An Organized Research Unit (ORU) is a non-permanent academic unit the University has established to provide a supportive infrastructure for interdisciplinary research that complements the academic goals of departments. Characteristically, ORUs cross significant intellectual boundaries between disciplines such as those assumed to exist between departments and divisions, or their equivalent. ORUs may also be established to serve a compelling campus research priority or need that has been identified through broad campus consultation or strategic planning. ORUs do not receive predefined institutional funding or a return of generating indirect costs.

ORUs serve to enable or facilitate interdisciplinary research and research collaborations; disseminate results through research conferences, seminar series, workshops, meetings, performances and other creative activities; seek extramural research funds; and carry out university and public service programs related to the ORU's research expertise. ORUs serve as a platform to facilitate the interaction of faculty from different departments. ORUs provide undergraduate and graduate student research and training opportunities, such as through institutional training grants. ORUs may be identified as a target for philanthropy. ORUs can contribute to the development of interdisciplinary academic programs and curricula that are established, overseen and supported by one or more Divisions. An ORU may not, however, act as an academic home unit that offers degree programs or formal courses for credit to students of the University or to the public. In some instances, ORUs provide administrative oversight or services to interdisciplinary curriculum programs. It is critical in such cases that there be a separation of funding and reporting lines to the cognizant Vice Chancellor and Divisional dean for each respective activity in order to keep them independent of one another.

REVIEW of ORUs

ORUs have contributed substantially to UCSD’s outstanding research reputation. In order to maintain an exceptional ORU portfolio at UCSD, it is important to periodically assess the performance of existing ORUs. The review process provides ORUs with a mechanism for in-depth, peer-reviewed evaluation of programs and goals, and provides the administration with a means of ensuring that research being conducted is of the highest quality and justifies the space and support received.

Each ORU will be reviewed at intervals of five years. No ORU may be continued without such a review. Leadership changes in an ORU should not delay, extend, or otherwise cause the review cycle to be altered. In exceptional circumstances, the VCHS acting in consultation with the Senate may form an ad hoc review committee that can serve to review an ORU outside of the normal five-year review cycle. ORUs that are approaching the end of the second five-year period since their establishment date will be carefully examined to ensure that the goals and measures for success, agreed upon by the Director and the VCHS at the time of establishment or last review, have been met. Every review should address the ORU’s original purpose, current goals and objectives, and its operations and scholarly accomplishments in light of the current and emerging needs and opportunities within the intellectual domain of the ORU. In addition, working in consultation with the VCHS, the ORU should define suitable measures of success that will then be used in the subsequent review of the organization. The effectiveness of the ORU Director likewise
is reviewed at the same time as the ORU. All ORUs must establish a rationale for continuance, in terms of scholarly merit and campus priorities.

A. Review Process

The VCHS has been delegated responsibility for the review of ORUs for the Health Sciences.

1. To ensure adequate time for the preparation of a proposal for continuance, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (AVCAA) notifies an ORU that it will be reviewed prior to the academic year in which the review is to be conducted.

2. The VCHS and/or AVCAA meets with the ORU Director soon after notification to describe the review process.

3. The ORU Director prepares a self-assessment covering the ORU's mission, history, resources, and accomplishments, as outlined in Section B. The material should be presented in accordance with the format provided by AVCAA. After review by the ORU Advisory Committee, materials are submitted to the AVCAA by the requested date.

4. The AVCAA submits a request with suggestions for review committee membership to the Committee on Committees. In consultation with the VCHS, the AVCAA appoints a review committee of 3 members from the slate nominated by the Committee on Committees, including one committee member from outside Health Sciences, who may have expertise in the field of study. If appropriate, a member of the previous review committee should be included. Current ORU members should not be included on the review committee. The UCSD Senate Committee on Research will identify a lead discussant for the review (COR-LD).

5. The AVCAA meets with the review committee to provide explicit instructions prior to the beginning of the review.

6. The review committee examines the materials provided to them about the ORU, interviews the ORU Director, Advisory and Executive Committee members, associated faculty, and other individuals deemed pertinent to the review, including non-UCSD researchers in the field when appropriate, and tours the ORU’s physical facilities.

7. The review committee prepares a draft report of its findings in accordance with the review criteria in Section C using the parameters below. The draft report is submitted to the AVCAA to ensure the review has been thorough and in accordance with the review criteria.

8. The AVCAA forwards the final report to the VCHS, the ORU Director, and the COR-LD.

9. The review committee then meets with the AVCAA and the COR-LD.

10. The COR-LD may also meet with the ORU Director and AVCAA.

11. The ORU Director distributes the report to and consults with members of the ORU and the ORU Executive and Advisory Committees. S/he uses this input to prepare a written response to the review report.
12. The Director then meets with the VCHS and the AVCAA to discuss the report and future plans for the ORU.

13. The AVCAA forwards the ORU’s most recent 5-year report, the report of the review committee, the Director's response, and recommendation from the VCHS to the Academic Senate.

14. The Academic Senate reviews the report and the Director's response and makes recommendations to the VCHS on both the continuation of the ORU and reappointment of its Director, along with any other issues it deems appropriate.

15. The VCHS makes a decision concerning the continuation of the ORU and reappointment of the ORU Director. In consultation with the AVCAA and ORU Director the VCHS prepares a summary for the ORU, identifying recommendations and other issues raised in the review and requesting specific actions as appropriate.

16. Presuming that the ORU is continued, then after not more than one year, the ORU submits a formal annual report to the AVCAA, documenting the ORU’s progress on key recommendations from the recent review. Subsequently, the ORU submits annual reports until its next five-year review.

B. ORU Self-Assessment

In preparation for the review, the ORU prepares a report with the following information. All materials should be assembled in a binder and also provided in an electronic file.

1. ORU Overview: Brief, concise statement detailing the history of the ORU, its goals and objectives, and any projected changes to the mission and objectives of the ORU if it is continued. If an ORU proposes to change its name as the result of new research directions or the addition of new fields of research to the unit’s mission, the Director should describe the rationale for requesting a new name as part of the review process.

2. Evidence of Accomplishments, focusing primarily on the preceding five years. The unit’s success in meeting the mission and goals that were previously identified and agreed to by the ORU and VCHS should be evaluated. Key elements of this discussion include:

   Research. The relevant issues may include: comments on the quality and significance of completed and on-going research; significant trends within the disciplines represented in the ORU and their relationship to current research specialties in the ORU; the added value and capabilities that the ORU has brought to the campus, which would have been difficult to achieve within other campus structures; continuing productivity and influence of ORU participants, locally as well as nationally and internationally; evidence of prominence in the fields represented in the ORU; description of the ORU’s collaborative interdisciplinary work and the quality and impact of the work on other research efforts across the campus; the degree of postdoctoral scholar training within the ORU; importance of the ORU to Visiting Scholars; contributions to the professional development of the ORU’s professional staff and faculty; and
descriptions of the possible sources and availability of extramural funds to support the ORU’s research.

**Graduate, Medical, and Postdoctoral Education.** Relevant issues to consider include contributions made by the ORU toward student and postdoctoral research training and the ORU’s impact on existing academic programs and units, including the benefits to the teaching programs of the participating faculty members’ departments.

**Diversity Goals.** Description of the ORU’s contributions to campus diversity goals. These can take a variety of forms, including efforts to advance equitable access to education, public service that addresses the needs of California’s diverse population, or research in a scholar’s area of expertise that highlights inequities.

**Relationships to Other Academic Units.** Issues to address may include: the unit’s interactions with similar units in other research centers or institutions; additional relationships the unit could be exploring that are not currently being pursued; impediments to developing such relationships; and contributions to clinical services (treatment and health-care delivery), if applicable.

**Public Service and Outreach.** Significant ORU contributions to the public and the community beyond UCSD. Measures of success can include: intellectual property that is brought to market; research that improves the quality of life for citizens; and events hosted by the ORU that engage the public’s interest.

**Administration and Governance.** Description of the ORU’s Advisory and Executive Committees. What are their roles, how often do they meet, and how well do they function? Are any changes needed to the Advisory, Executive, or other governance committees? Is there adequate and planned turnover of Advisory Committee members to ensure that new ideas and perspectives will be presented over time?

**Problems and Needs.** Describe any constraints which prevent the ORU from functioning at an optimal level.

**Justification for Continuance.** Describe the ORU’s plans for the next five years. It should be made clear to reviewers how the ORU’s plans will evolve from the situation presented in the self-assessment. Plans for external fundraising should be addressed.

3. Define measures of success appropriate for the research focus of the ORU. These measures will then be used in the subsequent review of the ORU to determine the degree of the unit’s success.

4. **Administrative Information including:**

   **Unit Profile**

   a. Names of (Co-) Directors, Acting Directors, and Associate Directors, and tenure of appointments.
b. Members of Executive and Advisory Committees, including members’ titles, affiliations, and dates and terms of membership.

c. Names of UCSD faculty who were/are members of the ORU, including their departments and dates of affiliation.

d. Names of faculty who have agreed to participate in the ORU’s activities over the next five years.

e. Names of UCSD professional researchers who have appointments in the ORU, including appointment dates.

f. Names, home universities, and dates at UCSD of all visitors during the last five years, including source of support.

g. Names of undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, their advisors, dates of association with the ORU, and, for graduate students, their department and masters degree and/or PhD degree conferral date.

h. Description of any university-industry and university-government activities.

i. Description of seminar, lecture, and conference programs.

j. Listing of all publications and other scholarly works that have appeared under the auspices of the ORU.

Physical Facilities and Space. Description of the physical facilities housing the ORU, including type of space (laboratories, studios, seminar rooms, professional research staff offices, administrative offices, etc.), assignable square footage, and location.

Financial Data

a. All income received by the ORU for each fiscal year since it was last reviewed from:
   • Federal, state, local, and international grants and contracts;
   • Foundations and private gifts;
   • UCSD and other UC-derived funds.

b. Expenditures for personnel in both FTE and dollars for each fiscal year since the last review:
   • Research and student personnel listed by title (e.g. Professors, Postdoctoral Scholars, Research/Project Scientists, Specialists, Graduate/Undergraduate students, etc.);
   • Technical staff by title (e.g., Development Engineer, SRA, Computer Programmer, etc.);
   • Administrative staff by title (MSO, Accountant, Administrative Assistants, etc.);
   • Equipment purchases;
   • Supplies and expenses.

C. Report of the Review Committee

Justification for continuation of an ORU must be carefully documented. Review committees shall consider and make specific recommendations on the following range of alternatives to the status quo: a change in the mission of the unit; a merger of the unit with one or more academic units on the same or another campus; discontinuance of the unit; a change in funding sources; a change in other resources (such as FTE, space, etc.); or any other changes for improvement of the ORU.

Directors of ORUs are normally appointed for five-year terms, the appointment period coinciding with the ORU review period. Extending a director’s term of service beyond ten consecutive years
should be carefully weighed against the advantage to the campus and the ORU of a change in leadership. The review committee should look carefully at the Director’s stewardship of the organization and comment on its quality. The committee may recommend that the present director be reappointed or recommend a change in leadership.

The review committee should prepare a list of key recommendations for changes or issues to be addressed in the future. If appropriate, the review committee may also prepare a confidential statement to the VCHS. It may also provide the VCHS with confidential letters received from individuals during the review process.

D. Review Criteria

In conducting a review of an ORU and preparing its report, the committee should keep in mind specific questions enumerated in the Charge to the Review Committee provided by the AVCAA, which usually deal with particular unique aspects of the ORU under review. General questions that are common to all ORU reviews are summarized below. Review committees are asked to directly respond to these questions in order to ensure completeness of the review report:

1. Introduction and Executive Summary.
   a. Mission. A concise statement detailing any projected changes to the mission and objectives of the ORU if it is continued.
   b. An evaluation of the overall scholarly quality of the ORU.
   c. Evaluation of the ORU’s self-assessment. Specifically, does it accurately reflect the ORU’s current stated objectives and activities? Its strengths and weaknesses?
   d. Assessment of the ORU Director’s performance.

2. Evidence of Accomplishment. What are the ORU’s major accomplishments over the preceding five-year period in the following areas?
   a. Research. What is the committee’s evaluation of the quality and productivity of research? Is there compelling evidence the ORU has contributed to outstanding research in the disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas in which it specializes? If appropriate, to what extent is the ORU attracting graduate students, postdoctoral scholars and/or faculty to UCSD? Are the ORU’s participants sufficiently active in the pursuit of available extramural funds? How does the extent of annual extramural research funding compare with similar units nationwide? What international connections have been established?
   b. Undergraduate and Graduate Research Training. What is the committee’s assessment of the direct and indirect contributions of the ORU to graduate and undergraduate research training at UCSD? What contributions does the ORU make to enhance undergraduate and graduate research training associated with the teaching programs of academic departments and programs? What evidence is there that the ORU is attracting graduate students to UCSD? For ORUs that provide administrative services to interdisciplinary curriculum programs, has the ORU maintained appropriate separation of funding and reporting for these activities?
   c. Recognition for Excellence beyond UCSD. Does the unit have a national and international reputation for excellence? Are there national and international collaborations that have been established?
d. **Diversity.** How has the ORU contributed to the campus’s diversity goals? Contributions to diversity and equal opportunity can take a variety of forms, including efforts to advance equitable access to education, public service that addresses the needs of California’s diverse population, or research in a scholar’s area of expertise that highlights inequities.

e. **Public Service and Outreach.** Has the ORU made significant contributions to the public and the community beyond UCSD? Have there been benefits to the citizens of California? Measures of success can include, for example, intellectual property that is brought to market; research that improves the quality of life for citizens; and events hosted by the ORU that engage the public’s interest. Does the ORU have clearly defined measures of success that are aligned with the unit’s research focus? To what degree have these measures been satisfied? What are the measures of success for the unit’s future operations?

3. **Budget.** Does the ORU make cost-effective use of UCSD funds? Has the unit been successful in obtaining extramural funds to augment UCSD funding? If additional UCSD funding were to be provided, what needs are regarded as most critical?

4. **Space and Resources.** Is the space assigned adequate, appropriate and reasonable? What specific changes, if any, are recommended?

5. **Governance and Administration.** Does the administrative structure meet the needs of the ORU? The report should separately address the following administrative issues:
   a. **Governance.** Comment on the ORU’s governance, its structure and effectiveness, including the leadership qualities of the Director and the ability of the Advisory and Executive Committees to provide guidance to the Director. Is there evidence of succession planning?
   b. **Faculty Participation.** Is there adequate participation of faculty from diverse disciplines in the ORU? Is there evidence that the ORU is a factor in attracting faculty to UCSD and retaining them?
   c. **Comparisons with Other Units.** What are the ORU’s unique contributions to the University that distinguish it from other similar academic entities at UCSD? Is the unit’s continuance as a separate entity justified? What would be lost if the unit did not exist? Are there effects of the ORU on campus departments?

6. **Five-Year Projections.** Provide critical commentary on the Director’s research budget and plan for the next five years.

7. **Conclusion and Recommendations.** The committee should summarize its recommendations for the future of the ORU, including, but not limited to, a recommendation about its continuance, directorship, and any changes involving administration, governance and funding. In making its recommendations, the committee should particularly consider whether the current ORU structure will continue to advance the goals of the University.