Guide to Charter Application Template
for Organized Research Units

Office of the Vice-President Research & Innovation

This Guide provides instructions for completing the Charter Application Template for ORUs. The Template and Guide are provided to implement the Senate Policy on ORUs (March 2012) and should be read in conjunction with the Policy. All applications by existing ORUs for new charters, and all applications to charter new ORUs, should be submitted using the Charter Application Template. The template must be completed on standard letter size paper using a 12 point font size, six lines per inch, with 1 inch margins. The content of the application should be written clearly and concisely.

1. Due dates: Applications must be submitted by Friday October 31, 2014 to the VPRI Office (c/o Lia Cavaliere: lia@yorku.ca, ext. 33782), with signatures from all proposed lead and participating Faculties to confirm that they are aware of the application. Also by October 31, please submit a request to each proposed lead or participating Faculty for a letter of support for the application, c/o each Faculty’s Associate Dean of Research, and send a copy of each request to the VPRI Office (lia@yorku.ca). Faculty letters of support are due to the VPRI Office by Friday November 28, 2014.

Indicate the current or proposed name of the ORU.

2. Plain Language Abstract (75 words max)

Summarize the proposed mandate for the ORU and its value to York University and to the broader community or society.

3. Category (Institutional or Faculty Based)

The Senate Policy provides that ORUs may be institutionally based or based within individual Faculties. Institutional ORUs will normally be expected to attract and support a large critical mass of researchers from across multiple Units and Faculties. Faculty-based ORUs will normally bring together a critical mass of researchers predominantly from a single Faculty.

4. Principal Applicant and Institutional Sponsors

Identify at least one Principal Applicant who has led the drafting of the application and has carriage of the application on behalf of the ORU or proposed ORU. Note that principal applicants must be full-time faculty members. All applications must be signed by the Principal Applicant’s Chair or other unit head to indicate they have notice of the application. Additionally, all applications must be signed by the Dean or designate of at least one Sponsoring Faculty that has provided a letter of support confirming it will be the lead Faculty for the ORU.
Applications for Institutional ORU Charters should also be signed and supported by at least one additional Participating Faculty. The expectations for Sponsoring and Participating Faculties are discussed below under Appendix A.

5. Co-Applicant(s)

Identify any co-applicants who have contributed to writing the application and are expected to form the base of the ORU membership during the term of the proposed charter. Note that co-applicants must be full-time faculty members.

6. Executive Committee

List current (if any) and proposed members of the ORU’s Executive Committee or equivalent internal governance body that provides advice, input and approval on operational and planning issues, in accordance with the ORU’s local governance documents.

7. Board

List suggested members for the ORU’s Board (note these do not need to be confirmed, only suggested). The Board normally includes:

- VPRI (or designate) (Chair, for Institutional ORUs, Vice-Chair, for Faculty-based ORUs)
- Dean (or designate) of lead Sponsoring Faculty (Vice-Chair, for Institutional ORUs, Chair for Faculty-based ORUs)
- Dean (or designate) of Participating Faculties

You may also suggest others for membership on the Board such as relevant Chairs or Directors, GPD representatives, Advancement representatives or others.

8. Advisory Body

List current (if any) and proposed members of the Advisory Body, which normally includes members external to the University who represent the ORU’s broader stakeholder communities and provide input and advice regarding the research program, strategic planning, or new opportunities. If you are not proposing an Advisory Body please provide a brief explanation.

9. Proposed Membership

List proposed members by category. Note that proposed members must have confirmed in writing to the Principal Applicant(s) (eg by email) that they wish to be listed in the application. “Full members” are defined for purposes of the Charter application as full-time York University faculty members who have confirmed how they intend to be active in the life of the ORU for at least part of the charter term. For all full members complete the matrix indicating the modes of participation to which they have committed.
“Other members” are defined for the purposes of the Charter application as those who are not full-time York University faculty members (e.g., students, external members, contract faculty, post-doctoral fellows, others), and full-time York University faculty members who wish to be listed as members of the ORU but do not expect to be active during the charter term.

10. Progress toward fulfilling mandate or meeting charter expectations during current term (5 pages max.)

This section should be completed only by existing ORUs. Provide a high level overview of the ORU’s most important contributions and achievements during its current term having regard to objectives and expectations set out in its own planning documents or current charter, and the expectations established for ORUs in the Senate Policy. In addition, attach to your application as Appendix C:

- The plan which formed the basis for the ORU’s last charter application
- Reports from the most recent Senate review or interim review (i.e., any reviewer report, any response from the ORU)
- Annual reports for the ORU for its past two years

11. Charter Proposal

All applicants must complete parts (a) and (b) of this section.

(a) Describe the most promising research opportunities for the ORU over the term of the proposed charter, addressing each of the following points (5 pages max):
- the general nature of the research to be pursued through the ORU
- proposed organizing themes, focus areas, or programs of research, and any specific research projects or activities being planned
- why the proposed research is timely
- why an ORU is needed to undertake the proposed research activities
- what value the ORU will add to the work of individual researchers or research teams
- how the proposed research will build on or complement existing institutional strengths and reputation or represents an outstanding new opportunity for research development
- how the proposed ORU charter aligns with the University’s Strategic Research Plan and Academic Plan, and with Faculty strategic plans, including complement planning
- anticipated sources of external funding that the ORU will pursue to finance its activities
- the plan for enhancing the training environment for students and post-doctoral fellows
- the plan for engaging in knowledge transfer or knowledge mobilization in ways appropriate to the ORU's research area
- the rationale as to why the ORU should be Faculty Based or Institutional
- identify the leading research units in Canada and internationally that pursue comparable mandates, and explain how the ORU or proposed ORU will position itself to achieve national leadership and international recognition within this field of comparators.

(b) Describe any other benefits of the ORU and its activities that have not been fully captured by the information in 10(a) above (optional - up to 1 page). This section may be used if needed to expand on any intangible or additional benefits that have not been addressed already through discussion of the bullet points in 10(a).

(c) Define the expectations, projected deliverables, and evaluation metrics for the proposed charter period (2 pages max.). Identity the specific expectations for what can be accomplished and delivered by the ORU and its membership over the next 5 year period. Suggest quantitative and other measures that can be applied in determining if these expectations have been met.

12. Directorship

Identify the proposed Director of the ORU, with title and affiliation. If there is no proposed Director make a recommendation as to how the Directorship should be filled (eg renewal application by current Director, internal search, external search), and provide a rationale to support the recommendation.

Appendices

A Lead Sponsoring and Participating Faculty Letters of Support

The application must be followed by a letter of support from the Dean or designate of at least one lead Sponsoring Faculty confirming it will serve as lead Faculty for the ORU, and the supports it is committing over the term of the Charter.

For Faculty based ORUs the lead Sponsoring Faculty hosts the ORU and is responsible to ensure it has access to baseline operating resources. It is also expected to support the ORU's development, supply a decanal representative to Chair the ORU Board, and integrate ORU objectives into Faculty planning.
For Institutional ORUs the lead Sponsoring Faculty is expected at a minimum to support the development of the ORU in collaboration with the Office of the VPRI by promoting membership in the ORU, supplying a decanal representative to serve as Vice-Chair of the ORU Board, facilitating selection and approval of Directors for the ORU, and integrating ORU objectives into Faculty planning on complement, graduate and post-doctoral fellow recruitment and training, advancement opportunities, and other relevant areas. Applications for Institutional ORUs must also be followed by a letter of support from the Dean or designate of at least one other Participating Faculty.

B  Budget

Provide a 5 year budget proposal for the ORU including a detailed budget for the first year. The Budget should itemize estimated expenses and the anticipated sources of revenue to cover those expenses, including supports confirmed from the Faculties and any support requested from the VPRI. Please contact Chandra Persaud, Budget Officer in the Office of the VPRI, for assistance in developing the budget.

C  Other attachments

- The plan which formed the basis for the ORU’s last charter application
- Reports from the most recent Senate review or interim review (i.e. any reviewer report, any response from the ORU)
- Annual reports for the ORU for its past two years