

SHIFT Centre Operations and Governance

Overview

This document summarizes the guiding principles and proposed structure for the governance and operations of the SHIFT Centre. More details about the proposed components of the Centre and their respective mandates, membership and decision-making authority can be found in the [Appendix](#).

Principles

In order for the Centre to thrive, its structures and processes are **agile** and able to quickly and skillfully respond to evolving contexts and emerging ideas. Agility is best achieved by (1) putting decision-making power in the hands of those most closely linked to an issue; and (2) being open to the emergence, closure and reincarnation of clusters and projects.

The success of the Centre is equally dependent on the **engagement** of its members, meaning its structures and process foster a sense of ownership, belonging and accountability in all stakeholders. An engagement of this kind is best maintained by (1) providing accessible and easy to understand information about decisions, processes and practices; (2) committing to not wasting people's time and valuing the energy and expertise they bring to the table; and (3) prioritizing health and well-being by maintaining a sustainable pace of work.

In addition, the SHIFT Centre is guided by principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in its structures, processes and decision-making.

Proposed Structure

The work of ensuring the healthy functioning of the SHIFT Centre is spread across three levels—Governance, Operations and Advisory—each with distinct responsibilities.

Governance level

The Governance level informs and approves all major decisions regarding the Centre, including overall vision, strategic directions, resource allocation, and processes for project intake, granting of awards, distribution of funds, appointment of residencies and conflict resolution. It consists of:

- **Steering Committee:** Primary decision making body of the Centre that includes Cluster representatives, Executive Group members, and a donor representative. Meets three to four times per year.
- **Executive Group:** A subgroup of the Steering Committee that meets more frequently to ensure the enactment of the processes and decisions agreed upon by the Steering Committee.

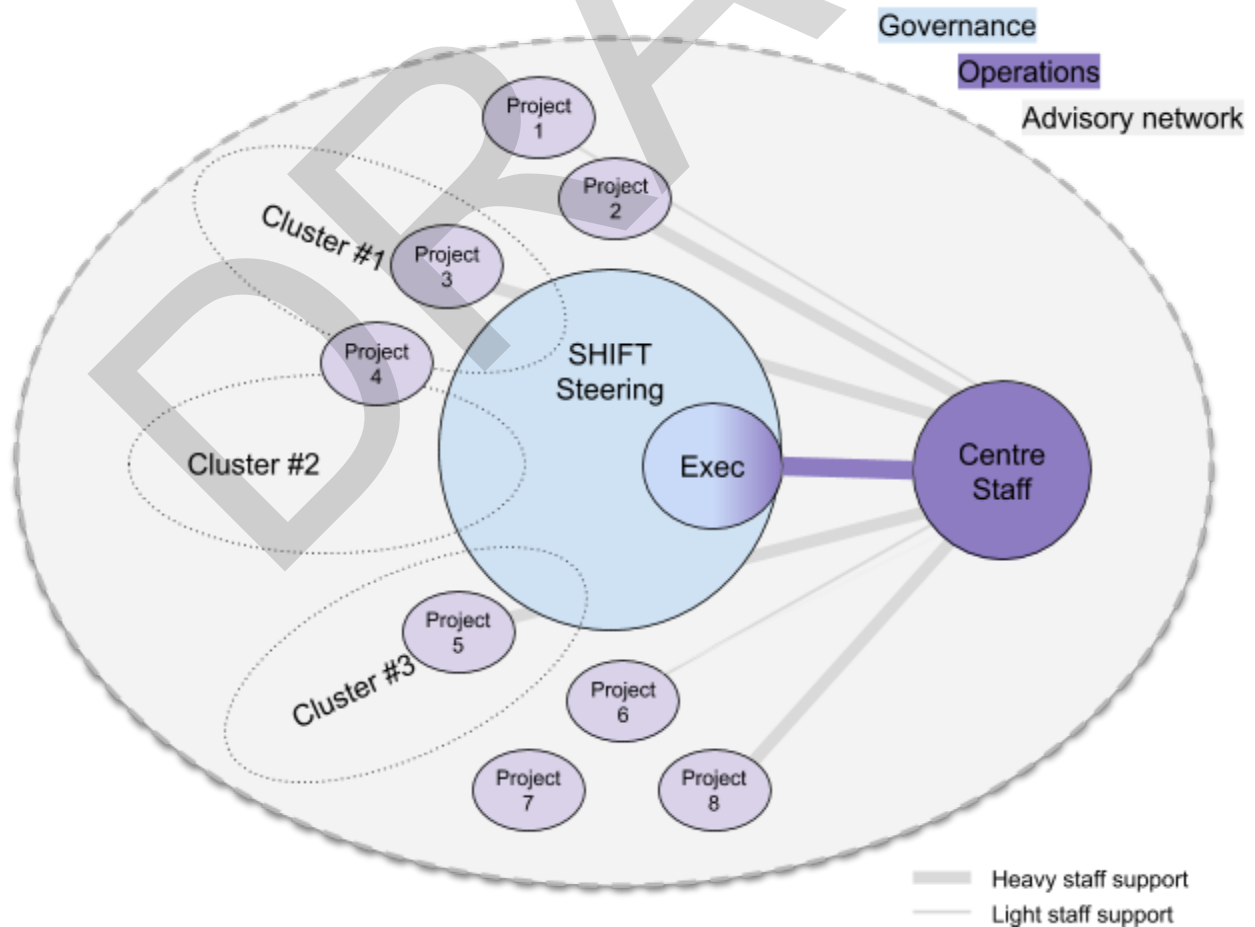
N.B. Clusters are organic, multidisciplinary groupings of faculty, staff, students and external partners whose work centres around a thematic area and has the potential for transformative impact. Clusters are represented at the Steering Committee by one student, one faculty member and one external partner.

Operations level

The Operations level performs the day-to-day tasks involved in running the Centre, including providing services in support of SHIFT projects and SHIFT clusters, preparing documentation to inform and respond to governance meetings, and responding to incoming requests in a timely way. It consists of Centre staff and the teams working on SHIFT-supported projects. The Executive Group provides leadership for the operations of the Centre and represents Centre staff at the Governance level.

Advisory level

The Advisory level provide advice and input into Centre priorities and programs by sharing best practices and lessons learned from other projects and acting as a sounding board for idea development. It consists of the informal SHIFT Advisory Network as well as annual meetings of the entire SHIFT Community. There is no decision-making power at this level.



Appendix: Further Details on Proposed Structures

Distribution of responsibilities

Governance level

- Inform/approve overall **vision and strategic directions** of the Centre based on input from broad consultation
- Inform/approve decisions around **resource allocation** based on input of Centre staff and clusters
- Inform/approve **processes** for project intake, granting of awards, distributing of funds, appointment of residencies, etc. based on input of Centre staff and clusters
- Inform/determine steps for **conflict resolution** based on issues as they arise

Operations level

- Perform the day-to-day tasks involved in achieving the Centre's vision and strategic directions
- Provide services in support of SHIFT projects and SHIFT clusters
- Prepare documentation to inform and respond to governance meetings
- Create and maintain an efficient yet accessible virtual internal communication system
- Respond to incoming requests in a timely way

Advisory level

- Provide advice and input into Centre priorities and programs
- Share best practices and lessons learned from other projects and ecosystems
- Act as a sounding board for idea developments
- **No decision-making power**

1.0 Governance

1.1 SHIFT Clusters

Clusters exist outside of the Centre but are formally associated with Centre's work. They may be pre-existing entities or they may be new entities formed in response to the Centre's mission and mandate.

To be recognized as a SHIFT cluster, a group must have membership from at least two faculties and at least three constituent groups (students, faculty, external partners). Initially the Centre will start with 2 or 3 clusters for an 18-month trial period to test out the Centre's practices and capacity. During this trial period, processes will be put in place both for clusters to join the Centre and to be wound down or put on hold from their engagement with the Centre.

- **Membership:**
 - Faculty, students, staff and external partners whose work is related to the clusters' focus area
 - A supporting SHIFT staff person

- Responsible for:
 - Identifying cluster priorities
 - Reporting on cluster activities
 - Proposing SHIFT-funded projects
- Authority to decide:
 - Appointment of cluster Lead(s) - one student, one faculty, one external partner
 - Allocation of cluster funding
- Meetings :
 - Convened and coordinated by: Designated SHIFT staff person
 - Facilitated by: Cluster Lead(s)
 - Frequency: 2 or more times per year
 - Discussion Topics:
 - What is emerging here;
 - Cluster priorities and alignment (or not) with SHIFT activities;
 - Ideas for potential projects to be supported by SHIFT

1.2 SHIFT Steering Committee

The SHIFT Steering Committee is the primary governing body of the Centre.

- Membership:
 - SHIFT Executive Group
 - Vice-Provost Partnerships & Experiential Learning
 - SHIFT Director(s)
 - OCE Senior Director
 - Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives
 - Donor rep
 - 3 reps from each cluster (1 Faculty, 1 student, 1 external partner)
 - At least 1 rep in attendance at each meeting
 - 1 vote per cluster
 - Responsible for:
 - Developing the overall vision and strategic directions of the Centre;
 - Establishing processes for cluster birth/death/reincarnation, project intake, granting of awards, distributing of funds, appointment of residencies, partnerships, etc.;
 - Determining steps for conflict resolution and other governance-related issues
- Authority to decide:
 - Approval of overall Centre budget
 - Approval of major programming directions
 - Approval of processes

- Meetings :
 - Facilitated by: Vice-Provost Partnerships & Experiential Learning
 - Frequency: 3 or 4 times per year
 - Discussion Topics:
 - Centre updates;
 - New services and programming directions;
 - Substantial resource requests
 - Significant emerging ideas or concerns

1.3 SHIFT Executive Group

The SHIFT Executive Group is a subgroup of the Steering Committee, which meets more frequently and is responsible for ensuring the enactment of the processes and decisions agreed upon by the Steering Committee.

- Membership:
 - Vice-Provost Partnerships & Experiential Learning
 - SHIFT Director(s)
 - OCE Senior Director
 - Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives
- Responsible for:
 - Overseeing and mobilizing their respective staff to operationalize the Centre's vision and strategic directions;
 - Implementing processes for project intake, granting of awards, distributing of funds, appointment of residencies, etc.;
 - Selection and renewal of SHIFT-supported clusters;
- Authority to decide:
 - Allocation of funds as outlined by the budget
 - Allocation of human resources
- Meetings :
 - Facilitated by: SHIFT Director(s)
 - Frequency: Bi-weekly
 - Discussion Topics:
 - Plans and document prep for upcoming steering committee meeting
 - Operations of the SHIFT Centre

2.0 Operations

2.1 SHIFT Staff

The SHIFT Staff are the administrative, professional and student personnel who are hired by the University to work for the Centre.

- Membership (TBD):
 - SHIFT Director(s)
 - SHIFT staff
 - Experiential Learning staff?
 - Concordia Cities Cluster staff?
 - Office of Community Engagement staff?
- Responsible for:
 - Performing the day-to-day tasks involved in achieving the Centre's vision and strategic directions
 - Providing services in support of SHIFT projects and SHIFT clusters
 - Preparing documentation to inform and respond to governance meetings
 - Responding to incoming requests in a timely way
 - Flagging emerging issues and resourcing needs
- Authority to decide:
 - Individual work plans
 - Funding and programming decisions according to Steering Committee decisions and Centre policies and processes
 - Allocation of general operating budget
- Meetings :
 - Facilitated by: SHIFT Director(s)
 - Frequency: Weekly or as needed
 - Discussion Topics:
 - Day to day operations of SHIFT and its services;
 - Programming ideas;
 - Emergent issues;
 - Cross-project alignment and coordination

2.2 SHIFT Projects

Each SHIFT supported project will have its own project team and/or steering committee according to its needs. Depending on the complexity and/or alignment of the project with the Centre's mission, a SHIFT staff member may also be assigned to support a project.

- Membership:
 - Students, staff, faculty and external partners involved in the project
- Responsible for:
 - Project management and oversight
 - Performing the day-to-day tasks involved executing the project
- Authority to decide:
 - Project work plans
 - Funding allocation within designated project budget
- Meetings :
 - Facilitated by: Project lead
 - Frequency: Bi-weekly or as needed

- Discussion Topics:
 - Project planning;
 - Implementation;
 - Emergent issues

N.B. While some SHIFT supported projects will be cluster-based, others will come from outside of existing clusters. This will leave the opportunity for a larger diversity of stakeholders to engage with the Centre without being formally involved with Governance and will also provide a potential pathway for the emergence of new clusters.

3.0 Advisory

3.1 SHIFT Community

Beyond the day-to-day operations and the formal governance of the Centre it will be important to have opportunities to connect with the SHIFT community as a whole.

- Membership:
 - All internal and external members of the SHIFT Community (Cluster members, Project teams, staff, etc.)
- Purpose:
 - Reporting to the SHIFT Community
 - Hearing from the SHIFT Community
 - Creating opportunities for cross-pollination between clusters and projects
- **No decision-making power**
- Meetings :
 - Facilitated by: SHIFT Director(s)
 - Frequency: 1 or 2 times per year
 - Discussion Topics:
 - Centre updates;
 - Annual/semesterly plans;
 - Gathering input and feedback

3.2 SHIFT Network

The SHIFT Network is a very informal gathering of people who will be used as a sounding board for emerging ideas and projects. Rather than meeting regularly like a formal committee, members of the network will be invited to provide input at opportune moments when their particular expertise would be most useful.

- Membership:
 - 1 or more external partners from each cluster
 - Other major players in the municipal, national and international social transformation ecosystems

- Purpose:
 - Gather input and advice
 - Learn from other practitioners who are already have active projects on the ground
- **No decision-making power**
- Meetings :
 - Facilitated by: SHIFT Director(s)
 - Frequency: 1 or 2 times per year, plus informal touch points as needed
 - Discussion Topics:
 - SHIFT Priorities;
 - Project ideas;
 - Feedback on SHIFT operations

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