

CORE FACILITIES GUIDELINES

1. Rationale for Establishing a Core Facility

Typical considerations:

- Need for services
 - The services to be provided by the proposed Core Facility should be unique to the University and there should be minimal duplication of Core Facilities
- Lack of availability of appropriate services from other, academic or commercial, laboratories
 - Outsourcing is not feasible due to cost, control, or timeliness considerations
- Improved accessibility / responsiveness of services
- Extend capabilities, current and state-of-the-art, to new users, thus enhancing the quality of their research
- Improved training and access for graduate students
- Foster multi-disciplinary collaborations
- Consolidation of existing facilities to:
 - enable or improve access to the user community
 - enable operating efficiencies (i.e. through shared, skilled, operators)
 - enable enhanced operating expertise
 - facilitate safe operation and use of potentially hazardous equipment or materials
 - enable cost savings through better purchasing processes (for example, through volume discounting resulting from a higher volume of throughput),
 - enable cost savings through reduced reliance on, or more effective use of, service contracts, etc.
 - enable better and more systematic maintenance of the equipment
 - provide a strong support infrastructure to enhance likelihood of success for future equipment grant applications and acquisitions
 - optimize use of existing equipment
 - reduce unnecessary duplication of services, resources and operating expenses

2. Management Structure

A Scientific Director should be identified for overall scientific and business leadership of the Core Facility. The Scientific Director is responsible for, amongst others, overseeing the operations and financial management of the facility, short and long term operational planning, assessing the impact of emerging technologies on facility operations and development strategies, preparation of performance reports, etc.

It is normally expected that a research associate or senior technician will be charged with the day-to-day operations of the facility, including supervision of technical staff and other users.

It is normally expected that there will be an advisory committee consisting of a few major users to provide advice on the service needs, quality of service delivery and short and long term strategic and technical planning.

3. Establishing User Fees

Core Facilities are not intended to subsidize the costs of research. Rather, they are intended to enable operational efficiencies which will both i) drive the costs of providing the services down (with the cost savings being passed on to the users) and ii) assure a much broader availability of services to the research community.

User fees should therefore be established to reflect the real costs of performing the services provided. These costs include:

- labor costs for operating the instrumentation and ensuring that operators have the appropriate expertise to do so,
- Materials and supplies consumed in providing the services,
- Normal operating and maintenance costs of the instrumentation (including the costs of any consumable parts within the instrumentation), and
- A contingency for major repair costs.

In some cases, the University, through the central administration and/or faculties and departments, provide operational subsidies of Core Facilities direct costs. Consequently, a differential pricing for other academic users may be permissible to the extent that the costs charged to them reflect direct research costs.

Where possible, the indirect costs associated with providing the services should be factored into the user fee structure.

Alternatively, some research contracts will accept market pricing of services.

This would result in this type of user fee structure:

Internal (UofO ¹) user	Direct costs, net of any UofO contribution to direct research costs
External academic users	Direct costs, <u>including</u> any UofO subsidization of direct research costs
External users	Market-based pricing

4. Budget Projections

Since most Core Facilities have different accounts rather than one single master account, the budget projections have been constructed in a way that individual budgets / cost centres can be planned for individually and aggregated or conversely, a global budget can be developed and then allocated to different cost centres.

This approach should also facilitate reporting since costs could simply be transcribed from current financial statements to the appropriate column or category.

¹ UofO is short for University of Ottawa.

5. Application Deadline, Submission and Reporting Requirements

Applications must be reviewed and approved by the applicant's faculty, which confirms its approval by having its representative sign the application and the RE form in a second step (described below).

Application Deadline for a new Core Facility

The competition deadline will be specified in the call for proposals issued normally every 2-3 years.

The application must include:

- The request for Funds Forms (RE forms) completed and signed by all parties
- A filled proposal form for the establishment of a new core facility
- A filled spreadsheet for new facilities including budget projections, equipment lists, and user fee structures. A provisional three year budget must be provided as indicated in the attached budget template.
- A letter from the faculty confirming its support of the establishment of the Core Facility and its contributions towards the proposed Core Facility

Annual reporting for Established Core Facilities

The annual reporting process is now switched to a more "going concern" type of reporting where much information should be available on web sites. Therefore, financial and performance information is to be provided in a single format, and narrative reporting focuses on events in the current year.

Requirements:

- A filled Progress Report
- A filled spreadsheet for annual financial and performance reports

For more information, please contact the Strategic Development Initiatives Office (bviens@uottawa.ca).