POLICY ON RESEARCH UNITS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLATFORMS

Effective Date: January 17, 2014

Originating Office: Office of the Vice President, Research and Graduate Studies

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PREAMBLE

Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms are recognized and funded in order to support groups of Concordia faculty members in expanding their research and/or research-creation activities by connecting and collaborating using shared resources. By providing a stimulating and collaborative research environment, Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms contribute significantly to the academic life of the University in terms of building research capacity, increasing research output, and securing increased visibility for Concordia and its researchers. Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms operate in complementarity with the University's academic department and Faculty structures, and provide unique training opportunities for students.

The previous *Policy on Research Units* (2010) superseded the *Research Centers at Concordia University: Policies and Procedures (US-97-1-D6)*, and led to the recognition of 18 University Research Units. This Policy and the related *Procedures* continue to recognize that the University has formal processes for the establishment and review of Research Units but introduces more precise definitions to differentiate categories and configurations of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms, as well as membership/usership and criteria for University recognition.

It is also recognized that the activities and resources of a Research Unit and/or an Infrastructure Platform change over time depending upon opportunities, membership/usership and circumstances. While successes must be encouraged and nurtured while building capacity within Research Units and/or Infrastructure Platforms, there may be, as well, a need for transforming, scaling down or phasing out activities.

This Policy, which is administered on behalf of the Senate Research Committee (SRC) by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (OVPRGS), is intended to ensure that the process for recognizing Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms is coherent and transparent across the University and that institutional support appropriately reflects the development phase, maturity, type and complexity of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy and the related *Procedures* is to provide definitions and specify University-wide principles for the establishment, recognition, governance and support of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms at the University, as well as setting out their reporting requirements and expectations for periodic review.

SCOPE

This Policy defines the internal principles that govern Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms at the University whose primary mandate is research and the training of graduate students. It addresses all types of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms, independent of their names (e.g. Centre, Institute, Group, etc.) or of their relationship to, or support by, external sponsors.

The *Procedures* related to this Policy address:

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

Any amendments to the *Procedures* are subject to the approval of all Faculty Deans.

It is recognized that there are Research Units and/or Infrastructure Platforms that are less formal in structure, or in an early phase, which might not meet the definitions and criteria for University-recognition. In order to reflect the principles enshrined in this Policy, each Faculty will have a written set of procedures that will define and recognize these Research Units and/or Infrastructure Platforms while allowing flexibility. Overall, the Faculties are expected to inform the OVPRGS on all matters related to Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy:

A **Research Unit** is a non-departmental unit, established within the University, with specific objectives to advance the research-related goals of the University. Research Units have a focus on the development of clear, integrated research programs, building on strong expertise, which is tailored to external funding criteria, all in relation to Concordia University's Strategic Research Plan.

Research Units will have regular (primary affiliation) and associate (secondary affiliation) **members**. Mirroring a criterion in FRQ-funded *Regroupements stratégiques* and *Groupes de recherche*, a Concordia faculty member can be a regular member in only one University-recognized Research Unit, usually the one to which he or she contributes the most, but can be an associate member in any number of other Research Units.

Research Units can be either configured as a **Research Centre** or as a **Research Unit with a Community Development/Outreach/Advocacy Focus**.

Research Centres are typically interdisciplinary groups with well-defined research and/or research-creation axes under which the individual researchers and trainees work in teams. Research Centres have access to significant external funding through public and/or private sources.

Research Units with a Community Development/Outreach/Advocacy Focus are interdisciplinary groups of researchers, creators and trainees whose scholarly work has a primary orientation targeted towards community development and/or knowledge mobilization in society at large. They will have developed a sustainable outreach program with diverse projects that involve strong elements of public/community engagement, policy development, intervention in communities and in society at large and/or knowledge mobilization and dissemination activities. Usually, external partners and communities will play an important role in the activities of the Research Unit with a Community Development/Outreach/Advocacy Focus.

An **Infrastructure Platform** is typically a space or facility hosting a coherently organized and logically integrated pool of research and/or research creation resources, laboratories, workshops and equipment managed as a whole in a dedicated way to enable and support research and/or research creation activities. It is not simply a collection of such research resources; the whole must exceed the sum of the parts.

Infrastructure Platforms have **users**. Users do not necessarily collaborate together other than by using similar or common equipment and infrastructure. Concordia faculty members may become users of any number of Infrastructure Platforms. Major and minor users will be distinguished on the basis of frequency and intensity of use of the Infrastructure Platform.

Some entities may qualify for both the Research Unit and the Infrastructure Platform categories.

Normally, a University-recognized Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform is expected to draw regular members and/or major users from more than one Faculty. However, it is possible in exceptional circumstances for a University-recognized Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform to consist of regular members and/or major users from a single Faculty (or Department) if the size and/or strategic importance to the University justifies it, and if there is enough interdisciplinarity and team/group external funding to support such recognition.

A Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform, recognized by the University:

- is led by a Director appointed for a time-limited term
- is supported by at least one Faculty Dean
- has a formal governance structure with an Advisory Committee
- has designated resources such as space, administrative and technical staff, shared equipment and infrastructure
- is financially secure with core funding for its operations, and attracting significant external funding on a continuous basis to support its activities (e.g. through grants, contracts, donations or fee-for service)
- maintains a high level of research productivity
- fosters the training of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and others
- allows for cooperation with scholars at other universities and/or institutions, and collaborations with industry partners and/or community groups

In addition, each category of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms may have different configurations, with specific criteria and expectations to meet, as listed in the *Procedures*.

A Research Unit or an Infrastructure Platform that does not meet the criteria identified above may be recognized by one or more Faculty(ies). Each Faculty will have a written administrative framework defining the criteria for obtaining Faculty-recognition status.

POLICY

Establishment, Recognition and Renewal

1. The creation of a Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform is usually initiated by a group of Concordia faculty members who wish to formalize the organization of the entity under the umbrella of a recognized unit or infrastructure platform. By obtaining recognition from the Faculty and/or the University, the establishment of the Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform becomes official.

2. A Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform is established, recognized and renewed under the authority of:

   - Senate, through the Senate Research Committee, for University-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms; or
   - One or more Faculty(ies) for Faculty-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms

3. To obtain University recognition, the potential Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform must apply for recognition in accordance with the process outlined in the Procedures. Any proposal for University recognition must be supported by at least one Faculty Dean.

4. Details on the duration of the University recognition and its renewability are presented in the *Procedures*

5. Each Faculty must inform the OVPRGS annually of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms that are recognized by the Faculty. A University-wide registry of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms will be kept by the OVPRGS. The University will

include and present all recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms through its official communication channels (e.g. web site, annual reports, etc). All University-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms must declare their affiliation to Concordia University through their official communication channels.

6. Use of the University's name and logo must be in accordance with the Policy on the Use of *Concordia University's Name, Logo and Related Insignia, and the Governance of its Visual Character* (SG-4)**.** University-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms are expected to use the University's name and logo in combination with their Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform name and/or logo. Only University-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms may use the University's name and/or logo in combination with their Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform name and/or logo. Faculty-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms may use the Faculty's name and/or logo in combination with their Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform name and/or logo.

Resource Allocation and Accountability

7. Space for offices, laboratories, studios, etc. with basic furniture is usually provided to the Research Unit or Infrastructure Platform by the hosting Faculty(ies). Each Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform will be responsible for acquiring, operating and maintaining physical resources such as specialized research equipment and databases.

8. Each Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform will be responsible for human, financial, and physical resources that are under its responsibility.

9. University-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms are accountable to the VPRGS while the Faculty-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms are accountable to the Faculty Dean(s).

10. University-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms may access institutional funding through the **Infrastructure Support for Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms Program** managed by the OVPRGS as outlined in the *Procedures*.

11. All Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms must conform to University policies and procedures pertaining to research including but not limited to: health and safety of staff working in research laboratories, compliance certification for research, recovery of indirect costs on research grants and contracts, conflict of interest guidelines, and University approval to engage in formal partnerships with other universities, industry or other organizations.

Governance

12. When a Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform is recognized by the University, a Director (or Co-Directors) must be identified as the head of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platforms. Accountable to the VPRGS on matters pertaining to the activities of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform, and working closely with the appropriate Associate Dean(s) Research, the Director is administratively responsible for the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform and exercises general supervision over its operations.

13. The process to appoint a Director (or Co-Directors), as well as the duration and renewability of the appointment, is detailed in the *Procedures*.

14. The Director (or one of the Co-Directors) of a University-recognized Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platforms must hold a full-time faculty appointment in an academic department at the University.

15. A University-recognized Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform directorship comes with a one-course remission per year. The cost of the course release is assumed by the Director's Faculty.

16. While the organizational and administrative structures of Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms vary as a function of their objectives, size and funding arrangements, all Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms must have an 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.

Reporting

17. University-recognized Research Units and Infrastructure Platforms are required to submit an annual report describing their operations and financial status to the VPRGS as set out in the *Procedures*.

Discontinuation of Recognition and Closure

18. In the event that the renewal of the University-recognition of a Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform is not recommended by the SRC following a review, its University-recognition will expire upon completion of the current term and the VPRGS may propose a phase out plan. The same applies should the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform fail to submit the required documentation for a review. If deemed necessary, the VPRGS may appoint an external reviewer to review the current and future prospects of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform and to make recommendations on the disposition of assets and liabilities.

19. A University-recognized Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform may choose to end its recognized status at any time. The Director of the Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform must inform the OVPRGS without delay if it is no longer active. The process for the termination is detailed in the *Procedures*.

20. The University reserves the right to phase out or immediately terminate a Research Unit and/or Infrastructure Platform at any time for financial exigency or other reasons, with due regard to human resources policies, contractual obligations and employment standards legislation.

Adopted by Senate at its meeting of January 17, 2014