

# **A POLICY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT, OPERATION AND GOVERNANCE OF UNITS, CENTRES AND INSTITUTES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES**

**3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

**February, 2009**

---

## **1. Background**

Units, Centres and Institutes are seen as devices to promote centres of excellence by Universities in research. They are expected to meet a significant portion of their operational costs through access to outside funding. Several Units, Centres and Institutes already exist at the University of the West Indies (UWI), and more are being continually established. However, there is little co-ordination and consistency in the manner in which these operational entities are established or to whom they report; and there is little consistency between the organizational structures and functions of the entities and the category to which they are assigned. In an attempt to rationalize this, the Board for Graduate Studies and Research requested that a list of all such existing entities be compiled, and that a common policy be developed that would make such entities readily identifiable in terms of consistency of nomenclature, mode of establishment, scope of work, reporting and governance within the UWI multi-Campus system.

It is recognized that Departments, Schools and Faculties are the key operational bases of the University that deliver teaching and conduct research and outreach in specific disciplines. Units, Centres and Institutes should therefore be seen as primarily facilitating extra-Departmental interactions and collaborations that are appropriate for providing inter- and multi-disciplinary programmes of research, training and outreach in selected theme areas. They do so by generating critical mass within their theme areas through the aggregation of expertise, whether this be academic staff, graduate research students or post-doctoral fellows. Units, Centres and Institutes must also be characterized by flexibility and responsiveness to stakeholder needs, but they must achieve this whilst operating in a formal management and reporting structure. To facilitate management and reporting, all Units, Centres and Institutes, regardless of their size, will have a Head or Director.

Apart from promoting interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary activity within the University and creating critical mass within the theme areas, Units, Centres and Institutes have the additional advantage of providing external stakeholders with a readily identifiable point of contact with the University, when they seek particular areas of the University's expertise; and as recognition and excellence grows, they can help to attract excellent staff, students and funding. While participation in these entities should provide staff members with greater visibility for themselves and their work, it is important to note that the

establishment of such entities does not necessarily imply permanency, in the same way as that of a Department or School. A key criterion for the success of these entities is that they can provide a flexible structure and operational approach that both facilitates interaction with a range of stakeholders and facilitates adaptation to change. This ability of these entities, and therefore of the University, to rapidly adapt to change, will be increasingly important as advances in knowledge challenge the way research is conducted and solutions are presented, and as traditional disciplinary boundaries are broken down.

Whereas most Units, Centres and Institutes will have research and development as their main focus, there will be situations in which it is appropriate to establish an entity for other purposes. For example, some may be established to play a key role in interdisciplinary teaching and training, at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, often in response to the demand of external stakeholders, since this can be difficult to accommodate through normal Departmental or Faculty structures; others may be established primarily for the provision of advisory, consulting or testing services to external parties.

## **2. Definition of Units, Centres and Institutes at the University of the West Indies**

### **2.1 A Faculty Unit**

This is a group of staff primarily from a single Faculty or Department, with expertise in an existing or emerging area of academic focus, and who are recognized nationally, regionally or internationally as having strength in this area of focus.

A Faculty Unit should have these characteristics:

- Activity is focused mainly within one Faculty or Department, but may involve contributions from individuals in other Faculties.
- The level of activity constitutes a small but important proportion of the Faculty's overall activity, as measured by research, teaching, financial or other indicators.
- No dedicated full-time administrative, technical or support staff are employed and paid for by the Unit, apart from those funded through a project or other research, teaching or consulting service contracts.
- The Unit has a nominated Head or Convenor who serves part-time in this role and whose salary is typically met by the Faculty or Department which has accepted responsibility for the Unit, except where the appointment can be funded by a project.
- External teaching, research or service staff affiliated with the Unit are generally employed on an Honorary or part-time basis, typically using project for services rendered. Where qualified, these persons may co-supervise graduate projects and research students, in accordance with the University's Regulations for external supervisors.

Faculty Units will have discrete budgeting, resourcing and financing arrangements, and will be subject to obligations such as formal management, reporting and

accounting procedures. Units will report through the Dean of the Faculty to the Campus Principal. Where the Unit resides primarily in one Department, it will report through the Head of Department to the Dean of the Faculty; and through the Dean to the Campus Principal.

## **2.2 A Campus Centre**

This is a group of staff operating within one or more Faculties on a particular Campus, in an established area of academic strength and focus. The programmes offered by such a Centre have a broader focus than Faculty Units, are generally interdisciplinary in nature, are recognized nationally, regionally and internationally in the focal area, and have often been established to take advantage of external funding opportunities. Campus Centres facilitate collaboration and the achievement of critical mass and enhanced capacity on the Campus.

A Campus Centre should have these characteristics:

- Activity is focused across several Departments and Faculties. Where one Faculty is clearly the major driver, it should be prepared to manage the Centre.
- A level of activity that is significant on the Campus in terms of research, supervision, graduate or undergraduate teaching and other services, with particular emphasis on areas that require cross-disciplinary collaboration for effective delivery.
- Possible employment of a small core of dedicated academic and support staff within or outside of the formal Campus budget, or a combination thereof. These may include a part-time or full-time Director, as well as administrative support.
- Contributions from the Campus to the Centre will typically be a combination of financial and in-kind support, e.g. the provision of infrastructure and a portion or all of the salary of the Director and staff.
- Academic staff across the Campus who form the core of the Centre's expertise and capacity can become Adjunct staff of the Centre, or simply participate as occasional collaborators.
- External staff affiliated with the Centre will generally be employed as Honorary, Temporary or Part-time appointments, paid from specific project funds. Where qualified, these persons may co-supervise graduate projects and research students, in accordance with the University's Regulations for external supervisors.

A Campus Centre will report to the Campus Principal through the Dean of the host Faculty or directly to the Campus Principal where there is no identified host Faculty.

## **2.3 A University Centre**

This is a group of staff operating across all Campuses of the University of the West Indies in an established area of academic strength and focus. An important asset of a University Centre is that it can draw on staff with complementary expertise and interests

across the entire University, and can thereby generate significant critical mass, encourage inter-campus collaboration and facilitate the University functioning as one regional institution. The programmes offered by such a Centre will generally be interdisciplinary in nature, recognized nationally, regionally and internationally in the focal area, and be well positioned to take advantage of external funding opportunities.

A University Centre should have these characteristics:

- University-wide teaching, research, consulting or other service activities.
- A level of activity that is significant in the University in terms of research, supervision, graduate or undergraduate teaching and other services, with particular emphasis on areas that require cross-disciplinary collaboration for effective delivery and are specifically targeted at regional development needs.
- Employment of a full time Director and small core of academic and administrative support staff within the formal University budget, supplemented by Project funds.
- Contributions from the University to the Centre will typically be a combination of financial and in-kind support, e.g. the provision of space, infrastructure and a portion or all of the salary of the Director and staff.
- Academic staff across the University who form the core of the Centre's expertise and capacity can become Adjunct staff of the Centre, or simply participate as occasional collaborators.
- External staff affiliated with the Centre will generally be employed as Honorary, Temporary or Part-time appointments, paid from specific project funds. Where qualified, these persons may co-supervise graduate projects and research students, in accordance with the University's Regulations for external supervisors.

A University Centre will report to the Vice Chancellor through the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) or through other Vice Chancellor's nominees.

## **2.4 A University Institute**

This is a discrete academic entity within the University which employs its own Director, academic staff and support staff, and which normally has a physical presence on all UWI Campuses. These separate components which together constitute the Institute are normally called Institute Units. An Institute focuses academic expertise on a critical area of regional need. It should display significant multi-disciplinary activity, facilitated by national, regional and international collaborations.

A University Institute should have the following characteristics:

- University-wide teaching, research, consulting or other service activities.

- A level of activity that is generally greater than a Centre; e.g., in research publications, the generation of income, consultancies, graduate projects and research supervision.
- International and regional recognition as evidenced by the attraction of regional and extra-regional graduate students, staff and researchers or visiting Scholars.
- Extensive links with external research institutions, business and government groups, and other regional and international stakeholders with a similar focus.
- Revenue to be derived from a variety of sources, including competitive grants, industry, international donors, fees, endowments, *inter alia*.
- Employment of a full-time Director and other academic staff, as well as a full complement of dedicated support staff.
- An Institute has identified space, equipment and facilities made available by the University and supplemented through external funding or through consultation with the Campuses. An Institute will typically have a physical presence (Institute Units) on all UWI Campuses, but may also have more than one Unit on a single Campus.
- Academic staff across the University with expertise and interest in the Institute's area of focus can participate in the Institute's activities as Adjunct staff or simply as collaborators.
- External staff affiliated with the Institute will generally be employed as Part-time, Temporary or Honorary appointments, with Project funds being used in cases where compensation is provided. Where qualified, these persons may co-supervise graduate projects and research students, in accordance with the University's Regulations for external supervisors.

An Institute is intended to provide a broad structure which incorporates a number of diverse stakeholders and presents a significant and relevant profile to the external community. Key criteria of an Institute are its ability to showcase the depth and breadth of the expertise of the UWI as a whole, and significant project and financial activity. It is envisaged that the University will have relatively few Institutes, and that use of the term signals a major strategic focus of the UWI.

Institutes that are funded through the University's Centre budget will report to the Vice Chancellor through the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research), or through other reporting arrangements determined by the Vice Chancellor; but each Institute Unit on a Campus may also report to the Academic Board on that Campus, which is chaired by the Campus Principal. Institutes that are funded through the University's Centre budget as well as through individual Campus budgets, will formally have a dual mode of reporting. Each Institute Unit on a Campus funded through the Campus budget will report to the Principal on the Campus, and the Institute as a whole will report to the Vice Chancellor through the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) or through other reporting arrangements determined by the Vice Chancellor.

### 3. Governance

The type of governance proposed for a Unit, Centre or Institute is described below.

**3.1 Faculty Unit:** The Head of each Faculty Unit will be appointed by the Faculty Board of the host Faculty and will report to the Dean of the Faculty or the Head of the host Department, as appropriate. Appointments will be for three years in the first instance. For the purposes of budget administration and financial reporting, a separate Activity Centre should be established within the Faculty or Department, if the nature or scale of the Unit's operation justifies this.

**3.2 Campus Centre:** A Campus Centre will have a formal Advisory Board normally chaired by the Dean of the host Faculty or by the Principal's nominee, and may include membership external to the University, if deemed appropriate. The Centre's Director will be appointed by the Campus Appointments Committee and will report directly to the Campus Principal, or to the Principal through the Dean of the host Faculty, where one has been identified. Appointments will be for three years in the first instance. For purposes of budget administration and financial reporting, a separate Activity Centre should be established within the Campus or host Faculty, if this is justified by the nature or scale of the Centre's operations.

**3.3 University Centre:** A University Centre will have a formal Advisory Board chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) or by an alternate Vice Chancellor's nominee, and will typically include membership external to the University. The Centre's Director will be appointed by the University's Appointments Committee, and will report directly to the Vice Chancellor, or to the Vice Chancellor through the Vice Chancellor's nominee. Appointments will be for three years in the first instance. For purposes of budget administration and financial reporting, a separate Activity Centre will be established within the University, given the anticipated scale of the Centre's operations.

**3.4 University Institute:** A University Institute will have an independent Advisory Board consisting of a number of external members and may also have a separate, internal Management Committee. The Board is to be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor and the Director of the Institute will be appointed by the University Appointments Committee. Appointments will be for five years in the first instance. The proposal for the establishment of a University Institute should clearly provide details of the composition and Terms of Reference of the proposed Board and the planned frequency of meetings. The Director of a University Institute will report to the Vice Chancellor through the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) or other Vice Chancellor's nominee; e.g. a Campus Principal or Chair of a University's Board. For the purposes of budget administration and financial reporting, a separate Activity Centre will be established within University's Centre budget for each University Institute.

### 4. Proposal for the establishment of a Faculty Unit, Centre or Institute

A formal proposal for the establishment of a Faculty Unit, Centre or Institute is to be submitted to the relevant authority (Dean of Faculty, Campus Principal or Vice Chancellor).

The proposal must include the details of the management structure, which should be of a size and composition appropriate to the group, and must clearly outline the group's academic and research aims, the activities it will undertake and how the existence of the entity will contribute to the University's mission and goals. All personnel associated with the group should be named and their Departmental and Faculty affiliations indicated, where appropriate.

Proposals for the establishment of Centres and Institutes must also include documentation about the consultations that occurred with relevant stakeholders, both within and external to the University. The documentation must clearly demonstrate that agreement has been reached on resource issues such as:

- Cost/revenue sharing arrangements for staff, including the Centre/Institute Director, as appropriate.
- Cost/revenue sharing arrangements for research students.
- Cost/revenue sharing arrangements for teaching activities.
- Cost/revenue sharing arrangements for overheads and provision of infrastructure.
- The distribution of any surplus returns from externally funded activities.

In the case of Faculty Units, funding mechanisms are to be agreed to by the relevant parties to the satisfaction of the host Faculty. The Unit will be eligible to receive a share of Faculty income and resources in line with Campus and University policy and budget practice. In the case of Campus Centres, funding mechanisms must be agreed to by the host Campus Principal. For University Centres and Institutes, funding mechanisms are to be agreed to by the relevant parties to the satisfaction of the Vice-Chancellor in the case of University Centres and Centre-funded Institutes, and to the satisfaction of the Vice Chancellor and Campus Principals in the case of Institutes funded through both Centre and Campus budgets. Institutes and Centres will be eligible to receive a share of research-based income in line with University and Campus policy and budget practice.

In all cases involving external stakeholders, the management of Intellectual Property (IP), the protection of the right to publish and the manner in which this will be addressed, particularly for students, should be stated.

## **5. Approval Process**

The approval process required for a Faculty Unit, Centre or Institute is described below.

**5.1 Faculty Units and Campus Centres** are established or abolished on the recommendation of Academic Board to Campus Finance and General Purposes Committee which acts on behalf of Campus Council. The establishment, abolition or any change in status of a Faculty Unit or Campus Centre should be reported by the Campus Principal to the University Registrar for purposes of updating the University Register of Units, Centres and Institutes.

**5.2 University Centres and Institutes** are established or abolished on the recommendation of University Finance and General Purposes Committee acting on behalf of University

Council. The establishment, abolition or any change in status of a University Centre or Institute should be reported by the Vice Chancellor to the University Registrar for purposes of updating the University Register of Units, Centres and Institutes.

## **6. Reporting and Accountability Requirements**

Once established, each Faculty Unit/Centre/Institute will have reporting and accountability responsibilities appropriate to its category.

- A Faculty Unit reports to the Dean of the Faculty or Head of the host Department as appropriate.
- A Campus Centre reports directly to the Campus Principal, or to the Principal through the Dean of the host Faculty where a host Faculty was identified.
- A University Centre reports to its Advisory Board and to the Vice Chancellor through the Vice Chancellor's nominee.
- A University Institute reports to its Advisory Board and to the Vice Chancellor through the Vice Chancellor's nominee in the case of Centre-funded Institutes; and to its Advisory Board, the Vice Chancellor and the Campus Principals in the case of Institutes funded through both Centre and Campus budgets (see Section 2.4).

Where formal reports are required, these will normally adhere to the requirements and timelines for the University's, Campus', Faculty's or Department's Annual Reports. These reports for Units, Centres and Institutes will be submitted in accordance with the reporting relationships identified above and in Section 2.

Where separate Activity Centres have been established for a Unit, Centre or Institute, financial reporting will adhere to the University's or the Campus' policies and practices for budgeting and forecasting of income and expenditure. Templates and assistance for completing these can be requested from the Campus or University Bursary. All funds, income and expenditure, will be managed through processes approved by the Campus or University Finance and General Purposes Committees, and the respective Campus or University Bursar. Recruitment and selection of personnel for any Unit, Centre or Institute will be carried out in accordance with the Campus or University's HR policy and practices.

## **7. Review Procedures**

**7.1 General provisions:** In order to assess its viability and the degree to which it has met its objectives, every Faculty Unit or Centre should be reviewed three years after its initial establishment and on a regular basis thereafter. The review process should be objective, rigorous and consistent with the level of approval authority. Where external partnerships exist, review arrangements should be coordinated to take account of the requirements of both internal and external partners and stakeholders.



The review process should also act as the normal mechanism for considering re-categorisation of Faculty Units and Centres, with one outcome being a recommendation on the future status of the entity. Any Faculty Unit or Centre may be closed or re-categorised if it has low levels of activity or activity has ceased (See Section 5).

**7.2 Faculty Units:** Apart from the review process identified above, Faculty Units should also be reviewed by the Dean of the host Faculty or Head of the host Department, at his/her discretion.

**7.3 Campus Centres:** Campus Centres should be reviewed by the Campus Principal every three years, or at the discretion of the Campus Principal on a recommendation of the Dean of the host Faculty, where a host Faculty exists. This review should include assessment of research and other outcomes from the Centre's activities, in line with the Centre's mission, and will take account of recommendations of external stakeholders (e.g. reviews by funding agencies). The terms of reference and membership of a Review Committee will be established by the relevant Campus Principal.

**7.4 University Centres:** University Centres should be reviewed by the Vice Chancellor every three years, or at the discretion of the Vice Chancellor on a recommendation of the Vice Chancellor's nominee to whom the Centre reports. This review should include assessment of research and other outcomes from the Centre's activities, in line with the Centre's mission, and will take account of recommendations of external stakeholders (e.g. reviews by funding agencies). The terms of reference and membership of a Review Committee will be established by the Vice Chancellor.

**7.5 University Institutes:** For the purpose of review, University Institutes will be treated as separate Departments and included in the normal Departmental review process. The review must take into account academic output, the requirements of external stakeholders (e.g. reviews by funding agencies) and whether the resource issues of cost/revenue sharing and distribution of surplus returns have been managed appropriately and equitably. If any major issues arise through the review process, the Advisory Board may request a further report from the Director of the Institute.

## **8. Application of Statutory and Policy Framework**

The establishment and operation of Faculty Units, Centres and Institutes pursuant to this Policy are subject to the Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Regulations, Financial Code and all applicable policies of the University.

## **TABLE 1: Reporting Procedures for Faculty Units, Centres and Institutes**

### **Format for Annual Reports**

- Title of Faculty Unit, Centre or Institute.
- Names of Director and Deputy Director (where appropriate).
- Names of Advisory Board members (for Campus Centres, University Centres and Institutes).
- Names of Management Committee Members (where appropriate).
- Dates of the meetings of the Advisory Board and Management Committee that have taken place during the year.
- Names and Departments of participating members.
- Introduction.
- Brief outline of the plans and objectives of the Faculty Unit, Centre or Institute.
- List of all staff (employed or associated) and graduate students involved with the Faculty Unit, Centre or Institute.
- Summary of major activities, developments and plans, emphasising noteworthy achievements that may give useful publicity to the Faculty, Campus and University.
- Comment on any co-operative commercial activities, research with other University or Government laboratories or research groups.
- Training activities: Comment on any courses given or workshops and seminars held.
- Publications, theses, patents and other outputs must be provided, as for Departmental Annual Reports.

### **Financial Report**

- State whether the Faculty Unit, Centre or Institute has its own Activity Centre(s) and list the Activity Centre(s) being used.
- List sources of funding (e.g. research funds from external bodies, the Department, Faculty, Campus or University).
- Include a statement of financial performance. This is to be presented according to Standard Accounting Principles using the relevant Campus or University Statement of Financial Performance and/or Budget Availability templates, and based on the University's financial year.
- State resource implications of proposed activities.
- List a clear indication of time provided by each member of the Faculty Unit, Centre or Institute.
- A lack of financial activity must be reported, with a clear explanation of the reason.