



SDSU Policies and Application Guidelines for Centers and Institutes

The establishment of centers, institutes, and similar entities at San Diego State University supports and enhances the teaching, research, and service missions of the institution. The activities conducted by these types of organizational units are important to the development of innovative solutions to pressing challenges as well as to the training of our future workforce and our commitment to community impact. As such, these organizational units serve to bring together students, faculty, and community partner organizations with common interests.

This document summarizes the policies, guidelines, and criteria applicable to creating a new SDSU center or institute, annual and periodic reviews, reporting responsibilities of approved SDSU centers and institutes, and the dissolution or termination of SDSU centers and institutes. The purpose of these policies and guidelines is to provide a standard process for creating, reviewing, and terminating centers and institutes. College policies for centers and institutes should be consistent with the policies and guidelines outlined in this document.

1. Applicability

The policies and guidelines included in this document apply to any organization within SDSU that is called a center, institute, or other designation (e.g., Academy) without regard to sources of funding, university initiatives, or external gifts.

2. Guidelines for Establishing a New Center or Institute

2.1. Proposals

Proposals to create a new SDSU research center or institute are authorized under [CSU Memorandum AA-2014-19](#). Please consult this document first for basic procedural and operational policies concerning the establishment of centers and institutes. Centers and institutes can reside in a single college or multiple colleges (e.g., the College of Science and the College of Health and Human Services) as in the case of interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or transdisciplinary collaborations. For example, centers or institutes can also span multiple institutions (e.g., SDSU and UCSD); however, an MOU may be required, depending on the partnering institution or shared resources. Centers and institutes shall have the ability to sponsor academic programs, continuing education programs, and/or conferences/workshops and to prepare academic curriculum to be reviewed through the normal academic internal procedures of the College(s) or University. Any academic programs or continuing education programs, including those via Global Campus, must be endorsed by the college.

Any new proposed SDSU center or institute should not significantly overlap in purpose and scope with any existing approved center or institute. Prior to submitting a proposal for a new SDSU center or institute, please review the current list of approved centers and institutes to determine if overlap exists.

The center or institute may be virtual or physical. Any SDSU faculty member or members seeking to establish a center or institute shall submit a formal written proposal to the Dean of the college in which the interim or named director of the proposed center/institute resides. If the proposed center or institute has faculty members from multiple colleges and/or co-directors, the written proposal should be submitted to the Deans of the colleges involved.

Proposals must indicate whether the new center or institute is primarily a research center/institute (e.g., the primary mission of the center/institute is focused on research or scholarship, including creativity activities) or primarily a center or institute focused on education, and/or training, and/or community engagement (e.g., the primary mission of the center/institute is not focused research). It is important to note a research center/institute could also be community-engaged or provide training or a center/institute focused on training or community engagement institute could be involved in some level of research or evaluation. However, the determination of the type of center or institute should be based on the primary focus of the proposed center/institute.

2.2 Center and Institute Proposals

Please include the following information in your proposal for a new SDSU center or institute.

1. Designate whether this is an application for a research-focused center/institute, or a center/institute focused on education, and/or training, and/or community engagement.
2. The name of the new center or institute (see Attachment A for guidance on what distinguishes a center from an institute). The term bureau shall not be used to describe these types of organizations.
3. The purpose or mission of the center or institute and a description of the major planned activities in which the center or institute will engage, including the roles of center/institute faculty, students, and affiliated community partner organizations (if applicable).
4. A description of how the center/institute aligns with the mission and strategic priorities of the CSU, SDSU as well as the college(s) and academic unit(s) involved. This should also include how the center will contribute to the education and training of SDSU students.
5. For research centers/institutes, the proposal must also include a preliminary research agenda, future grant submission plans, as well as brief research project descriptions that are planned for the center/institute.
6. The center or institute's organizational structure and operating procedures, including the name of an interim director or permanent director and a process by which a permanent director is selected and evaluated if a permanent director has not been named.

A co-director leadership structure may be appropriate. Please indicate this proposed structure in the application.

7. The appropriate college Dean(s) will make final approval of the director. Directors will be reviewed by college Deans every five years (see section 4.2) for renewal of appointment.

8. A list of all the principal faculty members involved in the center/institute, including research faculty (a center/institute must include at least three SDSU faculty members; for a multiple institutional center or institute, at least two faculty members must come from partnering institution(s)). This should also include a procedure for how new faculty will be selected to participate in the center/institute as well as how faculty may be removed from being listed as participants. The addition or removal of faculty from a center should be done annually and be included in the annual brief report (see section 4.1).

9. A description and a detailed projected budget of the center or institute's initial or potential funding sources (e.g., SDSU Research Foundation funds, grants funding, stateside funds, etc.). Please include any seed funding being provided by a college, department/school, or other university unit, including release time, salaries, equipment, or travel funds.

10. If space is needed for the center or institute, provide a detailed explanation of how the space will be allocated and funded (if applicable), the location of the space, and whether it is stateside or SDSU Research Foundation space.

11. Proposals to create a new SDSU center or institute must include clear support from the academic unit(s) involved. Please include a letter(s) of endorsement from all the college Dean(s) whose faculty will be involved in the center or institute as well as the Dean(s) or appropriate administrator(s) from partner institutions (if applicable).

2.3 Proposal Submission and Review

- Proposals (PDFs) should be submitted to the Deans(s) of the college in which the interim or named director (or co-director) of the proposed center/institute resides. Please copy the Associate Vice President for Research Operations on the email submission.

- Proposals must be submitted by the second Friday of the month to ensure review at the following Dean's Research Council meeting which is held the second Wednesday of the month. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be reviewed at the next month's meeting but at the following month's meeting.

- If a college has a center/institute review policy, this timeline may be longer depending on the college review. However, it is expected the review process will be completed in three months.

- The Dean's Research Council will review applications for new SDSU centers/institutes and make a recommendation for approval to the Provost (for centers or institutes focused on education, and/or training, and/or community engagement) or the Vice President for Research and Innovation (for research centers or institutes).

- Center or institute directors will be notified within one week by the Associate Vice President for Research Operations (AVPRO) of the Provost's or Vice President for Research and Innovation's decision.

- Incomplete applications will be returned to the submitting faculty member(s) with comments about what is needed for a complete application.

- If approved, the original copy of the proposal with approval signature shall be returned to the Provost's office, the Division of Research and Innovation, as well as to the appropriate college Dean(s). The approved center or institute shall then be added to the list of centers/institutes sent annually to the Chancellor's Office.
- The resubmission of a non-approved center or institute proposal is possible and will depend on the reasons for non-approval from the Dean's Council.

3. Policies

3.1 Fiscal Issues

- The director of a center or institute is responsible for the oversight of center/institute funds.
- A center or institute is not a legal entity and may not handle funds directly or open bank accounts in the name of the center or institute. The SDSU Research Foundation (SDSURF) shall handle external sources of funding. Center or institute directors should work with their SDSURF grants specialist and the SDSURF director of sponsored research administration to determine what type of fund should be established depending on the nature of external revenues. Center or institute directors should work with college resource managers for any stateside funding that may be provided to the center or institute.

3.2. Center or Institute Name Change

- Any substantive changes to a center or institute (e.g., name, location, focus, director(s), etc.) shall be submitted to the Dean(s) of the college(s) in which the center or institute resides. In the case of centers or institutes that involve several colleges, changes should be sent to all of the appropriate Deans.
- Recommendations for the change(s) will be made by the Dean's Council to the Provost (center or institute focused on education, and/or training, and/or community engagement) or to the Vice President for Research and Innovation (research centers or institutes). The Provost and/or the Vice President for Research and Innovation will make the final approval of the change.

4. Reporting

4.1. Annual Reports

- During the first week of November of each academic year, the AVPRO and the Vice Provost will send the directors of all approved SDSU centers or institutes a link to a brief annual report that will need to be completed before the last day of the fall semester.
- In accordance with [CSU Memorandum AA-2014-18](#), SDSU shall provide an annual list of all active, approved centers and institutes to the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research Initiatives and Partnerships for the purposes of updating the system-wide website.
- Contents of Annual Reports (these will be provided electronically to the Center/Institute Director) shall include:
 - The center/institute name.
 - Type of center/institute (e.g. research focused).
 - Director's (co-directors) name(s), including any leadership changes since the last annual report.

- A list of all SDSU faculty who have joined or left the center in the past year.
- Current web address (URL). Websites shall adhere to all SDSU cyber security requirements.
- A summary of center/institute activities for the previous 12 months. This could include relevant publications, art exhibits, performances, community outreach activities or new collaborations, grants/contracts secured, invited lectures, etc.
- College Deans will be provided with the annual reports for the centers and institutes in their respective colleges. This is informational only.
- Annual reports will be managed by the AVPRO and the Vice Provost.
- Failure to submit the required annual report may result in the termination of the Center/Institute (see section 4.3)

4.2. Center/Institute Periodic Reviews (5-year reports)

- At intervals of no more than five years, the Director of the center/institute shall provide a five-year report to the Dean(s) of the college(s) in which the center/institute resides.
 - In the first week of February of each academic year in which the periodic reports are due, the AVPRO and the Vice Provost will send report templates to the center and institute directors. Reports shall be submitted for review to the appropriate college Dean(s) by the first Monday of May.
 - The report shall include the following:
 - The history and mission of the center/institute (this only needs to be reported for the initial periodic review and does not need to be completed for subsequent reviews).
 - The contribution of the center/institute to the mission of the CSU, the college(s), and SDSU?
 - Faculty, student, and community member involvement.
 - An executive summary of the previous five years of annual reports. A summary of achievements, activities, and programs of the center or institute (past 5 years).
 - The financial status of the center or institute, including any extramural or intramural funding support.
 - Five-year plan for the center or institute, including plans for maintaining or enhancing fiscal stability.
 - Any changes to the original operating procedures, the organizational structure, or the mission of the center/institute.
 - Colleges shall provide a recommendation as to whether the center/institute shall continue, continue with stipulations or a recommendation of dissolution. The recommendation shall include a rationale(s) for the recommendation.
 - The college recommendation will be discussed by the Dean's Council and the Dean's Council will provide a final recommendation to continue, continue with stipulations, or a recommendation of dissolution to the Provost and Vice President for Research and Innovation.
 - Colleges shall develop and provide review processes and criteria to center and institute directors concerning the continuation or dissolution of the center/institute.
 - The Provost and Vice President for Research and Innovation will make the final decision as to the continuation or dissolution of a center or institute.

4.3. Dissolution or Discontinuation of a Center/Institute

- Failure to submit an annual report or periodic review may lead to the dissolution of a center/institute.
- The Provost and the Vice President for Research and Innovation will provide in writing, the decision to discontinue a center or institute to the center/institute director(s) as well as the Dean(s) of the appropriate college(s).
 - A decision to discontinue a center or institute can be appealed by writing a formal appeal to the Provost (center or institute focused on education, and/or training, and/or community engagement) or the Vice President for Research and Innovation (research center or institute) with copies to the Dean(s) of the appropriate colleges(s).
 - Appeals will be reviewed by the Dean's Council. A disposition of the appeal shall be provided to the center or institute director(s) one week following the Dean's Council meeting.
- A request to discontinue a center or institute should be initiated by the center or institute director(s) by submitting a memo to the appropriate college Dean(s). The memo should include the reason for the discontinuation request. The college Dean(s) shall then notify the Vice Provost and AVPRO of the request.
- *A discontinued center/institute can be reinstated only upon submission of a new proposal and following the same procedure for review of a new center/institute.*

Attachment A

Please use the following definitions of an Institute and a Center to determine the appropriate naming convention for your proposed organizational unit and for use in your application document.

Center. Centers are organized units that can serve to foster research/scholarship, public service, and/or teaching and focus on a specific topic, issue, or goal. The focus of a center is much narrower than the focus of an institute. (e.g., studying the effect of food insecurity on learning in children and adolescents as opposed to studying food insecurity or providing training to educators who work with children who are food insecure). Centers may require the efforts of faculty, staff, and/or students from multiple departments, schools, or colleges at SDSU as well as collaborative institutions. Centers may provide a vehicle for interdisciplinary research, interprofessional education, or external partnerships with agencies who are interested in a similar topic or goal. Centers can serve as a link between academic and professional communities.

Institutes. Institutes are organized units that serve for the coordination and promotion of faculty interests that are broad (e.g., a research focus on food insecurity or a focus on working with community partners to reduce food insecurity in San Diego County) and serve to foster research/scholarship, public service and/or teaching. The scope of projects within an institute goes beyond the boundaries of a department, school, college, or university and is inherently interdisciplinary. Like a center, an institute can also serve as a link between academic and professional communities. Institutes are composed of an interdisciplinary group of faculty, students, and other professionals. Research conducted by an institute could lead to public service activities or programs that help advance the goals of an institution.

Attachment B

This checklist was developed to help you track the required components of a new center or institute proposal.

1. Type of center or institute (research center/institute or center or institute focused on education, and/or training, and/or community engagement).
2. The name of the new center or institute (see Attachment A for guidance on what distinguishes a center from an institute).
3. The purpose or mission of the center or institute.
4. Description of how the center or institute aligns with the mission and strategic priorities of SDSU, the college(s), and the academic unit(s) involved.
5. Preliminary research agenda for the center or institute (research centers/institutes only).
6. Organizational structure and operating procedures of the center or institute.
7. A list of the principal faculty members and staff involved from SDSU and other institutions (if applicable).
8. Description and detailed budget of the center or institute.
9. A description of whether space is needed for the center or institute. If space is needed, provide a description of the space that is needed for the center or institute.
10. Letter(s) of endorsement from Deans, Chairs, Directors at SDSU or appropriate administrator(s) from partner institutions.