

## ***Quick Reference Guide:***

### ***Best Practices for Establishing, Managing, and Reviewing Centers and Institute at U-M***

#### **1. Assessing the Need and Strategic Fit**

- **Discuss with Leadership:** Faculty should consult with deans and senior administrators.
  - Determine which category the proposed unit falls under, influencing strategic discussions and documentation needed.
    - Category 1: Broad university impact, requiring presidential approval.
    - Category 2: School/College-specific focus, needing school/college-level approval.
- **Prepare Documentation:** Provide a clear mission, goals, and explain strategic alignment with the School/College University.
- **Identify Faculty Leadership:** Assemble a committed faculty team.
- **Financial Plan:** Outline a strategy for external funding (e.g., philanthropy, sponsored research).
- **Positioning:** Highlight the center's unique contribution to emerging fields.
- **Governance Model:** Establish governance structures in line with the proposed category.

#### **2. Proposed Unit Criteria**

- **Strategic Alignment:** Ensure alignment with University goals.
  - Tailor criteria based on category classification to ensure alignment (e.g., interdisciplinary scope for Category 1, school/college-centric focus for Category 2, specific research focus for Category 3).
- **Unmet Need:** Address gaps not covered by existing entities.
- **Leadership and Funding Strategy:** Secure commitments, faculty leadership and external funding plans relative to category needs.
  - Category 3: Emphasize dependence on external research funding.
- **Support Commitments:** Obtain internal support commitments until external funding is in place. Address if commitments affect classification and approval level (i.e., internal commitments for School/College Centers).

#### **3. Required Documentation**

- Business plans and bylaws should reflect the category-specific governance and operational protocols
  - **Business Plan Template:** Include a detailed business and financial plan.
  - **Bylaws:** Provide a governance and organizational bylaws template.

#### **4. Regental Approval (if needed)**

- Contact the [Office of the Provost](#) to determine if Board of Regents approval is required.
  - Category 1: Typically requires extensive approval, often at the presidential level.
  - Categories 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 may have less stringent approval paths, focusing on the alignment with funding sources or external affiliations.

#### **5. Management and Reporting**

- **Biennial review processes:** Should include checks against category-specific goals and metrics (e.g., financial sustainability crucial for Categories 3 and 4, operational efficiency for Category 5).
  - **Annual Review:** Submit reports detailing achievements, challenges, budget, space use, staffing, faculty activity, and student involvement.
  - **Metrics:** Track funding, space, staffing, operational effectiveness, teaching impact, research productivity, and external visibility.

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### **6. Tracking and Categorization**

- **Implement financial identifiers and track according to the defined categories.**
  - **Financial Identifier:** Track institutes and centers with a unique identifier, using categories (e.g., University Center, School/College Center, Sponsored Research Center) to define scope and oversight. Ensure that the identifier system accounts for the classification of centers, assisting in tracking approval requirements and operational oversight.
- **Category Descriptions:** Address and provide detailed criteria for each category.
  - Category 1: University Center or Institute
    - Broadly interdisciplinary and inter-institutional, advancing teaching, research, and service activities across multiple units at U-M.
  - Category 2: School/College Center
    - Single-school/college focus on specific, significant academic areas, supporting its strategic goals.
  - Category 3: Sponsored Research Center
    - Dependent on external research grants, with a focus on specific research objectives.
  - Category 4: Faculty Member Center
    - Centered around an individual faculty member's expertise, often linked to recruitment or retention efforts.
  - Category 5: Administrative Center
    - Provides support for teaching and research without conducting independent research.
  - Category 6: Agency Center
    - University-affiliated, but primarily managed by an external organization.

### **7. Periodic Comprehensive Review**

- **Five-Year Review:** Every five years, evaluate the unit's mission relevance, financial sustainability, and leadership performance.
  - Review Process: Conducted every five years by a committee of U-M faculty, selected for their expertise and familiarity with the center or institute; external reviewers may be included.
  - Report Content: Assesses mandate fulfillment, mission relevance, financial stewardship, structure, and leadership.
  - Submission: The committee submits its advisory report to the Dean for review and decision-making.

### **8. Sunsetting Process (if necessary)**

- **Closure Standards:** Consider closing centers if financial or strategic goals are not met.
- **Transition Planning:** Plan for staff transition, IT/data management, and resource redistribution if closing.