



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

Office of The Provost

Policies and Guidelines

Guidelines and Procedures for Establishing, Annual Reporting and Reviewing of Organized Research, Innovation and Creativity Units (ORICUs)

Office Responsible	The Associate Provost for Research
Last updated	December 2021
Reviewed and Recommended	The University Research Board
Approved	The Provost

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Research, innovation, and creativity are the key drivers of success for many of today's leading universities and are integral to global institution's ability to survive and thrive in a competitive environment. The Provost Office at The American University in Cairo, through the Office of Associate Provost for Research, Innovation and Creativity, seeks to facilitate the development of initiatives that cut across traditional disciplinary boundaries. One effective way to this end entails the creation of units at university that serve as links to different relevant constituencies such as civil society, other institutions of higher education and/or research, governmental entities, the private sector, and national, regional and international agencies. These units contribute to developing and supporting new fields of inquiry and scholarship, foster academic networks, support research, innovation and creativity at AUC involving multiple investigators and leading to high-impact outputs. These units are typically identified as centers, institutes, laboratories, etc. Collectively, these will be referred to as "Organized Research, Innovation and Creativity Units" (ORICUs).

i. Definition, Purpose and Authority

An Organized Research Innovation and Creativity Unit (ORICU) is an academic unit the university establishes to provide a supportive infrastructure for disciplinary, interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary research, creative endeavors, and/or services complementary to the academic goals of academic departments, and/or schools. An ORICU is expected to maintain significant intellectual assets and outcomes; to facilitate research and research collaborations; to disseminate research results through conferences, meetings and other mechanisms; to facilitate creative endeavors; to strengthen graduate and undergraduate education by providing students with training opportunities and access to facilities, community outreach and other community services; to secure external funding; to provide innovative and creative solutions through university and public service programs within the ORICU expertise.

ORICUs are established by the Provost after fulfilling the requirements and completing the procedures specified in this document. The chief officer of the ORICU has the title "Director". Directors are appointed by the school Dean, or Deans, under which the ORICU is established and the supervision of the ORICU's operations is conducted by the concerned school Dean, or Deans. The review of an ORICU, as specified in this document is overseen by the Associate Provost for Research Innovation and Creativity.

An ORICU is expected to be funded from external sources, with possible support from internal resources. In a typical fiscal year, at least 50% of an ORICU's total budget should be secured from external sources.

In this document, the term "intra-disciplinary" refers to research/creative endeavors conducted within one academic department. The terms "multi-disciplinary", "interdisciplinary", and "transdisciplinary" refer to research/creative endeavors conducted across academic departments whether within the same school or across different schools.

ii. Designation of ORICU

Units included in the directory of ORICUs can be referred to as Institutes and Centers, and sometimes, and for branding purposes, a center may be referred to as a lab to reflect a unique activity or service it provides. The Institute is the only ORICU that can offer an academic degree and must be multidisciplinary. Deciding on which ORICU to pursue depends on the type of expected intellectual outputs. AUC adopts the following definitions:

Institute: a degree-offering unit that consolidates diverse specializations and expertise by faculty members in order to undertake research/creative endeavors, and teaching activities stretching across different academic departments and/or schools. The unit may also engage in public service activities related to its stated mission and objectives.

Center: a unit, possibly falling entirely within an institute, between several academic departments, or within one academic department, which promotes research/creative endeavors either primarily, or as an outcome of another service it provides in its designated field. This unit can also be primarily engaged in different types of external public services.

iii. Establishing an ORICU

a) The proposal file

The formal proposal to establish a new ORICU is prepared by the concerned parties and should encompass the following information:

1. A proposed name of the new ORICU
2. A mission statement
3. A vision statement
4. The key strategic objectives of the ORICU with an indication of how these match those of the hosting academic department/school
5. The purpose of the ORICU's establishment, the scope of its operations, the type of intellectual and academic output that it will provide, as well as its primary beneficiaries. This should specify how the ORICU fits within the academic/intellectual ecosystem(s) of relevance and the gaps it aims to fill and/or address
6. The types of initiatives, activities, projects and/or functions the ORICU plans to perform
7. A short summary of the ORICU's projects and activities agenda, including brief descriptions of any funded and/or initial projects to be managed within the ORICU
8. A list of the principal faculty members involved, including director(s) and participating researchers, with the respective role of each, and a justification for the involvement of each
9. An organizational structure and governance, demonstrating the coherence of the ORICU's administrative structures, research/creative endeavors plans, and resources, for meeting the ORICU's stated mission and objectives.
10. How the organizational structure and governance align with those of the hosting academic department/school
11. Three years' budget projection, including evidence that at least 50% of the total budget of the first three years are secured from external funding

12. Details of specific startup requirements such as space, equipment, staff, faculty release time, etc.
13. Key performance indicators with specific targets
14. A sustainability plan - financial, institutional, administrative, academic, leadership, etc. - beyond the initial 3 years.
15. The added value to AUC, for example:
 - i. How the new ORICU will benefit AUC's academic standing
 - ii. How the new ORICU will impact AUC's international ranking
 - iii. How the new ORICU will to achieve a national/regional/international reputation
 - iv. Evidence of how the creation of the new ORICU will secure external funding
 - v. How the new ORICU crosses disciplinary boundaries and/or have a broad impact on AUC
 - vi. How the new ORICU will transform into a critical differentiating area at AUC
 - vii. How the new ORICU integrates research/creative endeavors and education, for example, how it contributes to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, undergraduate research, graduate research, etc.
 - viii. How the new ORICU creates differentiating research/creative endeavors opportunities

N.B. In case of institutes, any new academic programs offered by this ORICU will undergo the established proposal, evaluation and approval process at AUC.

b) Proposal evaluation and approvals

The Office of the Associate Provost for Research will check a submitted proposal for the correct and accurate designation of the ORICU, as well as for the completeness of the proposal. An incomplete proposal, or one where the ORICU is not correctly/accurately designated, will not be processed for evaluation.

Complete proposals with correct and accurate ORICU designation will be forwarded to the evaluating entities, as specified below, for it to be evaluated using the criteria specified in Appendix I.

Intra-disciplinary ORICUs:

1. The proposal is evaluated by the concerned academic department, with a separate recommendation provided by the department chair
2. The proposal, with the departmental evaluation and the chair's recommendation is then evaluated by the concerned school Dean
3. The proposal, with its evaluations, is then reviewed at the Office of the Associate Provost for Research, Innovation and Creativity, and is submitted to the University Research Board (URB) for a recommendation. The URB anonymously votes on and scores the proposal
4. The URB recommendation is then communicated to the Provost
5. The final approval of the proposal is a decision of the Provost after seeking feedback from the Provost Council
6. In case of a positive outcome, the Provost issues a letter addressed to the PI establishing

the ORICU, specifying the conditions for this establishment, and copying the concerned departmental chair and school dean.

Multi-disciplinary ORICUs:

1. The proposal is evaluated by the concerned school dean(s)
2. The proposal, with its evaluations, is then reviewed at the Office of the Associate Provost for Research, Innovation and Creativity, and is submitted to the University Research Board (URB) for a recommendation. The URB anonymously votes on and scores the proposal
3. The URB recommendation is then communicated to the Provost
4. The final approval of the proposal is a decision of the Provost after seeking feedback from the Provost Council
5. In case of a positive outcome, the Provost issues a letter addressed to the PI establishing the ORICU, specifying the conditions for this establishment, and copying the concerned departmental chair and school dean.

c) Appointing the ORICU Director and Advisory Board

The dean of the school where the ORICU is administratively hosted, and in consultation with other deans where necessary, appoints the ORICU director, after securing the endorsement from the Provost, and with consideration of the proposed director specified in the ORICU proposal. This school dean, and in consultation with other deans where necessary, will also appoint an advisory board. The advisory board will include at least three members external to AUC, with expertise relevant to the area of disciplinary focus of the ORICU and to the ORICU's mission and objectives. The board will also include the ORICU's director, and can include members of AUC's community of relevant experience. Membership of the board is for two years, renewable. The board assists the ORICU in applying its vision and mission, achieving its objectives, and enhancing its visibility. The board convenes at least once a year. It also reviews the ORICU's annual report.

Within the first quarter of the establishment of the ORICU, the ORICU's staff under the guidance of the director, is responsible for creating and maintaining an ORICU website, and for ensuring the site is added to the "Research Centers" web page. The ORICU is required to maintain its website regularly updated.

iv. ORICU Assessment and Review

The assessment of the ORICU is conducted annually to ensure it is operating as per approved plans. There is also a cycle review every three years to evaluate performance against planned activities. The cycle review will be used for the decision on the continuation of the ORICU. For the year of the cycle review, a review report will be prepared by the ORICU and submitted *in lieu* of the annual report.

a) Annual Report

On **June 1st** of every academic year, every ORICU is required to submit a progress report, and share it with the ORICU's advisory board for feedback. For the intra-disciplinary ORICUs, this is then submitted first to the concerned departmental chair for assessment, then moves to the concerned dean. For multi-disciplinary ORICUs this is submitted to the concerned dean(s) directly. The objective of this report is to reflect the ORICU's activities against its annual objectives and reflect operational effectiveness. Impediments to the ORICU's performance should be reported. The report should include the following:

1. List of all intellectual outputs, specifying the type(s) of outputs, with details of authors, and an indication of impact for each
2. Detailed accomplishments of the ORICU (Research, creative endeavors, services, etc.)
3. List of faculty members who have contributed to the ORICU's research/creative endeavors and/or its other activities and their specific contributions
4. List of students and other researchers directly members who have contributed to the ORICU's research/creative endeavors and/or its other activities and their specific contributions
5. List of non-faculty and non-student, professional, technical, administrative, and clerical personnel, with position titles of each
6. Annual funding from all sources
7. Annual expenditures, specifying the expenditure for administrative support, direct functional activities, and other specified use
8. KPIs and to what degree the respective targets were met
9. Description and justification for the amount of space occupied if different from the original plan.
10. List of major equipment purchased, where applicable
11. Any international cooperation that was established
12. Impediments faced, if any
13. Updated three-year plan with all resource requirements.

The annual report, with the assessment from the concerned department chair (where applicable) and the concerned dean(s), is then shared with the APRIC Office by **August 1st**. Any APRIC feedback is then provided to the concerned dean(s) by **October 1st**.

b) Annual assessment of the ORICU director

The annual assessment of the ORICU's director is conducted with the unit's annual assessment by the concerned dean(s). This entails an assessment of the performance of the director and his/her ability and/or skills in guiding the unit, and this in accordance to the unit's annual assessment criteria.

A cycle performance review of the director is conducted every four years by the relevant academic department chair where applicable, and the relevant school dean, and the decision for the renewal of the director's term is based on this cycle performance review.

c) ORICU Cycle Performance Reviews

A performance review of the activities of the ORICU should occur every six years, in order to ensure that the unit is achieving its objectives and whether there is solid justification for continuing, further developing, or the termination of operations.

A self-report is to be prepared by the ORICU director for this review. This report should address the following:

1. An overview and executive summary
 - a. Including a brief description and the main research focus of the ORICU (specifying the date of inception), the mission, vision, history, and describing any changes that have occurred from the original scope of the ORICU (if any)
 - b. A description of the ORICUs strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
 - c. A summary of the three years' performance against what was expected in the original plan
2. The ORICU's accomplishments over the three-year period
 - a. A thorough performance review with a reporting on the approved KPIs and targets
 - b. Overview of how the ORICUs work has demonstrated a value added to the AUC
 - c. Evidence of national and/or international reputation
 - d. List of major awards received and/or fostered by the ORICU
 - e. In case of Institutes or Research Centers:
 - i. Description of how the ORICU has contributed to fostering collaborative research at AUC
 - ii. specifying the type(s) of outputs, with details of authors, and an indication of impact for each
 - iii. Direct or indirect contributions of the ORICU to graduate and undergraduate teaching, learning and research
 - f. In case of creative /service centers:
 - i. New partnerships, including industrial partnerships where applicable
 - ii. Technology transfer information such as patents, licensing and/or IP disclosures
 - iii. Evidence of public service and outreach and contribution at the national and the international level
3. Institutionalization and benchmarking
 - a. Brief descriptions of similar ORICUs nationally/internationally
 - b. Ranking and/or other evaluative information, where available, indicating the relative position of the AUC ORICU
 - c. In case the ORICU was subject to peer evaluation as part of a national/international competition, provide relative rankings or scores, if available
4. The following components from the annual reports of the three-year period under review
 - a. List of faculty members who have contributed to the ORICU's research/creative endeavors and/or its other activities and their specific contributions
 - b. List of students and other researchers directly members who have contributed to the ORICU's research/creative endeavors and/or its other activities and their

- specific contributions
 - c. List of non-faculty and non-student, professional, technical, administrative, and clerical personnel, with position titles of each
 - d. Description and justification for the amount of space occupied if different from the original plan.
5. Financial Data
 - a. Annual funding from all sources for the three-year period being reviewed
 - b. Annual expenditures for the three-year period being reviewed, specifying the expenditure for administrative support, direct functional activities, and other specified use
 - c. Three-year budget comparison
 - d. Three-year budget projection
 6. Impediments and/or challenges to operations faced by the ORICU
 7. Justification for the continuation of the ORICU with the plans for the following three-year
 8. Review of the ORICU director
 - a. Description of the director's leadership and effectiveness
 - b. Description of the director's strengths and weaknesses
 - c. Description of the director's accomplishments

On **December 1st of year of the ORICU's Cycle Performance Review**, the ORICU director will submit this self-report to the chair of the academic department hosting the ORICU, where applicable, and to the relevant school dean(s) for evaluation.

The APRIC office oversees the review which is to be conducted by the URB. An audit may also be conducted on an ad-hoc basis. The URB will discuss the self-report with the ORICU's director, then will make recommendations on whether the ORICU is to continue as planned, make some changes, or terminate operations of the ORICU. Clear and well developed justification, referring to evidence from the ORICU self-report must be specified by the URB in its recommendations. These recommendations, together with the feedback from the concerned departmental chair where applicable, and relevant school dean(s), are presented to the Provost for a decision.

N.B. The APRIC office may require off-cycle reviews of the ORICU performance

Table (1): Roles and Responsibilities for the establishment and review of an ORICU

	Intra-disciplinary	Multi-disciplinary
ORICU proposal evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic department - Concerned school dean - APRIC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerned school dean(s) - APRIC
Authorizing the establishment of the ORICU	Provost	Provost
Appointing the director	Concerned school dean appoints the director with Provost endorsement	Dean of the school hosting the ORICU appoints the director with Provost endorsement
Appointing the advisory board members	Concerned school dean appoints the advisory board members	Dean of the school hosting the ORICU appoints the advisory board members in coordination with other concerned deans
Annual reporting to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advisory board - Academic department chair - Concerned dean - Copy to APRIC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advisory board - Concerned dean(s) - Copy to APRIC
ORICU director four-year cycle performance review by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic department chair - Concerned school dean 	Dean of the school hosting the ORICU with feedback from other concerned deans
ORICU six-year cycle review to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic department chair - Concerned school dean - URB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerned school dean - URB
ORICU continuation decision by:	Provost	Provost

APPENDIX I: ORICU Proposal Evaluation Criteria

EVALUATION CRITERIA	Evaluation				COMMENTS
	High	Medium	Low	N/A	
How justifiable is the added value of the ORICU to the AUC?					
How well aligned are the ORICU's objectives with those of the hosting academic department/school?					
How much do the planned activities of the ORICU necessitate its establishment?					
How suitable is the proposed PI to directing the ORICU?					
How suitable are the proposed members of the ORICU to achieving its mission and objectives?					
How well aligned the proposed ORICU's governance structure with that of the hosting department/school?					
How well are the requirements (space, equipment, staff, faculty release time, etc..) for the establishment of the ORICU justifiable?					
How reasonable is the ORICU's projected 3-year budget to ensuring the achievement of its plans?					
How suited are the ORICU's key performance indicators (KPIs) and specified targets to monitoring the ORICU's progress and accomplishments?					

EVALUATION CRITERIA	Evaluation				COMMENTS
	High	Medium	Low	N/A	
How sustainable is the ORICU (institutionally, administratively, academically, financially etc...)?					
<p style="text-align: center;">OVERALL (Include comments and justifications)</p>					