

Complete Policy Title

**Guidelines for the Governance and Review of
Core Research Platforms**

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by

**University Planning Committee /
Senate /
Board of Governors**

Date of Most Recent Approval

**January 22, 2020 /
February 12, 2020 /
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Responsible Executive

Vice-President, Research

Policy Specific Enquiries

[Vice-President, Research](#)

General Policy Enquiries

[Policy \(University Secretariat\)](#)

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PREAMBLE

1. Research facilities and platforms are a pivotal part of the University's research infrastructure, providing resources that support and enhance ground-breaking research. Some of these are complex, highly technical and often expensive sets of specialized equipment and/or services that are shared by many researchers. These Core Research Platforms provide all McMaster researchers access to the instrumentation and technical support to push forward discoveries that will shape the future of our nation and our world.
2. The University leadership, through the University Research Infrastructure Oversight Board, will encourage the development and use of Core Research Platforms by researchers throughout the University. The importance of the platforms will be evidenced by the identification and proposed use of Core Research Platforms in research grant requests submitted to granting agencies and foundations. The expectation is that, wherever possible, newly acquired research infrastructure will be placed within a Core Research Platform; justification for why such infrastructure should be located outside a platform must be made to the University Research Infrastructure Oversight Board. Core research platforms should, wherever appropriate, operate on a fee for service basis and be accessible by external entities.
3. Normally, Core Research Platforms will be housed within established Institutes, Centers or Groups, or within Departments or Faculties. Accordingly, the governance (described below) of such platforms will be similar to that of Institutes, Centers or Groups, where a Dean or coalition of Deans will provide appropriate oversight. Regardless of the unit in which a platform is housed, it will be available to any McMaster researcher. There is an expectation that platforms will cooperate with each other and, wherever possible, collaborate.

DEFINITION OF CORE RESEARCH PLATFORMS

4. Core Research Platforms are designed to:
 - provide all McMaster researchers access to infrastructure, services and expertise needed to advance the University's research mission;
 - provide researchers with opportunities to extend the breadth of their research programs and integrate this research across disciplines; and
 - ensure the development and sustainability of equipment, facilities and entities for the future.
5. Core research platforms are intended to provide state-of-the-art infrastructure, services and technical expertise and to encourage new avenues of revenue generation through use by external academic, government and private sector users. Access by any user must be compliant with the operational rules of the platform (e.g. access restricted to those with appropriate training, commitment to pay the user fees, and, for infrastructure funded by a granting agency, priority access for the research described in the funding proposal).
6. Described within this document are criteria for Core Research Platforms. Core Research Platforms may be eligible to receive support from the University as overseen by the University Research Infrastructure Oversight Board. It is recognized that not all infrastructure at McMaster will sit within a defined Core Research Platform.

CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION AS A CORE RESEARCH PLATFORM:

7. It is recognized that many research facilities and platforms exist at McMaster University. Key criteria for recognition as a Core Research Platform are listed below:
 - must have multiple users;
 - must be accessible to all potential McMaster users, including on a fee-for-service basis, as appropriate for that facility;
 - must not have more than 80% usage arising from a single faculty member;
 - should be able to demonstrate how the platform supports the Research Strategic Plan; and
 - should support both research and training of research personnel including students.
8. Proposals for recognition as a Core Research Platform will be submitted to the University Research Infrastructure Oversight Board by the appropriate Dean or coalition of Deans. For proposal detail please see companion document "[Applying and Reporting to the University Research Infrastructure Oversight Board](#)"
9. The University Research Infrastructure Oversight Board may from time to time determine that a facility no longer meets the criteria required to be a "core research platform".

GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW OF CORE RESEARCH PLATFORMS

10. The University must be informed of the status, progress, and financial viability of the research organizations which carry out its strategic interests. As such the University's Core Research Platforms must adhere to general practices of good governance with reporting structures which ultimately inform the Vice-President, Research, relevant Deans and Associate Deans Research and the University Planning Committee as to their activities and financial standing.
11. Each platform will require a Director to oversee the purpose and direction of the platform. The Director will be a McMaster faculty member who will establish an Advisory Committee to provide advice to the Director with regard to priorities and directions for the platform. The Director may decide to strike other committees such as a Users Group who could provide input on user's needs.
12. Each platform will require an appropriately qualified Manager to oversee its day-to-day activity and management. The Manager will be a permanent or contract full time or regular part time employee of the University. In cases where the platform is small, the Director and Manager may be the same person.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

13. Annual reporting will provide the University with information needed for strategic planning and decision making. The Director will provide a report to the appropriate Dean or coalition of Deans who, in turn, will provide the Director's report, and the Dean's response to the report, to the University Research Infrastructure Oversight Board. The Board will submit a summary of the reports, along with their comments, suggestions and decisions to the Vice-President, Research who will report to the University Planning Committee for information. Reports will be provided, at minimum, annually. For reporting requirements please see companion document "[Applying and Reporting to the University Research Infrastructure Oversight Board](#)"
14. External funding sources such as research grants will continue to be the first option for funding research infrastructure and operations. Requests for new or additional central university funding in support of renewal of research equipment or certain operational needs such as technical support, where required, may be made as part of the annual reporting process to the University Research Infrastructure Oversight Board. The Board will make decisions on funding for renewal of research equipment or certain operational needs, where required.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

15. All Institutes, Centres and Groups are expected to adhere to the University's financial policies and procedures as established or amended from time to time.