

Samford University

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<u>Applicable to:</u>	All Units
<u>Responsibility for Administration:</u>	Provost/Executive Vice President
<u>Title:</u>	Academic Centers and Institutes

I. **Definitions**

An *Academic Center* is a formal designation of an educational support unit that ordinarily has a focused teaching, learning and/or scholarship mission, clearly defined objectives, and sponsors programs or provides services that fall outside the routine duties or mission of an academic department. A non-academic center is a center that has a focused mission, clearly defined objectives, and sponsors programs or provides services outside the routine duties or mission of an academic department.

An *Institute* is an educational support unit that ordinarily has a broader mission and a more complex interdisciplinary and/or research focus than a center.

II. **Scope**

This policy and procedure provides for the establishment, review, and termination of academic centers and institutes at Samford University. When the scope of a unit is limited to the disciplines represented within a single academic department, or to one or more academic departments within a single school, it will normally operate under the direct supervision of a department head, dean, or center/institute director. When the unit's scope includes more than one college or school, the provost/executive vice president (EVP) or his/her designee will be the direct supervisor.

III. **Criteria for Establishment of a Center/Institute**

The establishment of a new academic center/institute requires careful deliberation that includes an evaluation and justification of need and the potential for making a meaningful contribution. The following issues are relevant to these deliberations during the planning process:

- The center/institute should provide new resources/benefits to the University.
- The activities of an institute should ordinarily involve individuals from more than one discipline and/or school.
- The center/institute should involve multiple individuals and be broad in scope.

IV. **Proposal for Establishment of a Center/Institute**

The proposal for establishing a new academic center/institute should provide information regarding the following:

- **Name of Center/Institute:** This name should describe as best as possible the unique function(s) of the center/institute, and should not overlap or be similar to the name of an existing unit.
- **Benchmarking:** A brief description of similar centers/institutes at other universities should be provided.
- **Advance Efforts:** Efforts towards the center/institute's development should be delineated including funding sources, internal and external partners etc.
- **Center/Institute Director:** The name and contact information of the faculty or staff member who will provide leadership to the center/institute, and a brief description of his/her qualifications.

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- Mission: The mission statement should clearly describe the purpose for establishing this center/institute and its relationship to the University mission and strategic plan. Explain how this mission is unique and distinct from that of other units.
- Goals: Delineate what the center/institute expects to accomplish. The outcomes should be clear and their impact should be measurable. Clearly justify how the center/institute will enhance teaching, learning and/or scholarship at the University.
- Budget: Provide details of the amount, source and availability of funds required for the operation of the center/institute. If the funds are not already available, explain and justify the source of additional funds that will be required to operate the proposed center/institute. Clearly delineate the resources that will be necessary for the sustainability of the center/institute, and the plans for obtaining them. Reallocation of resources must be clearly delineated.
- Faculty/Staff: Provide a listing of all faculty and/or staff that will be associated with the center/institute. Include their title and a brief listing of their responsibilities and contributions to the center/institute and percentage of time they will contribute.
- Space: Identify the space needs of the center/institute. Identify if this space is available and if not, what the plans are for identifying appropriate space.
- Organizational chart: Provide an organizational chart. As a part of the chart, confirm that all impacted units (departments and/or schools/colleges) are familiar with the plans for establishing the center/institute and supportive of the proposal. Letters of support from these units are the appropriate means of conveying this information.

V. Procedure for Establishing an Academic Center/Institute

The establishment of a new center/institute requires the following procedure to be followed:

- Individual (s) interested in establishing a center/institute should first discuss their plans with their department chair/head and dean to obtain their support.
- The individual(s) should complete the Academic Center/Institute Approval documentation. See criteria discussed in Section IV above.
- The center/institute director should forward the completed document to the dean of the proposing school/college for approval. Where multiple schools/colleges are involved, all the deans of these schools/colleges must support the establishment of the center/institute. Letter(s) of support from the dean(s) of the collaborating school(s)/college(s) should be submitted as a part of the proposal.
- Once approved by the dean(s), the document should be forwarded to the deans' council and faculty senate for review.
- Proposal sent to provost/executive vice president for approval.
- Final approval will be sought from the board of trustees.

VI. Reports and Reviews

On an annual basis, the center/institute director will submit to their respective supervisor and to Samford's assessment site, their assessment report which includes a summary of the center's accomplishments, challenges, departmental goals, and if appropriate one or more student learning outcomes.

All centers/institutes will undergo an intensive review on a five-year cycle to determine their contribution to the university's mission. The criteria used for evaluating academic centers/institutes will be the following (from the time the unit was approved or last reviewed):

- A copy of the Academic Center/Institute Approval documentation.
- Effectiveness of the center/institute in meeting the goals that were stated in the approval documentation. This statement should include a citation and evaluation of the products (e.g. publications, patents, works of creative art, and other outcomes) and activities offered by the center/institute.

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- The ways in which the center/institute has enhanced the teaching, learning and/or scholarly reputation of the university. Examples include a listing of conferences/workshops hosted on or off campus; keynote addresses and invited presentations at state, regional or national meetings, service on national panels and other significant contributions made by the members of the center/institute.
- The extent of internal and external funding (from state, federal, foundation or other sources) obtained by the center/institute since it was last approved or reviewed.
- Other contributions relevant to the mission of the center/institute.

The provost/executive vice president or his/her designee in Academic Affairs will develop a schedule identifying the academic year in which each center/institute will be reviewed. Each center/institute will have at least one year to prepare for the review. The center/institute will prepare a self-study that addresses the above criteria and submit the report to the supervisor, the provost/executive vice president and other appropriate individuals for review. An external peer reviewer may also be employed in the review process. Upon completion of the review, one of the following recommendations will be made: (1) approval for another five year term; (2) approval with conditions - deficiencies identified must be rectified in the prescribed time period or the center/institute will be discontinued; (3) restructure the center/institute; or (4) discontinue the center/institute. The provost/executive vice president will inform the dean(s), department chair/head(s), and center/institute director of his/her recommendations.

VII. Procedure for Elimination of an Academic Center/Institute

If, on the basis of an annual or five-year program review by the provost/executive vice president, a decision is made to reduce a unit's funding or to discontinue its operation, the appropriate administrators will be notified of this decision and be given at least 60 days to respond.

Units will be discontinued when one or more of the following conditions are met:

- There is no longer a compelling need for their services
- Goals for external support have not been achieved
- Qualified staff are no longer available
- Center/institute no longer financially viable
- Serious mismanagement or malfeasance has occurred.

The phasing-out of a center/institute will follow the below process.

- The provost/executive vice president will inform the dean(s), faculty senate, relevant department chair/head(s), and center/institute director of his/her recommendations to discontinue the unit.
- The dean(s), department chair/head(s), and/or center/institute director will have 60 days to develop an orderly plan to phase-out the unit.
- A discussion of the phase-out plan should involve the dean(s), department chair/head(s), center/institute director, provost/executive vice-president, vice president for business affairs, and other relevant individuals.
- A final phase-out plan and timeline should be documented.
- The provost/executive vice president will notify the board of trustees of the unit's proposed discontinuance and request their approval.