including overseeing research activities, securing extramural funding for the center or institute, managing budgets, and ensuring compliance with university policies and external funding requirements.
- **Advisory Committee:** Comprised of internal and external experts, this committee provides strategic advice, reviews annual activities, and ensures that the center or institute maintains high standards of research and operational efficiency.
- **Faculty and Researchers:** Engaged in conducting research, securing funding, and contributing to the center's or institute's objectives. They play a key role in collaborative projects and innovative research initiatives.
- **Administrative Staff:** Handle administrative and logistical support, including budget management, reporting, and coordination of activities within the center or institute.

#### **D. Funding and Resource Allocation**

Diversification of funding sources ensures financial stability and independence. Centers and institutes should seek funding from a variety of sources, including extramural grants, partnerships, and philanthropic contributions. The Executive Director of Development for Research can assist with basic prospect research and recommendations for possible engagement with private donors.

If acting as a “service center”, the center/institute must have a clear budget plan outlining expected income, expenditures, and sustainability strategies. See [RF SUNY Service Center Policy](#). Long-term financial planning, including strategies for self-sustainability, is crucial for the viability of the center or institute.

Procedures for the allocation of resources, including staff, equipment, and facilities, should be transparent and aligned with the strategic objectives of the center or institute.

#### **E. Collaboration and Partnership Guidelines**

Centers and institutes should actively establish and maintain collaborative networks with internal and external partners, including other academic institutions, industry, and non-profit organizations. Affiliates, which include individual researchers or organizations formally connected to DHSU but not part of its internal structure, play a vital role in these collaborations. Clear guidelines should be established for engaging affiliates in research activities.



Formal agreements processed and signed through the Office of Research Administration must be developed for all collaborations, outlining roles, responsibilities, and expectations to ensure mutual benefit and alignment with DHSU’s objectives. Centers and institutes jointly founded by DHSU and external institutions should include shared governance structures and detailed resource sharing plans in their formal agreements.

**IV. EVALUATION AND MONITORING**

Each research center and institute must submit an annual report to the SVPR’s office. This report should detail research activities, financial status, and progress toward strategic goals. Documentation of research outputs, including publications, patents, and conference presentations, must be included in reports. These reporting requirements are designed to maintain transparency and accountability, ensuring that centers and institutes are meeting their objectives and contributing to DHSU's research mission.

Every three to five years, a comprehensive review of each center and institute should be conducted by an appointed committee to evaluate overall performance, impact, and alignment with DHSU’s strategic goals. The review committee will provide a recommendation to the SVPR regarding the continuation or termination of the center or institute based on the review findings. If renewal is recommended with conditions, a detailed action plan for addressing identified areas of improvement should be submitted. This process ensures that research centers and institutes continuously evolve and remain aligned with the dynamic needs and goals of DHSU.

Date Reviewed	Revision Required (Circle One)		Responsible Staff Name and Title
	Yes	No	
	Yes	No	
	Yes	No	