

Establishment, Review, and Disestablishment of Core Facilities at UC Merced
Approved by the Committee on Research (COR) on May 1, 2018

I. Introduction

A *core facility* is a broadly-accessible, shared research facility that provides access to academic resources, technologies, training, and high quality scientific services. Instruments that are too costly to maintain in the laboratories of individual faculty members and that could benefit many different research groups are particularly well suited for housing in a core facility. Services at these facilities are commonly delivered by trained experts, often on a fee-for-service basis. Core facilities are typically professionally managed operations with a sustainable business plan, following standards for best practices in facility management and operations. Core facilities serve a broad user base in order to enable and enhance the research mission of UC Merced.

Core facilities may be created for a variety of reasons. A core facility may be established as a pilot program in a strategic area, where institutional support may be provided for a specified period of time. Such a facility may be the result of an extramural funding award. It may originate as a line item in a governmental budget. It may be funded by philanthropy. It may be fabricated by a group of scholars, focusing on a research theme of mutual interest, even in cases in which the facility does not require substantial financial resources. Providing instrumentation important to a modern research university, even without a large user base, could also be a goal of a core facility.

II. Purpose and Scope

These procedures describe the steps required to establish, review, and disestablish a core facility that is not affiliated with, or located within, an Organized Research Unit. Core facilities may be established within a department, a school, or a campus-wide center. They may also be established as independent campus-wide entities, reporting to the Office of Research & Economic Development. Each such facility will be reviewed every five years, according to a schedule determined by the Vice-Chancellor of the Office of Research & Economic Development (VCORED).

III. Authority and Coordination

A. The authority to establish a core facility rests with the administrative head of the unit proposed to house the core facility, after consultation with appropriate representatives of the Academic Senate. Core facilities to be housed within a department may be established by the department chair, after consultation with the department faculty (as guided by departmental policy). Core facilities to be housed within a school may be established by the school dean, after

Revisions approved by Divisional Council on May 6, 2025.

Revised and approved by Committee on Research on February 24, 2025.

Approved by Committee on Research on May 1, 2018.

consultation with the school's executive committee. Core facilities to be housed within a campus-wide center may be established by the center director, after consultation with the campus Committee on Research. Independent campus-wide core facilities may be established by the Provost, after consultation with the Division of the Academic Senate. Those with the authority to establish a core facility also have the authority to disestablish a core facility, after consultation, following the procedures described later in this policy.

- B. For a core facility housed within a department, the department chair acts as the coordinator for the evaluation of proposals to establish or disestablish the core facility. For a core facility housed within a school, the school dean acts as the coordinator for the evaluation of proposals to establish or disestablish the core facility. For an independent core facility or one housed within a campus-wide center, the VCORED acts as the coordinator for the evaluation of proposals to establish or disestablish the core facility.
- C. Core facilities are to be reviewed at five-year intervals. For a core facility housed within a department, the department chair is responsible for initiating and conducting reviews in collaboration with the Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC). For a core facility housed within a school, the school dean is responsible for initiating and conducting reviews in collaboration with PROC. For an independent core facility or one housed within a campus-wide center, the VCORED is responsible for initiating and conducting reviews in collaboration with the Academic Senate and in consultation with PROC. A review may result in a proposal to disestablish a core facility. Reviews shall be conducted in accordance with established guidelines. (See Appendix 2.)

IV. Procedure for Establishment

Establishment within a Department, School, or Center

Proposals to establish a core facility within a department or a school are prepared and evaluated according to the policies and procedures of the department or school. Similarly, proposals to establish a core facility within a campus-wide center are prepared and evaluated according to the policies and procedures of the center. The decision to establish a core facility within a department, school, or campus-wide center should be communicated to the Provost, the VCORED, PROC, and the Division of the Academic Senate.

The remainder of this section addresses independent campus-wide core facilities.

A. Proposal Initiation and Early Consultation

Revisions approved by Divisional Council on May 6, 2025.

Revised and approved by Committee on Research on February 24, 2025.

Approved by Committee on Research on May 1, 2018.

A proposal for the establishment of a core facility may be made by faculty who are members of the Academic Senate or by a dean. (See Appendix 1A.) If proposed by faculty, relevant department chairs and deans should be consulted prior to the formal submission of the proposal. Written endorsements from relevant department chairs and deans should be solicited and collected. If the initiator is a dean, she or he should consult the VCORED prior to the formal submission of the proposal. To streamline Senate review, the proposer should also consult with Committee on Research prior to the formal submission.

B. Submission of the Proposal

The proposal, along with endorsements, should be submitted to the VCORED. While proposals may be submitted at any time, the VCORED may delay the evaluation of an establishment proposal until the month of September of the upcoming academic year, allowing for the consideration of proposals in the light of limited resources. Upon receipt of a proposal, the VCORED shall communicate to the relevant faculty and dean(s) the planned date for initiating the evaluation of the proposal.

C. Proposal Evaluation

1. The VCORED sends a copy of the proposal to the Chair of the Division of the Academic Senate and also to the Provost.
2. The proposal is distributed for comment to the appropriate Academic Senate committees (i.e., Committee on Research (lead committee), Graduate Council, CAPRA, and, optionally, other committees such as Undergraduate Council, depending on the nature of the proposed core facility) and to any department chair(s) or dean(s) directly affected by the potential allocation, as part of core facility establishment, of personnel, space, and equipment. Comments on the proposal are solicited from these entities.
3. Establishment of a core facility must carry with it a commitment of resources adequate to the mission of the facility. Thus, the budget associated with a core facility proposal shall be evaluated by the UC Merced Budget Committee.
4. Based on comments from all consulted entities, the VCORED provides a recommendation concerning establishment to the Provost. In cases of disagreement about whether to establish a core facility, the Provost shall consult with the Chair of the Division of the Academic Senate in hopes of reaching a consensus. However, the Provost retains final authority over the decision to approve establishment of a new core facility.

Revisions approved by Divisional Council on May 6, 2025.

Revised and approved by Committee on Research on February 24, 2025.

Approved by Committee on Research on May 1, 2018.

D. Final Action Notification

The VCORED notifies the proposal initiators of the final establishment decision and informs the Provost, all relevant department chair(s) and dean(s), and the Chair of the Division of the Academic Senate. The VCORED also communicates the official date of establishment, which may be delayed until the start of the next fiscal year.

V. Procedure for Five-Year Review

A. Review of a Core Facility within a Department or School

It is the responsibility of a department chair to ensure that reviews are conducted for each core facility housed within the department at proper intervals. (See Appendix 2.) The department chair, in coordination with PROC, shall initiate a review of each such core facility every five years. The review procedures are established by PROC and may be augmented by departmental policy.

It is the responsibility of a dean to ensure that reviews are conducted for each core facility housed within the school at proper intervals. (See Appendix 2.) The dean, in coordination with PROC, shall initiate a review of each such core facility every five years. The review procedures are established by PROC and may be augmented by school policy.

The remainder of this section describes procedures for the review of independent core facilities and those housed within campus-wide centers.

B. Review Initiation

Five-year reviews for campus-wide core facilities are initiated by the VCORED, in consultation with the Academic Senate Committee on Research (COR). Upon initiation, the VCORED shall meet with the leadership of the core facility in order to describe the review process.

C. Self-Review Report

Within six months after initiation, the leadership of the core facility shall produce and deliver to the VCORED a self-review report. The self-review report should address the core facility's original purpose, history, current status (including challenges), accomplishments during the review period, use of resources during the review period, and plans for the future. A description of the expected contents of the self-review report is provided in Appendix 2C.

D. Review Committee

The VCORED appoints faculty members to form a review committee for the core facility, with members drawn from a slate nominated by COR. Review committees consist of at least three individuals. The VCORED may appoint at most one member from outside of the slate provided by COR. The COR slate must contain at least five nominations. Review committees may have one or more members with appointments at another UC campus or from outside of the University.

E. Review Committee Report

The review committee is charged with promptly preparing a report on the past activities and future utility of the core facility, including comments on the self-review document prepared by the leadership of the core facility. Prior to preparing this report, the review committee may request meetings with relevant stakeholders, and such meetings will be coordinated by the VCORED so as to be maximally efficient and convenient, with the schedule assembled at the discretion of the VCORED. Justification for continuation of a core facility must be documented carefully by the review committee. The review committee is charged with the task of producing its report within six months of being provided with the core facility self-review document. The review committee report shall be delivered to the VCORED for further consideration.

The VCORED should provide the review committee's report to the leadership of the core facility for comment. The leadership of the core facility is granted a month to provide comments on the review committee report. Accompanied by these responsive comments and the core facility's self-review document, the review committee's report shall then be distributed for comment to the appropriate Academic Senate committee(s), with COR playing the role of lead committee.

F. Final Evaluation and Notification

Based upon consideration of all solicited materials and comments, the VCORED produces an evaluation statement. The evaluation statement should clearly indicate if the VCORED approves the continuation of the core facility or if the VCORED recommends the disestablishment of the core facility. An evaluation statement recommending disestablishment is taken to be a formal proposal for disestablishment, and this proposal is processed according to the procedures described later in this policy. An evaluation statement approving continuation may specify required changes to the core facility, including changes to core facility leadership (including directors and members of executive or advisory committees) or changes to the faculty membership, if such exists for the core facility. Budgetary changes, particularly involving funding from campus sources, may also be required.

Revisions approved by Divisional Council on May 6, 2025.

Revised and approved by Committee on Research on February 24, 2025.

Approved by Committee on Research on May 1, 2018.

The VCORED is charged to produce an evaluation statement within one month following the receipt of comments from the Division of the Academic Senate. Once produced, the evaluation statement should be promptly communicated to the core facility leadership, the Provost, all relevant department chair(s) and dean(s), and the Chair of the Division of the Academic Senate.

VI. Procedure for Disestablishment

A. Initiating a Proposal for Disestablishment

A proposal to disestablish a core facility may be initiated by the leadership of the core facility or by any department chair, dean, or campus-wide center director overseeing the core facility. (See Appendix 1B.) A proposal to disestablish a core facility may also be initiated by the VCORED. Such a proposal may be made at any time, and it may arise from the evaluation statement produced by the VCORED as a part of a five-year review of the core facility. (See Appendix 2.) The VCORED receives proposals for the disestablishment of a core facility.

B. Review

A proposal for disestablishment of a core facility shall be presented by the VCORED to the Chair of the Division of the Academic Senate with a request for review. Comments shall be solicited and collected from appropriate committees of the Division of the Academic Senate, with COR typically playing the role of lead committee. If the disestablishment of the core facility would affect staff or student employment, the VCORED should also consult with Human Resources, the Graduate Division, and other relevant units.

C. Proposal Evaluation and Notification

Upon receipt of all requested comments, the VCORED shall consider all available materials and decide to approve or disapprove of the proposal. If the VCORED decides to disapprove of the proposal, the core facility remains in operation, and this result should be promptly communicated, along with an explanation for the decision, to the core facility leadership, all affected faculty members and researchers, the Provost, all relevant department chair(s) and dean(s), and the Chair of the Division of the Academic Senate. If the VCORED approves of the disestablishment of the core facility, this recommendation shall be promptly communicated to the Provost, along with all assembled materials concerning the proposal. The Provost has the sole authority to disestablish a core facility, regardless of the unit in which it is housed. The final decision of the Provost shall be promptly communicated, along with a statement explaining the rationale for the choice, to the core facility leadership, all affected faculty members and researchers, the Provost,

Revisions approved by Divisional Council on May 6, 2025.

Revised and approved by Committee on Research on February 24, 2025.

Approved by Committee on Research on May 1, 2018.

all relevant department chair(s) and dean(s), and the Chair of the Division of the Academic Senate.

Revisions approved by Divisional Council on May 6, 2025.
Revised and approved by Committee on Research on February 24, 2025.
Approved by Committee on Research on May 1, 2018.

Appendix 1

Proposal Formats for the Establishment or Disestablishment of a Core Facility

A. Proposal Format for the Establishment of a Core Facility

The proposal must contain the following material:

1. Proposed name of the core facility
2. Initiator's name(s), positions, and contact information
3. Description of and rationale for establishment of the core facility that should also address:
 - a. the value and capabilities that will be added by establishment of the new facility, and
 - b. the benefit of the proposed facility to academic programs and graduate education and training.
4. Mission statement of the core facility
5. Proposed date of establishment
6. The proposed organizational structure of the core facility, including detailed descriptions of leadership roles such as a director or executive/advisory committees. This is best communicated by a set of bylaws for the core facility.
7. Name(s) of the proposed initial leader(s) of the core facility
8. Names and home departments of faculty members who will participate in the core facility's activities, along with a letter of agreement from each such faculty member
9. Budget estimates for the first year of operation, projections for the four years following, and anticipated sources of funding, both internal and external
10. Space and equipment needs and how they will be met for the first year, along with realistic projections of future space needs
11. Other resource needs, such as capital equipment and library resources, and a detailed description of how these needs will be met for the first year, along with realistic projections of future resource needs
12. A list of similar facilities that exist at UC Merced and a description of the contributions that the proposed facility may be anticipated to make beyond those provided by existing facilities

The proposal should describe the following:

1. The proposed core facility's goals and objectives, long- and short-term, with time-lines for achievement
2. Evaluation criteria to be used during subsequent five-year reviews

Revisions approved by Divisional Council on May 6, 2025.

Revised and approved by Committee on Research on February 24, 2025.

Approved by Committee on Research on May 1, 2018.

B. Proposal Format for the Disestablishment of a Core Facility

The proposal should include:

1. The name of the core facility and its current leader(s)
2. Initiator(s) of the proposed action, positions, and contact information
3. Names of core facility faculty participants, if applicable, and written documentation of their support for disestablishment or the lack of such support
4. Reason for disestablishment
5. Effective date of disestablishment
6. Effect, if any, on staff and students, and the disposition of affected positions
7. Effect, if any, on any established academic programs
8. Proposed disposition of core facility equipment/inventory, if applicable

The evaluation statement produced by the VCORED as the result of a core facility five-year review may substitute for this document.

Revisions approved by Divisional Council on May 6, 2025.

Revised and approved by Committee on Research on February 24, 2025.

Approved by Committee on Research on May 1, 2018.

Appendix 2

Periodic Review of a Campus-Wide Core Facility

- A. Campus-wide core facilities are reviewed every five years for their effectiveness, quality, and appropriateness, according to the evaluation criteria stated in the establishment proposal or previous review reports, as well as other applicable academic review standards. Should a change in goals and evaluation criteria be made by a core facility in the period between reviews, the core facility leadership must provide to the VCORED and the Committee on Research, in writing, the revised evaluation criteria and rationale for the change.

- B. Six months prior to the scheduled review, the VCORED requests from the core facility leadership a self-review report which describes the core facility's activities, assesses its achievements in relation to the established goals and evaluation criteria, documents its budget performance, and justifies the core facility's continuance, providing new goals and evaluation criteria.

- C. The self-review report should contain the following information:
 - 1. The core facility's original purpose, present functioning, accomplishments (e.g., publications, grants, new collaborations, number of users, and educational/outreach activities associated with the facility), future plans, and continuing development
 - 2. Assessment of the adequacy of space and other resources
 - 3. Statement on the core facility's success in meeting previously established objectives, planned changes in program objectives, and planned steps to achieve new objectives
 - 4. Review of the effectiveness of core facility leadership and the participation of the membership of any executive committee or advisory committee
 - 5. Explicit budget information, including amounts and sources of all funds and expenditures, and an assessment of whether the budget is adequate and appropriate to support the facility's mission

- D. The process for conducting the five-year review of a campus-wide core facility is further described in Section V of this document. The result is an evaluation statement penned by the VCORED, specifying if the VCORED approves the continuation of the core facility or if the VCORED recommends the disestablishment of the core facility. An evaluation statement recommending disestablishment is taken as a proposal. Only the Provost is empowered to disestablish a core facility, following the process described in Section VI of this document. An evaluation statement approving continuation may specify required changes to the core facility, including changes to core facility leadership (including directors and members of executive or advisory committees) or changes to the faculty membership, if such exists for the core facility. Budgetary changes, particularly involving funding from campus sources, may also be

Revisions approved by Divisional Council on May 6, 2025.

Revised and approved by Committee on Research on February 24, 2025.

Approved by Committee on Research on May 1, 2018.

required.

Sources:

<http://research.ucdavis.edu/research/core-facilities-services/program-description/>

Policies and Procedures for Centralized Research Units (CRU) – Approved by GRC on 5/20/09

Establishment of Centers_Final_12.16.14_Provost.doc

Revisions approved by Divisional Council on May 6, 2025.

Revised and approved by Committee on Research on February 24, 2025.

Approved by Committee on Research on May 1, 2018.