

Guidelines for New Centers at the Dornsife School of Public Health

Centers play a key role in promoting research collaborations, building relationships to advance public health policy and practice, synergizing existing faculty projects, attracting external funding as well as faculty, staff and students, and increasing the visibility of the DSPH (Dornsife School of Public Health) both inside and outside Drexel University. As DSPH continues to expand, guidelines are needed to encourage the development of centers as well provide standards for centers within DSPH. The guidelines received input from Department Chairs, Center Directors, Associate Deans and the Executive Committee of the Faculty and were adopted in consultation with DEC and ECF, in December 2019. These guidelines may be modified as the School develops and new needs arise.

A Center is defined as a unit involving multiple faculty and staff from one or more academic units which is organized around research, practice, or policy goals, and has some involvement in training undergraduate, graduate, and/or post-docs. DSPH recognizes various types of Centers that vary in goals, stage of development, size, lifespan, and location within the DSPH administrative structure.

For new centers starting in or after 2020, we identify four specific types of centers that will be considered for development by DSPH. Centers existing at DSPH prior to implementation of these guidelines will be approved in their current structure via a memorandum signed by the ADR (and ADP if appropriate for Center's mission), the Dean, and the Center Director. In the memorandum, a mutually agreed upon timeline will be provided to guide the Center towards conforming to one of the four types described below within a specified timeframe. The process for approving new Centers is described separately for each type. This approval will also involve agreement on the Center name.

I. Centers created for the purposes of securing external funding

These Centers may be created for the purpose of responding to RFPs, developing grants, or other forms of external fundraising. These Centers will generally be located in departments but may be located in other units (e.g., within Office of Global Health or Office of Public Health Practice) if appropriate to the mission. Once funding is obtained, the administrative home may be revisited in accordance with the criteria outlined below. Faculty proposing to create such a Center will submit a proposal to the Dean. Approval to create these Centers will be granted by the Dean in consultation with the Chair (if located in a Department) and with the Associate Dean for Research (ADR) and/or the Associate Dean for Practice (AP) as appropriate depending on the Center focus. If funding is not obtained within a pre-specified period, the Dean (in consultation with the Chair, ADR, ADP) as appropriate) will review the proposed mission and determine whether the Center should be continued for a specified period of time or sunsetted.

II. Centers created as a result of designated external funding via Center grants

These Centers are funded by NIH or other similar awards (e.g. P60s or program project grants). Creating a Center with some form of shared resources (analytic, lab or other) is a requirement of the award. These Centers are fully externally funded for a fixed time period. They have a set of specific aims, a distinct budget, core staff, and support a Center Director and other faculty. The life of these Centers is determined by the award period and are sunsetted when the award

ends. Approval to create these Centers is granted by the Dean and the ADR when the grant proposal is submitted.

Administrative structure: These Centers will usually sit within Departments or occasionally within a School-wide Center (see below). External funding for these Centers will usually support administrative staff that will work with the Departmental administrator or grants management specialist to manage budget and staffing issues.

III. Department Centers created by faculty to support and expand a specific area of research, practice, or policy

Faculty with significant research or practice programs may propose the creation of a Center to further synergize their work and help build collaborations with faculty within DSPH and the University as well as external partners, e.g., community, university, government. The creation of a center should add value to DSPH above and beyond the status quo, e.g., a faculty member leading one or more projects/grants, a “program,” or a “lab”. Examples of added value include: (1) external visibility; (2) ability to attract external funding; (3) enhanced research productivity; (4) programming related to the schools mission and values; (4) faculty recruitment; (5) new collaborators; and (6) student recruitment or enhanced student experience.

Criteria to create a Center include:

- Multiple faculty (DSPH, Drexel, or external) engaged in research or programming related to the mission
- Interdisciplinary approach to research, practice, and/or policy
- Involvement of junior and senior faculty as well as trainees
- Research training component, e.g., masters, doctoral students
- Director with effort supported on external grants
- Substantial guaranteed external funding, e.g., 3-5 years, supporting distinct but related research projects, administrative support
- Strategic and business plans as well as mutually agreed upon performance metrics that have clearly articulated goals and objectives and timelines.,
- Clearly articulated mission and added value to DSPH and University

Proposals for the creation of Departmental Centers will be reviewed and approved by the corresponding Chair, ADR or ADP (accrosing to research and/or practice/policy focus), and Dean for a fixed period (usually 3-5 years) with renewal being possible based on performance. The Chair, ADR (if research) or ADP (of practice/policy) and Dean will also review annual reports. Continuation of Center status is contingent on performance and external funding based upon goals established in the proposal.

Center activities are expected to be primarily grant funded. Often, Centers will house grants that allow administrative costs as part of direct costs and therefore will also have administrative staff to manage grants and contracts. The Center may be provided additional administrative support or other support via Departments or the School.

Administrative structure: Department Centers report to the Department Chair and receive departmental administrative support as necessary. Center staff report to the Center director

and/or research project PIs as appropriate based on the work. When the Center is created, special agreements may be established in writing to provide support, e.g., administrative, financial, to Centers via Departments or the School for a specified period of time.

IV. School-wide Centers

School-wide Centers must fulfill the criteria noted above for Department Centers but in addition are expected to be larger in size (and external funding), have a more significant School-wide involvement, and provide significant service and added value to the School as a whole. Given their size they are expected to have resources for grant management. They will receive IDC returns from the School and may receive other infrastructure support from the School or the University.

Proposals for the creation of School wide Centers will be reviewed and approved by the ADR (if research), APT (if practice/policy) and Dean (all) for a fixed period (usually 3-5 years) with renewal being possible based on performance. The ADR (if research), APT (if practice/policy) and Dean will also review annual reports. Continuation of Center status is contingent on performance metrics that are mutually agreed upon by the Center Director, ADR (or ADP) and Dean. The determination of whether a Center should be School-wide or based within a Department will be made by the Dean in consultation with the ADR (if research) or the ADP (if practice/policy) and the Department Chairs. As Department based Centers grow they can petition the School to become School-wide Centers.

In addition to the Department criteria, School-wide Centers will generally fulfill the following criteria:

- Broad engagement of faculty across the School from multiple Departments in multiple Center activities. These Centers will also often engage faculty outside the School, at Drexel or at other institutions.
- Substantial external funding for multiple projects and/or significant sources of gift or University funds as well as evidence/history of sustainability.
- Substantial service to the School, which may include by are not limited to student support, pilot awards, support for research faculty, or other mechanisms.
- Established external visibility via research productivity, events, policy work, or other activities.

Administrative structure: School-wide Centers report to the Dean who may delegate oversight responsibilities to the ADR or ADP as appropriate. Center staff report to the Center director and/or research project PIs as appropriate based on the work. When the Center is created, special agreements may be established in writing to provide support, e.g., administrative, financial, to Centers from the School for a specified period of time.

Center Faculty

Faculty throughout the School and the University may become affiliated with Centers via participation in projects and/or formally becoming faculty “affiliates”. Each Center will determine the definition, process, as well as the benefits and responsibilities of becoming an “affiliate”.

In addition, Centers may financially support the appointment of contractual research or clinical faculty attached to specific projects and supported by the Center. Research and clinical faculty will have a Departmental home but may be housed by Centers (indicating that their support is guaranteed by the Center). Centers will support at least 5% of research/clinical faculty time for Departmental or School service (such as serving on committees). Centers will determine the responsibilities of Center research or clinical faculty based on their funding and effort allocation. Hiring Center research faculty will follow the same general procedures as hiring research or clinical faculty in a department.

Research/clinical faculty housed by Centers will have dual reporting relationships to their Department Chair and to the Center Director. For specific project responsibilities they may also report to a project PI. Like all faculty, they will follow the annual faculty review process and will be evaluated jointly by the Center Director and their Chair. The Center Director will conduct an evaluation with input from any supervising project PIs and submit his/her evaluation to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will incorporate this input into his/her annual review of the faculty member. Promotions will be handled through Departmental processes like any faculty member.