

**Louisiana State University**  
**Office of Research and Economic Development**

**Creation, Evaluation, and Management of  
Research Centers and Institutes**

March 2026

The Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) has oversight and monitoring responsibilities for research centers and institutes (RCI) at LSU A&M. The following guidelines govern the creation, evaluation, and management of RCI that report at the University (ORED) or College level, establishing University-wide research accountability standards consistent with the [LSU Scholarship First Agenda](#). They also apply to jointly administered RCI with other LSU campuses and to centers formed from sponsored program sources and LSU Foundation gifts with specific funding, management, or evaluation requirements.

**I. Terminology and Classification of Centers and Institutes**

RCI are classified by interdisciplinary scope, reporting structure, and funding sources. Separate guidelines govern Research Core Facilities (RCF) [link].

**Exclusions:** These guidelines do not apply to centers focused on: (a) interdisciplinary educational programs or academic services (e.g., Center for Faculty Development); (b) administrative centers (e.g., counseling, computer centers); (c) “geographic” units primarily denoting a place (e.g., African American Cultural Center); (d) service units (e.g., LSU Child Care Center); or (e) research laboratories or facilities at the departmental or individual faculty level.

**Classification Criteria 1: Interdisciplinary Breadth**

RCI expand disciplinary focus beyond Department or College structures to build interdisciplinary research teams:

- A **Center** is: (a) analogous to an institute but smaller in scope, while still involving more than one Department or College; (b) administered by a director reporting to ORED or a Dean; (c) focused on externally supported research; and (d) may reside within an academic unit or institute, and report to ORED if broad enough in scope.
- An **Institute** is a large, integrative, interdisciplinary unit: (a) spanning multiple Colleges; (b) administered by a director reporting at or above the College level; (c) attracting extensive external research funding; and (d) linking academia to professional communities, such as government and industry. An institute typically reports directly to ORED and requires clear evidence of service to university research priorities.
- A **Joint Center or Institute** is collaboratively established and administered by more than one LSU A&M unit and subject to LSU Board of Supervisors (BoS) approval and the rules set by LSU A&M campus leadership.

**Classification Criteria 2: Reporting Structures**

Reporting structures reflect the interdisciplinary breadth of faculty engagement and can be

modified as research activity evolves.

- **RCI at the University level** report to the ORED Vice Chancellor. They have the broadest interdisciplinary faculty engagement across Departments and Colleges and are subject to periodic Council on Research review.
- **RCI at the College level** report to the respective College Dean. They undergo formal review only if BOR-designated as Centers of Excellence; otherwise at Dean discretion or per sponsor requirements.
- **Research centers at the Department level** (institutes are not permitted at this level) report to the Department Chair. Review follows the same rules as College RCI.

**Classification Criteria 3: Program Management**

RCI associated with external agreements follow a combination of the LSU guidelines provided in this document and other specific requirements outlined in sponsor agreements (contracts, grants, gifts, etc.). Such management protocols cover funding, formation, mission, evaluation, and discontinuation.

**Sponsored Program-Based RCI** (federal, state, industry, or private) are established by grant competitions or block funding. They typically dissolve at the end of the funding period unless formalized as a University, College, or Department unit. ORED annual review is required for all University-level RCI but may coincide with required sponsor reviews. Sponsored program-based RCI include units that are mandated by State or Federal statute without specific funding agreements (e.g. Center for Energy Studies).

The Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR) can certify an RCI as a “**Center of Excellence**” following formal review, with reauthorization required every 5 years. All RCI seeking BOR certification must also be approved by the LSU Board of Supervisors (BoS). LSU A&M Institutes are eligible for recognition as a BOR Center of Excellence.

**RCI are classified along two axes:** (1) interdisciplinary breadth defining reporting structure (University/College/Department), and (2) program management type (LSU vs. external agreements). Table 1 defines the applicable reporting and management responsibilities for each combination.

**Table 1.** Classification matrix for RCI.

RCI Impact	University Reporting	Program Management
UNIVERSITY	ORED Vice Chancellor	LSU Agreements External Sponsor Agreements
COLLEGE	College Dean	LSU Agreements External Sponsor Agreements
DEPARTMENT (Centers only)	Department Chair	LSU Agreements External Sponsor Agreements

## **II. Guidelines for the Creation of RCI**

ORED encourages faculty to form organized research units that advance interdisciplinary collaboration and extramural funding. A proposed RCI must demonstrate:

- National or international reputation relevant to its mission and LSU strategic goals.
- Advancement of the LSU Scholarship First Agenda and the research strengths of participating units.
- Interdisciplinary interaction among faculty from multiple disciplines that would not otherwise occur.
- A predominant focus on a recognized LSU research strength.
- External partnerships at local, regional, national, and international levels.
- Integration of undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral training into research activities.
- Sponsorship of special lectures, seminars, symposia, exhibits, or conferences.
- Enhanced research productivity and extramural funding potential.

Faculty groups should use Table 1 to select the appropriate RCI classification and reporting structure before proceeding. University RCI report to ORED via an MOU with the Colleges with faculty actively involved; College RCI report to ORED or a Dean based on research scope and external partner involvement (those reporting to ORED also have an MOU).

### **Approval Process**

The use of “center” or “institute” requires approval at different university levels:

- Department Centers: Approval from the Department Chair, Dean, and Vice Chancellor of ORED.
- College and University RCI: Approval from participating Departments (Department Chairs), Dean, and Vice Chancellor of ORED.
- All RCI require approval by the Executive Vice President and Chancellor of LSU A&M following ORED review and approval.
- University and College RCI must determine—in consultation with the Vice Chancellor of ORED—whether to pursue BOR Center of Excellence designation. If pursued, BoS approval is required prior to BOR submission. Early consultation with ORED (and Academic Affairs as appropriate) is strongly advised.

### **Criteria**

Proposals for RCI should address a specific, original research challenge that makes LSU competitive with AAU peer institutions. Approval requires strong evidence of past extramural support, peer-reviewed publications, and a functioning interdisciplinary faculty team.

### **Proposal Format**

Proposals for University or College RCI must include (see Appendix B for full format):

- Role, scope, and mission relative to the LSU Scholarship First Agenda; intellectual merit and global research challenges that distinguish the collective scholarly effort.
- How the unit enhances LSU research productivity and funding opportunities, including federal partnerships and external collaborations, and what partnerships it will generate at the local, state, national or international level.
- Justification for the proposed interdisciplinary classification level and identification of supporting faculty and research interests.
- Year-one and five-year budgets based on current and anticipated extramural funding;

productivity metrics (publications, extramural support, collaborative indicators); anticipated new academic programs.

- Proposed self-assessment methods and advisory board membership (internal and external).
- Cover memo from the proposer through the Dean and participating Department Chairs to ORED.

After Council on Research review, RCI proposals are submitted to the Chancellor with a letter of support from the ORED Vice Chancellor. Sample proposal templates are available from ORED [link].

### **III. RCI Management**

#### **F&A Generation by RCI**

F&A credit on externally funded projects is available to University RCI based on the degree to which the RCI's interdisciplinary mission, administrative services, or facilities "enable" the research and provide a competitive advantage. This enabling role is requested by the PI with OSP and must be clearly documented in the proposal; simply listing an RCI is not sufficient.

Full F&A credit requires that two or more faculty with tenure track (TTF) or non-tenure track (NTF) appointments in the RCI, or faculty fellows, hold active leadership roles in the project AND clearly demonstrate how they will utilize the RCI's interdisciplinary mission, administrative services, or facilities as described in the proposal.

#### **Policy for RCI Review**

Accountability rests with the administrative officer defined in Table 1. The RCI director is appointed by and reports to that officer and is responsible for day-to-day management per the approved RCI proposal and active MOU. Reviews ensure RCI function effectively, meet defined goals, operate per their mission statements, and remain consistent with LSU's overall research mission.

#### **Review Process**

Annual Review: By June 30 each year, all College- and University-level RCI submit a brief electronic report to their supervising administrative officer documenting performance against mission and goals—including grants, publications, patents, conferences sponsored, F&A credit, and other scholarly productivity indicators. RCI that already submit annual reports to external agencies may submit those reports as a supplement. The administrative officer provides annual written feedback.

Comprehensive Review: Every five years, all University RCI must demonstrate a rationale for continued operation based on scholarly merit, publication outputs, fiscal health, F&A credit, and campus priorities. BOR-approved RCI must complete their comprehensive review one semester before the BOR renewal date. The review includes a five-year report and strategic plan submitted to the Council on Research (see Appendix D), which recommends continuation, renewal, combination, probation, or discontinuation. The Vice Chancellor of ORED makes the final decision in consultation with the appointing officer and the Chancellor of LSU A&M.

The Vice Chancellor of ORED may also appoint a Review Committee as part of the comprehensive review. The committee consists of three LSU faculty members (one from the

Council on Research), plus additional non-LSU members as appropriate. College Deans or Department Chairs may independently request a comprehensive review; Chair requests require Dean approval. For BOR-designated RCI, BOR renewal documents may substitute for or supplement the comprehensive review.

### **Review Criteria**

The five-year report and strategic plan should emphasize specific metrics and examples across the following items:

1. Goals, strategic plan, and mission statement; history and rationale; how the RCI enhances the University mission and promotes interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, or multi-disciplinary research.
2. Administrative structure with organizational chart; infrastructure ensuring future viability beyond any single faculty member; personnel outlook after current grant funding ends.
3. Collaborative activities since last review—research, public service, and graduate/undergraduate research impacts—with particular emphasis on interdisciplinary activity, MOUs, and examples of ongoing work with other institutions, LSU units, or industry.
4. Funding history (external and internal) since last review—expenditures by university categories, F&A credit, and the five-year research plan for maintaining and enhancing performance. Emphasis on team-driven grants.
5. Activities and achievements of affiliated faculty/staff in research, creative activity, and outreach; AAU-relevant metrics, such as honorific awards; two-page CVs for all active affiliated faculty.
6. Adequacy of current space and facilities; feasibility and cost of any additional resources requested.
7. Factors impeding effective functioning; current and future budget plans; strategy for remaining self-funded; personnel funded directly by the unit.
8. Advisory board membership, level of engagement, and relevant expertise (internal and external boards).
9. Strategic plans for future research activity and aspirational impacts.

### **Role of the Comprehensive Review Committee**

When appointed, the committee meets with the director, faculty, staff, and relevant administrators. It assesses and reports on: (A) appropriateness of goals and mission; (B) programs and activities relative to mission; (C) funding adequacy; (D) personnel effectiveness; (E) managerial effectiveness; (F) major impediments and remedies; (G) recommendations for continuation, modification, or discontinuation. The committee submits its report to the Vice Chancellor of ORED who shares it with the RCI and the relevant Dean and Directors, who then have two months to respond in writing. These responses will be considered before the Vice Chancellor issues a formal written recommendation to the Chancellor. ORED monitors the implementation of any corrective actions and reports progress to the Council on Research.

### **Leadership Review of University RCI**

RCI directors are appointed by the appropriate administrative officer per Table 1, with final approval by the Vice Chancellor of ORED and the Chancellor of LSU A&M. Appointment terms are typically 3 years during probation periods, or aligned with the 5-year comprehensive review

cycle.

#### **IV. Policies and Procedures for the Discontinuation of RCI**

An RCI is discontinued when it fails to achieve scholarship goals, extramural funding benchmarks, or has fulfilled its useful purpose. LSU may discontinue an RCI on recommendation of the Administrative Officer, Council on Research, or Vice Chancellor of ORED in consultation with the Chancellor. Grounds include: loss of funding or key faculty, mission superseded by a new research direction, fiscal unsustainability, or lack of faculty engagement and external scholarly impact. Discontinuation proposals are reviewed by affected Department Chairs and RCI Directors, Deans, the Council on Research, the Vice Chancellor of ORED, and the Chancellor. The proposal must confirm that advisory boards and partner institutions have been notified of the intent to dissolve. The “phase-out” period—sufficient for orderly termination of contractual obligations and staff transition—shall not exceed one year after the academic year in which final approval is granted.

#### **Appealing a Recommendation of Discontinuation**

Directors may appeal for a one-year reprieve to the supervising Administrative Officer, reviewed by the Vice Chancellor of ORED and Council on Research. Reprieves are granted only in extenuating circumstances when the appeal demonstrates: (a) a high likelihood of remediating noted deficiencies within 12 months, and (b) a clear five-year plan for sustained high productivity. Units with a documented history of low or uneven performance should not expect approval.

#### **V. RCI Modifications**

A. Major changes in function, focus, or funding sources require prior Chancellor approval based on the Vice Chancellor of ORED’s recommendation, and subsequent BOR approval if the unit is BOR-recognized.

B. All modification requests to the Chancellor require Vice Chancellor of ORED approval and recommendation.

C. When a RCI’s program management is defined by an MOU among Colleges, Departments, and ORED, modifications may be addressed in MOU renewals.

#### **VI. Joint RCI**

A. Joint RCI with one or more LSU A&M campuses follow the same creation procedures as described in Section II.

B. Joint University RCI require approval from the Chancellor of LSU A&M and the chief executive officers of each partner campus. A single agenda item is submitted jointly to the Board of Supervisors.

C. Approval and review processes are streamlined to respect each campus member’s authority while maximizing director effectiveness.

D. Review and evaluation processes will be addressed in the full proposal submitted through each campus member’s recommendation process to the LSU Board of Supervisors.

## References

CalPoly (2009) Policy for the Establishment, Evaluation and Discontinuation of University Centers and Institutes. <http://www.calpoly.edu/~rgp/pdf/EstablishCenters.pdf>

University at Albany (2009) Policies and Procedures for Establishing, Operating, and Reviewing Organized Research Units. <http://www.albany.edu/research/VPRDocs/CenterReviewPolicy.pdf>

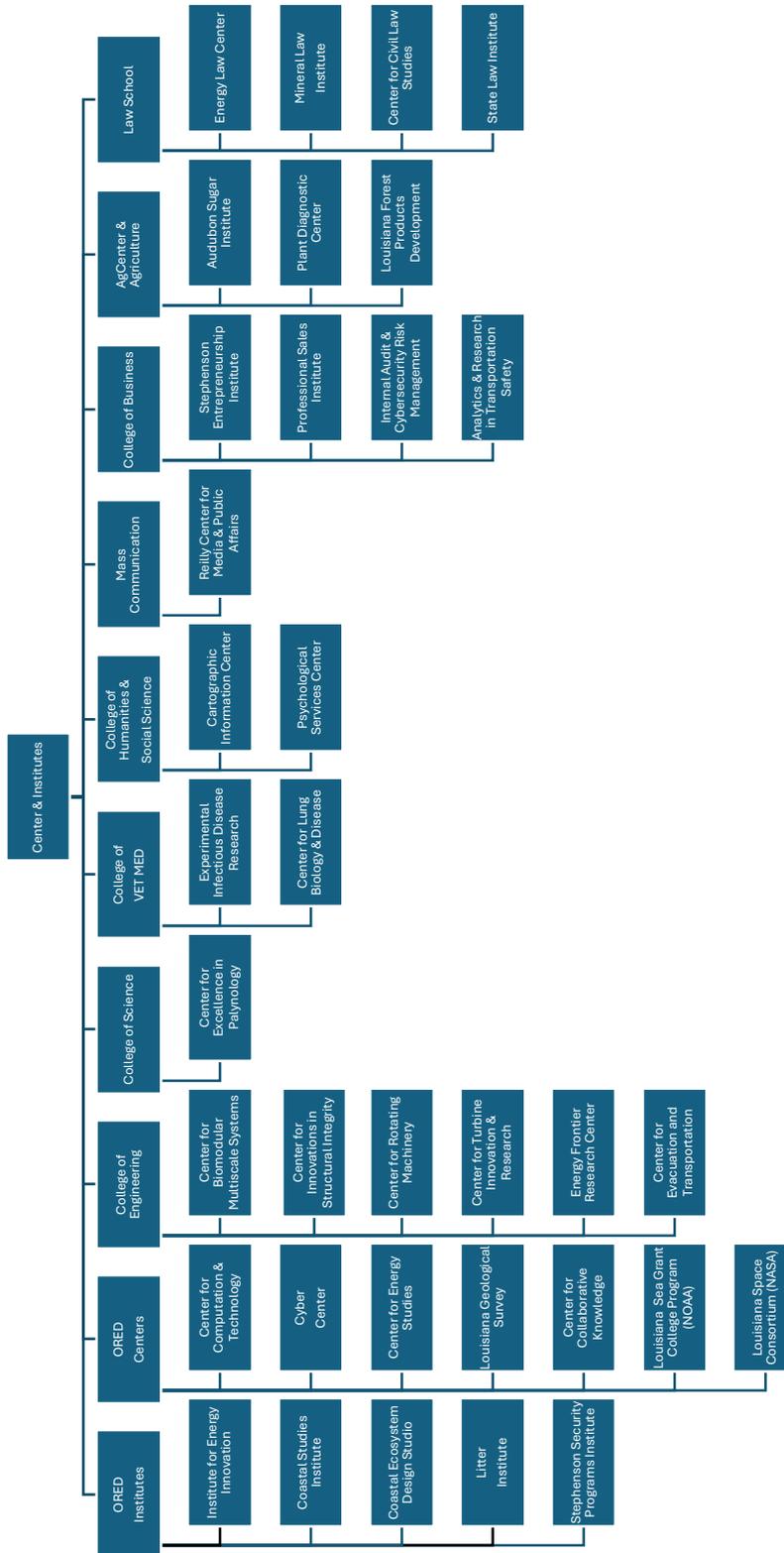
Louisiana Board of Regents (2009) Guidelines for the Proposal of New Centers, Institutes, and Other Similar Academic/Research Units. <http://regents.state.la.us/Academic/PP/Guidelines/II.html>

UNLV (2009) Creation, Periodic Review, and Closure of University Centers, Institutes, Museums, and Laboratories. <http://research.unlv.edu/cli&m/docs/Center-Institute-Policy.pdf>

NC State University (2009) Policies and Procedures for Planning, Establishing, and Reviewing University Centers and Institutes. <http://www.ncat.edu/~divofres/centers/policies.php>

# Appendix A

## Centers & Institutes — LSU A&M [organizational chart]



## **Appendix B — Proposal Format for an RCI at LSU A&M**

1. Name of Institution
2. Name of Proposed Research Unit
3. Designation as RCI at the University, College, or Department Level
4. Name(s) and Title(s) of RCI Leadership
5. Department or Academic Unit Responsible for the RCI

### **Part I — Description**

- A. Intellectual merit and global research challenges that will distinguish the collective scholarly effort across LSU academic units.
- B. Role, scope, and mission of the research unit relative to the LSU Scholarship First Agenda.
- C. How the unit will enhance LSU research productivity, expand funding opportunities (particularly federal), and promote external collaborations.

### **Part II — Need and Justification**

- A. Rationale for the proposed interdisciplinary level (University/College/Department) and identification of supporting faculty and research interests.
- B. Relationship to any similar LSU System unit; distinguishing characteristics and anticipated coordination.
- C. Local, state, national, and international partnerships the unit will generate, promoting the LSU research enterprise.

### **Part III — Degree of Research Integration**

- A. Research disciplines of primary faculty; contribution to unit goals; how the unit enhances their research opportunities.
- B. Methods for broadening LSU's research capacity to address the challenge in Part I; impact on funding and scholarship.

### **Part IV — Facilities and Equipment**

- A. Existing facilities and equipment available to the unit.
- B. Need for new facilities and equipment; cost estimates and proposed funding sources.
- C. Use of existing Research Core Facilities or research infrastructure at LSU.

### **Part V — Administration**

- A. Administrative structure and reporting lines (organizational chart recommended).
- B. Impact on current campus administrative structure, if any.

### **Part VI — Budget**

- A. Projected five-year budget with sources of revenue and categories of expenditure.
- B. External revenue sources the unit will pursue to support operations and research.

## **Appendix C — RCI Annual Review Form**

1. Top five accomplishments of the past year and their relation to the LSU Scholarship First Agenda and unit mission.
2. Top five goals for the upcoming year; strategies for achieving them; relation to the LSU Scholarship First Agenda.
3. How the unit maximizes effectiveness for its constituency; F&A credit generated in the last fiscal year.
4. Recommended modifications to institutional processes to improve unit effectiveness, efficiency, and service to the University, research community, and external stakeholders.

## **Appendix D — RCI Comprehensive Review Form (Five-Year Report and Strategic Plan)**

### **A. Role/Scope/Mission**

1. Describe role, scope, and mission; how the past five years' activities met stated criteria; BOR approval status and date if applicable.
2. State continued need and relevance; response to research challenges; enhancement of faculty research at national/international scale and in response to state issues.

### **B. Faculty and Staff**

1. Provide an organizational chart.
2. Describe leadership with roles.
3. List faculty: home Department, specialization, level of involvement.
4. List staff: name, position, level of involvement.

### **C. Research, Creative, and Scholarly Productivity**

1. All external grant submissions: LSU proposal number, funding status, agency, amount, duration, faculty involved, F&A credit generated.
2. All journal articles, books, exhibits, performances, and other scholarly works acknowledging the unit.
3. All outreach projects: faculty involved, project type, beneficiary group, press releases, invited presentations with state/national/international impact.
4. All graduate and undergraduate students involved: name, whether graduate or undergraduate, year of study, level of involvement.
5. Honors and awards for faculty using unit facilities.
6. Research conferences, symposia, and seminars organized.
7. Other relevant research activities.

### **D. Advisory Boards**

1. External board: members, affiliation, length of service, expertise, meeting frequency over five years.
2. Internal board: same information.

### **E. Budget**

1. Detailed five-year budget using University object codes showing how resources were used.

2. Total F&A credit generated per year over the last five years.

#### **F. Facilities and Equipment**

1. Space used; assessment of future space needs.
2. Main shared equipment used during the last fiscal year.

#### **G. Strategic Plan**

1. How the unit provides value beyond what a Department or College would offer without its unique staff and facilities.
2. Future goals and upcoming initiatives.
3. Barriers to achieving mission and scope.

### **Appendix E — RCI Comprehensive Committee Review Process**

#### **Review Committee Members:**

- Member, Chair
- Member
- Member
- College Representative
- Council on Research Representative

#### **Review Committee Activities:**

1. Review of annual and five-year reports to ORED on research achievements and faculty development impact.
2. Evaluation of equipment and staff for research capacity and cost-center operations (if applicable).
3. Discussions with campus user groups, including interviews with Deans and faculty.
4. RCI budget review.
5. RCI management, structure, and funding review.
6. Final report submitted to Vice Chancellor of ORED and Chancellor of LSU A&M.