PROCEDURES FOR RESEARCH UNITS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLATFORMS

As per *Policy on Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms* (VPRGS-8)

Last Updated – March 23 2018

These Procedures are related to the *Policy on Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms* (VPRGS-8) and reflect current practices concerning:

- University Recognition of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms
- Categories and Configurations of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms
- Advisory Committee of University-recognized Research Units and/or Infrastructure Platforms
- Directorship of University-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms
- Review of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms, and Renewal of Recognition
- Discontinuation of Recognition and Closure of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms

<u>University Recognition of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms</u>

<u>Recognition process:</u> Before considering applying for University recognition, it is expected that the interested group of researchers will consult the definitions and criteria for Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms and communicate with the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (OVPRGS) and the relevant Faculty(ies) at an early stage. Normally, the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform applying for University-recognition will have functioned successfully as a Faculty-recognized Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform for at least one year. The OVPRGS and the Faculties will communicate at least once every year about Research Units and/or Infrastructure Platforms that could possibly meet the criteria for University recognition.

A draft proposal for University recognition may be submitted at any time to the OVPRGS by the interested group of researchers, with a copy to the relevant Faculty Dean(s). The information provided in the draft proposal must be comprehensive enough to allow the merits and feasibility of establishing and recognizing a Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform to be assessed. The OVPRGS will discuss the submitted documents with the relevant Faculty(ies) and will conduct a general screening as to whether the unit meets the general criteria of a University-recognized Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform as outlined in the *Policy on Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms* (<u>VPRGS-8</u>).This is an iterative process where the draft proposal will be reworked by the interested group of researchers in collaboration with the OVPRGS and the relevant Faculty(ies) as applicable.

When the OVPRGS deems that a Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform meets the criteria for University Recognition, it will communicate with the relevant Faculty Dean(s) to formally request support letter(s).

The Faculty Dean(s) must support the proposal for University recognition for it to be presented to the SRC. In communicating to the OVPRGS its support for University recognition, the Faculty Dean(s) should address, in writing, the following:
- fit with the Concordia Strategic Research Plan;
- how the proposed Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform is positioned in relation to, and distinct from, other Research Units and/or Infrastructure Platforms already recognized or active at the University and within the Faculties;
- what resources – funding, time release, space, etc. – the Faculty is providing to the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform; and

- how the entity performed as a Faculty-based Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform, or why it was not previously recognized at the Faculty level prior to submitting the proposal for University recognition.

The support letter from a Faculty and the proposals for University recognition must also address any potential conflicts of interest that may arise in the recognition process (examples include, if the anticipated Director of the proposed Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform is a member of the Faculty administrative team, Faculty Research Committee or Senate Research Committee, or is an academic unit head).

If certain criteria are not met or if additional information is needed, the OVPRGS may request complementary information. When all criteria are met, a recommendation for University recognition will be presented by the VPRGS to the SRC for approval.

Approval process: The authority to establish a University-recognized Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform resides with the University Senate as delegated to the Senate Research Committee (SRC). All approved dossiers shall be presented to the University Senate for ratification.

Notification: Upon approval by the Senate, the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform Director will receive formal notification of the recognition indicating the terms and reporting requirements. If funding from the *Infrastructure Support for Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms Program* (managed by the OVPRGS) is awarded, the amount and conditions will be indicated. A copy of the proposal and related documentation will be kept with the OVPRGS/Office of Research.

<u>Categories and Configurations of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms</u>

Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms can be either Emerging or Established.

Established Research Units or Infrastructure Platforms are either considered 'medium scale' or 'major scale'.

<u>Emerging:</u> An emerging Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform:
- i) Is normally recognized as a Faculty Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform by at least one Faculty;
  AND
- ii) Has only been established at Concordia within the last four years;
  AND
- iii) Has never previously been recognized at the University level through the *Policy on Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms*.

Criteria for 'Emerging' status:

A) Emerging Research Centre

Criteria for recognition	- Recently created but having established collaborations between regular members and secured substantial external funding, including team grant funding, for common and related research activities. - Significant critical mass of Concordia researchers as regular members of the Research Centre. The number of regular members may vary between areas, but as a guide a minimum of 6 Concordia faculty members would list the Research Centre as their primary affiliation. - Potential for close collaboration between disciplines, with other Faculties, external partners or community groups. - Must have a development plan in place that shows high potential to meet the criteria for an established Research Centre within four years.

B) Emerging Research Unit with a Community Development / Outreach / Advocacy Focus

Criteria for recognition	• Recently established Research Unit whose primary orientation is targeted towards knowledge mobilization, policy change or intervention in communities and in society at large, with substantial funding and/or support from external sources (which may include funding and support from sources other than granting agencies). • High relevance and importance to society and communities. • Significant critical mass of Concordia researchers as regular members of the Research Unit, and active participation of external partners/communities. The number of regular members may vary between areas, but as a guide a minimum of 6 Concordia faculty members would list the Research Unit as their primary affiliation, plus 2-3 external partners/communities that actively participate in the Research Unit activities. • Must have a program/plan to organize outreach and knowledge translation activities and events such as internships, fieldwork, community-based research, workshops, seminars, etc. • Must have a development plan in place that shows high potential to meet the criteria for an established Research Unit with a Community Development / Outreach / Advocacy Focus within four years.

C) Emerging Infrastructure Platform

Criteria for recognition	• The research infrastructure is critical for many researchers at Concordia, although it may not be unique in Québec and Canada. • Regular use by Concordia researchers from multiple disciplines. The number of regular users of the infrastructure may vary between areas, but as a guide, a minimum of 6 Concordia faculty members would be major users of the Infrastructure Platform. • Demonstrated added value as consolidation of similar equipment to improve access, lower operating costs, and shared resources and expertise. • Emerging importance as a provider of experimental testing facility or a source of information for other Research Units. • Emerging demand by internal and external users. • Emerging needs for technical and administrative support to operate the Infrastructure Platform. • Must have a development plan in place that shows high potential to meet the criteria for an established Infrastructure Platform within four years.

'Emerging' status is valid for four years and cannot be renewed.

After four years of 'Emerging' status, the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform must seek recognition as now being 'Established', as it will be expected to meet the appropriate evaluation criteria by that time. If it does not meet the criteria for the appropriate 'Established'

status, it will cease to be recognized as a University Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform.

Fast-tracking: Emerging Research Units and/or Infrastructure Platforms can seek 'Established' status after two years (and a successful mid-term review) provided it is determined by the OVPRGS that it meets 'Established' criteria. A proposal for University recognition will then be presented by the VPRGS to the SRC for approval.

Established: An established Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform:
   i)   Is normally recognized as a Faculty Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform by at least one Faculty;
       AND
   ii) Has been established at Concordia for at least four years OR has been previously recognized at the University level through the *Policy on Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms* OR is fast-tracking from Emerging status.

Criteria for 'Established' status:

A) Established Research Centre

Criteria for major scale status	• Research Centre with a significant critical mass of Concordia researchers as regular members. The number of regular members may vary between areas, but as a guide, more than 10 Concordia faculty members would list the Research Centre as their primary affiliation. • Recognized leader in Québec, Canada, and/or internationally, with external members and/or collaborators actively participating in the Research Centre activities. • Mature cross-disciplinary research program. • High activity/productivity: publications, citations, training, patents, etc. • Significant activities in training of graduate students and other Highly Qualified Personnel. • Substantial research funding, including team or centre/regroupement funding, from external sources (as per the norms in the specific disciplines and areas of research). • Close collaboration with external partners and/or community groups.
Criteria for medium scale status	*Same criteria as for Major scale, with the following differences:* • Fewer Concordia researchers as regular members. The number of regular members may vary between areas, but as a guide, 6-8 Concordia faculty members or more would list the Research Centre as their primary affiliation. • The research program may be in one discipline but preferably cross-disciplinary.

B) Established Research Unit with a Community Development / Outreach / Advocacy Focus

Criteria for major scale status	• High relevance and importance to society and communities. • Significant critical mass of Concordia researchers as regular members of the Research Unit, and active participation of external partners/communities. The number of regular members may vary between areas, but as a guide, more than 10 Concordia faculty members would list the Research Unit as their primary affiliation, plus 4-6 external partners/communities that actively participate in the Research Unit activities. • High activity/productivity/engagement, with focus on activities primarily targeted towards knowledge mobilization, policy change and intervention in communities and in society at large. • Recognized leader(s) in Québec and/or Canada. • Important outreach program – frequently and successfully organizing outreach and knowledge translation activities and events such as internships, fieldwork, community-based research, workshops, seminars, etc. • Very important positioning value to the University. • Substantial funding from external sources, which may include sources other than granting agencies.
Criteria for medium scale status	*Same criteria as for Major scale, with the following differences:* • Fewer Concordia researchers as regular members. The number of regular members may vary between areas, but as a guide, 6-8 Concordia faculty members or more would list the Research Unit as their primary affiliation, plus 3-4 external partners/communities that actively participate in the Research Unit activities. • Important positioning value to the University.

PROCEDURES FOR RESEARCH UNITS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLATFORMS

C) Established Infrastructure Platform

Criteria for major scale recognition	• Unique research infrastructure (within Montreal, in Québec and/or Canada) • Several Concordia researchers from many disciplines as major users of the Infrastructure Platform. The number of major users may vary between areas, but as a guide, more than 15 Concordia faculty members would be major users of the Infrastructure Platform. • Important entity as a provider of experimental testing facility or a source of information for other Research Units. • High demand by internal and external users. • Demonstrated need for technical and administrative support to operate the infrastructure.
Criteria for medium scale recognition	*Same criteria as for Major scale, with the following differences:* • The research infrastructure is critical for many Concordia researchers, although it might not be unique within Montreal, Québec and/or Canada. • Lesser number of major users. The number of major users may vary between areas, but as a guide, more than 10 Concordia faculty members would be major users of the Infrastructure Platform. • Less or no demand by external users.

Advisory Committee of University-recognized Research Units and/or Infrastructure Platforms

Purpose and Composition of the Advisory Committee: The general purpose of the Advisory Committee is to oversee and provide general guidance on the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform activities and operations.

Normally, an Advisory Committee is comprised of at least three individuals who are not members or users of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform. The Director or Co-Directors should also serve as members, with the status as voting or observer member to be at the discretion of the Advisory Committee. It is recommended that an observer seat be reserved on the Advisory Committee for a representative of the OVPRGS.

The Advisory Committee must meet at least once a year. The Minutes of all Advisory Committee Meetings will be submitted to the OVPRGS at the time of the annual report.

Directorship of University-recognized Research Units and/or Infrastructure Platforms

Responsibilities and Term of the Director: A Director (or Co-Directors) is the appointed head of each University-recognized Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform. The Director is responsible for the scientific direction and administration of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform. In addition, the Director oversees the coordination of the activities including student training, outreach and special events, as well as managing communications both within the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform and Concordia University, externally to partner institutions, external members, funding agencies, and the community.

The Director has the day-to-day responsibility for staff operations of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform, as well as ensuring that it conforms to the relevant collective agreements and policies in effect within the University.

The Director is responsible for the budget of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform and for preparing the annual report and review material for renewal of the recognition. A plan for securing external and internal funding for operations, as well as research activities, should be developed and revised on a continuous basis.

Eligibility: Only full-time tenured faculty members are eligible to be Director of a University-Recognized Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform. In the case of a co-directorships, one of the Co-Directors may be a full-time tenure-track faculty member, and serve a maximum term of two years. The term may not be renewed unless the faculty member has received tenure).

In accordance with the process set out below, a Director or a Co-Director shall be appointed for a term of up to four years and normally may be re-appointed for one additional term of up to four years, for a total of up to eight years. With the concurrence of at least 80% of the members (Research Units) and/or users (Infrastructure Platforms), the Director may be re-appointed for additional terms of up to four years. In the case of Co-Directors, it is suggested that the term lengths be staggered.

A Director or Co-Director who ceases to be a full-time tenured faculty member during his/her term must step down from the position within one year.

Process for the Search and Appointment of the Director: The formal process of searching for a new Director (or Co-Directors) of a University-recognized Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform will begin at least nine months prior to the date at which the current Director's term ends. Preferably, searches for new Directors (or Co-Directors) would be completed early in the winter term.

Description of the Director position: The Advisory Committee of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform will prepare a description of the Director (or Co-Directors) position and a profile of the ideal candidate. The description and profile must be approved by the VPRGS and the relevant Faculty Dean(s).

Once the description and profile have been approved, the VPRGS will authorize the Director (or Co-Directors) to inform all members of the Research Unit and/or users of the Infrastructure Platform (in writing) that a search committee will be struck to choose a new Director (or Co-Directors). The Director (or Co-Directors) will also circulate the description and profile of the ideal candidate.

Search Committee: The Advisory Committee will decide upon the composition of the Search Committee. Normally, a Search Committee will include a number of faculty members that are members of the Research Unit and/or users of the Infrastructure Platform, a representative of the graduate students, one member appointed by the VPRGS, and one by Dean(s) of the hosting Faculty(ies). A representative of the full-time staff of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure

Platform may be included for those units with two or more full-time staff members. The Chair of the Search Committee will be selected by and among the Search Committee members. When applicable, it is recommended that partnering organizations and communities be represented on the Search Committee.

Following the announcement of a search for a Director (or Co-Directors), there will be a period of at least ten working days during which members of the Research Unit and/or users of the Infrastructure Platform may nominate representatives to the Search Committee. Nominations will only be accepted if the nominee agrees in writing. In the week following the nomination process, an election will be held, if necessary, in person or by email. All members of the Research Unit and/or users of the Infrastructure Platform are entitled to vote for faculty member representatives to the Search Committee. In cases when it applies, graduate student members and full-time staff elect their representatives.

Call for nominations: The Chair of the Search Committee will circulate a call for nominations, open for at least ten working days, for the Director (or Co-Directors) position to all members of the Research Unit and/or users of the Infrastructure Platform. If an individual who had been elected to serve on the Search Committee is subsequently approached about standing for the Director (or Co-Directors) position, the individual must resign from the Search Committee and a replacement elected.

Deliberations: Once all nominations have been received, the Search Committee will solicit the candidates' cv's and shortlist up to three nominees. The Search Committee will then proceed to interview the shortlisted nominees. Prior to interviews, the Search Committee will invite all members of the Research Unit and/or users of the Infrastructure Platform to appear before the committee, if they wish, or to submit written statements about the nominees. As part of this process, the Search Committee will interview the outgoing Director (or Co-Directors) about the past experiences and solicit his/her advice regarding priority issues for the future.

Recommendation and Appointment: When the Search Committee has interviewed the nominees and completed its deliberations, it will select the preferred candidate(s) through secret ballot voting. The result of the vote together with a reasoned recommendation (including proposed term start date) will be forwarded to the OVPRGS. The VPRGS will make the final decision with respect to the appointment of the new Director (or Co-Directors) and an appointment letter will be prepared.

Interim Directorship: In the case of a vacancy at the Directorship of a University-recognized Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform (for example due to a leave or a Director stepping down from his/her position before the end of his/her normal term), the Advisory Committee should submit to the OVPRGS a recommendation for an Interim Director (term of up to one year, not renewable as 'interim'). In consultation with the relevant Faculty, the VPRGS will make the final decision with respect to the appointment of the Interim Director and will appoint the successful candidate.

Should the Advisory Committee not submit a recommendation, and in consultation with the relevant Faculty(ies), the VPRGS will decide on an Interim Director chosen from amongst the members or users of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform and will appoint the chosen candidate.

Appointed Interim Directors are subject to the same conditions as selected Directors, including course release in relation to the period or service as Interim Director. A term as an Interim Director does not count as a Director/Co-Director term in the previously-mentioned number of terms.

Review of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms, and Renewal of Recognition

To ensure that the activities of all University-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms are consistent with the goals of the University, and reflect positively on its reputation, reviews will be undertaken periodically.

Annual Reporting Requirements: University-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms are required to submit an annual report to the VPRGS (for administrative review by the OVPRGS) with a copy to the Faculty(ies) Dean(s) by August 31st of each year. The report must provide: an overview of the activities during the past year (June 1st to May 31st), copies of the Minutes of Advisory Committee meetings, and an update on its financial status (a financial statement for the past year and a budget forecast for the new year).

Mid-term Review: The purpose of this review is to provide an opportunity for the Advisory Committee of the University-recognized Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform and the OVPRGS to meet and discuss the development of the Research Units and/or Infrastructure Platform as it relates to its original objectives. If deemed necessary, the OVPRGS may propose revisions to the planned activities for the second part of the term. The mid-term review is organized by the OVPRGS. For Emerging Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms, the mid-term review meeting should be held in the third year, while for Established Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms, it should be held in the fourth year. The OVPRGS will invite the Director of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform to submit a review dossier and to give a presentation.

The review dossier should include the following:

- An updated list of members (regular and associate) of the Research Unit and/or users (major and minor) of the Infrastructure Platform;
- Annual reports produced since the first year of the term;
- A report on the financial status of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform (with financial report and forecasted expenditures to the end of the approved recognition period);
- An updated Development Plan for the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform activities and operations; and
- Any other information requested by the OVPRGS.

The review dossier will be sent to the OVPRGS and the relevant Faculty(ies) at least ten working days prior to its presentation. After the presentation, any comments, suggestions or advice raised should be documented and sent to the Director of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform, with a copy to the Faculty Dean(s).

Renewal Evaluation: Notice of the review for renewal will be communicated to the Director of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform by the OVPRGS during the last year of the approved recognition period. In response to this notification, should renewal of the recognition be requested, the Director will submit a review package to the OVPRGS with the following material:

- A proposal for Renewal of University recognition covering a period of six years;
- If applicable, letters of support from external members and partnering organizations; and
- Any other information requested by the OVPRGS.

Once the proposal is received, the OVPRGS will communicate with the appropriate Faculty Dean(s) to request the Faculty letter(s) of support to complete the dossier prior to its presentation to the SRC.

On the basis of the information provided in the renewal package and the past annual reports, if applicable, the OVPRGS will conduct a general screening as to whether the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform continues to meet the criteria of a University-recognized Research Unit as defined in the most current version of the *Policy on Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms* (VPRGS-8) and the related *Procedures*.

If certain criteria are not met, the OVPRGS may request complementary information or, in some cases, strike a special review committee with members from the SRC for a detailed review and call for a meeting with the Director and members of the Research Unit and/or users of the Infrastructure Platform.

Renewal decision: Following the renewal evaluation process, the VPRGS will make a recommendation to the SRC for renewal or non-renewal of the recognition. The SRC decision may be:

- Renewal of recognition for six years (with mid-term review); or
- Temporary renewal of recognition (for one or two years); or
- That the recognition will expire upon completion of the current term.

PROCEDURES FOR RESEARCH UNITS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLATFORMS

Discontinuation of Recognition and Closure of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms

Reasons for discontinuation: The activities of a Research Unit are often carried out on a project basis or, for Infrastructure Platforms, on availability of appropriate research infrastructure. Changing factors such as funding opportunities, partnerships, infrastructure status, and members/users might lead to a lower level of activity. In general, Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms may be discontinued for the following reasons:

- a renewal application is not submitted and the recognition expires upon completion of the current term
- the members of a Research Unit and/or users of an Infrastructure Platform collectively agree to withdraw its recognition
- the University decides to discontinue the recognition

Process for discontinuation: If the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform wishes to be discontinued, the Director must contact all regular members (Research Unit) and/or major users (Infrastructure Platform) and request their written consent. If a majority of the regular members (Research Unit) and/or major users (Infrastructure Platform) consents to the discontinuation, the Director must inform the VPRGS and the Faculty Dean(s) in writing, without delay, that the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform is discontinued.

The University, through the SRC, reserves the right to discontinue the recognition at any time for any reason. If potential grounds for a discontinuation are brought to the attention of the SRC and/or the OVPRGS, the VPRGS will strike a special committee with members from the SRC to meet with the Director and the Advisory Committee seeking solutions for maintaining the recognition. If a solution cannot be reached, a letter will be sent from the SRC informing the Director about the reasons for discontinuing the unit's recognition and the date it will be in effect.

Upon discontinuation of recognition, any legal agreements or obligations that affect the status of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform must be taken into consideration. Equipment and facilities under the responsibility of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform will be transferred to the hosting Faculty(ies). A planned dismantling and re-allocation of the physical resources should take place in collaboration between the Director, the Faculty Dean(s) and the VPRGS. A Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform may not sell, donate or otherwise dispose of any equipment or material.

PROCEDURES FOR RESEARCH UNITS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLATFORMS

Staff positions of discontinued Research Units and/or Infrastructure Platforms will be managed according to the University Human Resources policies, collective agreements and contractual agreements.

Approved by the VPRGS and the Faculty Deans on March 23 2018.