Application for University-Level Research Institute or Center

Research-related Institutes and Centers (RICs) are an important part of VCU’s overall research mission. Before applying for creation or renewal of a RIC, please read the policy governing RICs, found at: https://bit.ly/RICpolicy. The critical components include:

- RICs can be either unit-level or university-level. Unit-level RICs report to the chief administrator of the unit, typically a dean. University-level RICs report to the VPRI and are supported in part by OVPRI staff and funding. This application is only for university-level RICs.
- University-level RICs must:
  - Have a mission that aligns with VCU Strategic Research Priorities Plan (https://research.vcu.edu/about/strategic-research-priorities-plan/) AND be multidisciplinary, across multiple academic units, and beyond the scope of what can be accomplished by an individual department, school, or college.
  - Have a plan for financial stability and external funding. We are specifically encouraging the submission of center-type, multi-investigator awards.

Please address the following aspects of the proposed university-level RIC.

Assemble the final application as a single pdf file and email it to: jjryan@vcu.edu

If you have questions about the application, please contact John Ryan, Assoc. VP for Research Development, jjryan@vcu.edu

1. **Mission and Vision statements:** Provide short (1-3 sentence) mission and vision statements that are suitable for display on the OVPRI website.

2. **RIC aims and goals.** (Limit: 2 pages) Describe the aims of the RIC and how these will add value to the university’s strategic goals. Specifically, address how the RIC will:
   - Contribute to the national and international prominence of VCU as a research university
   - Enhance interdepartmental and inter school/college interactions and collaborations leading to significant multi-investigator awards
   - Promote strategic initiatives that expand the university’s research enterprise
   - Improve research quality and research productivity
   - Create a mentoring environment for faculty that augments and extends what is provided by individual departments
   - Provide unique educational opportunities for faculty, students, and trainees - including those from underrepresented backgrounds
   - Play a significant role in transferring science into practice and/or impacting policies and regulations

   Your application may also address other assets the RIC could provide, such as how it will:
   - Develop and maintain core facilities or services that promote and support research
   - Play a significant role in recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty
   - Build partnerships and alliances between the university and local, state, national, and international communities

3. **Scope and value:** (limit: 1 page) Provide the rationale for seeking university-level status instead of establishing a unit-level RIC. Explain how the interdisciplinary collaboration of individual researchers under the proposed RIC will potentially result in outcomes greater than those that could be realized from the researchers’ individual efforts. Describe similar entities and how the proposed RIC differs from or might be consolidated with these groups.
4. **Organizational structure, operations, and governance:** (limit: 1 page) Describe the organizational structure and general operations plan. Include your plan to address the university’s mission for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Please specifically address:
   a. The rationale for selecting the RIC director and description and justification of term limits. Describe the evaluation criteria and process for assessing the performance and efficacy of the selected RIC director.
   a. A description of the roles and responsibilities of the director and any other administrators (e.g., assistant director).
   b. How membership for RIC faculty is defined and monitored, with clear guidelines for promoting diversity and inclusivity. Membership should be demonstrated by prior evidence of synergistic collaboration between faculty members, or plans for future collaborations (publications, collaboration on a sponsored research project, etc.).

5. **Measurable outcomes and timeline:** (limit: 1 page) Provide specific activities to be undertaken, measurable outcomes, and a timeline for the stages of development over the first five years. The proposal must include the projected number of faculty members and trainees who are expected to participate in the RIC during this time as well as a plan for obtaining extramural funding.

6. **Resources and sustainability plan:** (limit: 1 page) Explain the funding plan and outline the resources needed (including personnel and space) for the initial five-year period of the RIC. All units involved with a RIC (schools/colleges, departments, etc.) are expected to have an investment in the work of the RIC. Examples of investments include funding commitment, protected time, decreased teaching responsibilities, facilities, space, and administrative support. These are important to demonstrate sustainability and solvency, preferably through the submission of Memoranda of Understanding from the RIC’s key stakeholders with the application.

7. **Provide evidence of past productivity/synergy of the RIC (if renewing) or the proposed group of investigators (for new applications):** It is very important that the reviewers can clearly see that the group of faculty involved are from more than one academic unit (i.e. report to more than one dean. Using a table or spreadsheet format, provide a summary of outcomes the proposed or current RIC has supported over the past 3 years. These can include a list of co-authored publications, extramural funding applications with co-investigators (indicate outcome of the application), intellectual property with co-inventors (e.g. patents applied for or received), and other important products coming from this group.

For renewing RICS only: The committee is seeking an understanding of how the RIC has led to the generation of these products. To assist the committee please score each product in the table/spreadsheet with a letter designation as follows:

“A”: Products whose creation was not possible without support and collaboration through the RIC

“B”: Products whose creation benefitted from but was not completely dependent on the RIC

“C”: Products whose creation were incidental to the RIC but involved participating members