

Academic Organization

Academics & Research – Academics & Instruction

EWU Policy 301-01

Authority: EWU Board of Trustees

Effective: May 16, 2025

Proponent: Vice President – Academic Affairs

Purpose: This policy describes the basic academic organization at Eastern Washington University and prescribes the standards and procedures for modifying the academic organization.

History: This policy supersedes the previous version dated May 21, 2021, with a housekeeping edit adding the School of Nursing effective June 1, 2023. Revisions were approved by the Board of Trustees on May 16, 2025. A housekeeping edit to a cross-reference was made on November 4, 2025.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

a. The university academic organizational structure should reflect and promote the educational goals and programs of the university. It will be based upon a multidimensional framework, recognizing different organizational needs of various units and yet providing for equitable consideration of all programs within institutional goals and policies.

b. While Eastern Washington University is primarily a face-to-face institution, committed to fostering in-person learning, we recognize Distance Education (DE) as an essential component of our mission to increase accessibility and expand opportunities. DE enhances access through innovative delivery methods, supporting diverse populations and aligning with EWU's strategic goals. All DE programs maintain the same academic standards as in-person offerings, ensuring quality, rigor, and compliance with federal and accreditor standards, including regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors.

Governance of DE programs is integrated into EWU's organization structure, with oversight shared by academic departments, the Office of the Provost, and the Faculty Organization. Departments are responsible for faculty training, course design, and continuous improvement, working closely with university support units. Regular reviews and approval processes ensure DE programs meet institutional goals, maintain academic integrity, and comply with regulatory requirements.

c. In addition to traditional academic units such as colleges, departments, schools, centers, and institutes, EWU has established a Professional and Continuing Education (PCE) unit as a dedicated administrative unit to support post-secondary non-degree instructional activities. PCE serves to centralize and streamline the management

of non-degree offerings, enhancing access and quality while supporting the university's broader educational mission.

(1) The primary effort of administration should be to facilitate the work of the teaching faculty and students and the educational needs of our service area.

(2) The organization should reflect the major commitments of the university and permit implementation of decisions about university program directions.

(3) Structure and procedures should provide every faculty member with:

(a) An opportunity for maximum professional development within the given resources of the university.

(b) An effective role or representation in the selection and evaluation of academic administrators, and

(c) A clear understanding of the conditions of his employment, particularly the regulations governing retention, tenure and promotion.

d. The university organizational structure and mechanisms are to be considered to be in a process of continuing development and adaptation, responding to the emerging or changing conditions affecting the university's mission and activities.

(1) As program goals and environmental conditions change, university organization and related procedures must also make appropriate corresponding changes.

(2) In order to facilitate necessary change, overly complex and restrictive organizational arrangements or procedures will be avoided. Institution-wide policies governing instruction and personnel will therefore be broad gauged and generally applicable to all instructional units and will be drafted in such a manner as to provide reasonable flexibility for the academic sub-units charged with operation under them.

(3) A key part of the developmental style must be continuous (annual) review of all unit goals and performance, in reference to the changed environment in which the university and its sub-units operate.

e. In formulating all-university policies, procedures and structures the assumption is made that the faculty member is highly professional in the faculty member's area of expertise. Thus it is further assumed that the faculty member is capable of making individual, as well as collective, decisions with fellow professionals concerning matters of instruction, professional conduct and conditions of professional employment and reward. Therefore, the academic administration of the university shall be based upon the principle of shared responsibility in governance. Organizational procedures will place decision accountability as close as possible to the most adequate and appropriate source of expertise and information, and provide for specific evaluation and review of all operations.

- (1) The structure should promote effective and efficient management as directly and simply as possible.
- (2) Every program unit (departments, centers, colleges, schools, etc.) will prepare explicit goal statements which will be reviewed regularly, both for pertinence to institutional goals, particularly the strategic plan and for relationship to program productivity.
- (3) Definitive statements of administrative responsibility and accountability at all levels will be prepared and adopted.
- (4) Academic administrative assignments will be for specific terms which will be codified in a signed MOU or Letter of Appointment between the faculty member, their Dean, and the Provost or their designee.
- (5) The faculty shall exercise a strong voice in the selection of academic administrative personnel. This voice may be expressed formally in various ways, depending upon the specific circumstances and the relationship of the position to individual faculty concerns. Appointments will be made by the president of the university, upon recommendations by the provost for academic affairs.

CHAPTER 2 – ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

2-1. Colleges

College structure is re-evaluated periodically as the needs of the university change. Changes in college structure require approval by the University President and the Board of Trustees.

Currently, Eastern Washington University consists of the following academic colleges:

College of Professional Programs

College of Health Science & Public Health

College of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences

2-2. Schools

The following schools have been established at EWU:

- a. School of Computing and Engineering Sciences

- b. School of Social Work
- c. School of Education
- d. School of Business
- e. School of Accounting
- f. School of Psychology
- g. School of Libraries
- h. School of Nursing

A school may be established if it meets the criteria and completes the procedures set forth in this section.

a. Similar academic units of comparable size and academic quality at other comprehensive universities are frequently designated as schools.

b. The designation, school, is an important factor in competing for external resources.

c. The designation, school, is an important factor in competitive dealings with other, similar programs.

d. The designation, school, satisfies and/or is in keeping with the expectations of accrediting bodies and with the perception of community.

e. The applicant department(s) offers a terminal degree in a professionally oriented program.

f. The applicant department(s) enrolls a sufficient number of students to justify the offering of its entire required curriculum on a regular basis.

g. The applicant department(s) has a complex organization as evidenced by: the number of degree programs, the number of disciplines within the unit, a high degree of community interaction, extensive external funding activity, and by size of faculty.

Title of School Administrator: The title for the individual who administers a school is director or equivalent. The use of the title, director, as administrative officer of a school does not preclude its use for other administrative positions in the university.

Financial Impact in Establishment of a School: No new administrative positions may be created by the designation of school. Furthermore, the university shall not be obligated to provide additional resources as a result of the establishment of a school. Departments designated as schools under this policy remain departments within their colleges for purposes of other university policies and procedures.

CHAPTER 3 – CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

3-1. General

Centers and Institutes are becoming an increasingly common method used by universities to organize research, selected curricula programs, and services to the community that transcend the boundaries of traditional academic departments. They are characterized by their flexible goals and structure, their specific functions, and multidisciplinary nature. Centers and institutes offer a highly responsive means for increasing the institution's

capacity to provide relevant, timely, and cost-effective support to regional stakeholders. It is the intent that centers and institutes encourage interdepartmental cooperation, collaboration, and innovative programming. A center or institute may provide services to on-campus and off-campus populations, and may be funded in a variety of ways.

3-2. Definitions

- Centers or Institutes are organizational units within one or more colleges, or an extension of the Provost's or President's Office, created to implement academic and training programs, clinical or community service, or research activities that cannot ordinarily be accommodated within existing departmental structures. They are designed to further the mission of the university.

- An Institute is a distinct and freestanding unit of substantial size that may be associated directly with one or more colleges/schools, or be independent of these academic structures.

- Institutes are freestanding units capable of managing degree programs, facilitating research, and offering services while maintaining close ties to colleges or schools. While institutes are not tenure-granting units, they may house academic programs and offer degrees or certificates, with faculty tenure homes remaining in their respective departments. A Center is ordinarily a subordinate unit within an existing department, school, college, or institute; interdisciplinary centers may, however, report to the Provost. Centers are interdisciplinary organizational units within one or more departments, schools, or colleges. They are primarily focused on fostering collaboration, administering curricula, managing resources, and supporting research or community engagement that transcends traditional departmental boundaries. While centers are not tenure-granting units, they may house academic programs and offer degrees or certificates, with faculty tenure homes remaining in their respective departments.

Note:

- Some entities called "institutes" or "centers" whose purpose is to provide services to the University community (including daycare centers, learning centers, computer centers and other such entities as may be so designated by the President) shall not be considered Centers or Institutes for the purposes of this policy.

- The EWU Centers of Excellence, while reflecting many of the characteristics described in this policy document, were created under SSB 6655 (1998) that directed EWU to identify "those academic centers of excellence on which EWU should focus and expand in order to enhance its enrollment and reaffirm its reputation for academic excellence." The expectation is that the centers provide activity relevant to regional needs, maintain a reputation for excellence that extends beyond the university, include career-focusing opportunities for students, and offer the opportunity for partnerships with the

local communities and other institutions. The Centers of Excellence are --- Music, Creative Writing, and Honors.

- Centers and institutes may maintain independent budgets, including funding for instructional activities, research, and community engagement. Where applicable, centers may reimburse departments for faculty participation or teaching contributions.

- Centers offering interdisciplinary curricula must appoint a director or equivalent administrative leader responsible for program oversight, resource allocation, and liaison work with participating departments.

3-3. Policy Statements

A Center or Institute that uses the Eastern Washington University name or resources shall:

- a. Be able to define its focus of service to on-campus and off-campus populations, including the identification of interdepartmental/service collaboration, and connection to the EWU mission.
- b. Conform to all state and university regulations related to fiscal management and practice, exercise fiscal accountability, and provide an annual report of activity and accounts; and
- c. Be reviewed by a committee appointed by the President, Provost, or college dean(s) every three years.

3-4. Professional and Continuing Education

The Professional and Continuing Education (PCE) unit serves as the administrative home for all post-secondary non-degree instructional activities at EWU. This includes both for-credit and not-for-credit offerings. The purpose of PCE is to centralize the administration, marketing, and delivery of these activities to enhance access, ensure quality, and streamline operations.

Post-secondary non-degree instructional activities must be housed in PCE, except under the following conditions:

- a. Graduate for-credit certificates may remain within Graduate Programs if their courses are also included in accelerated online degree programs.
- b. Credential offerings created by EWU units exclusively for EWU employees, and that are not recognized externally as credentials, may remain under their respective units' administration.
- c. All other exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Provost, with justification demonstrating why the program cannot be effectively administered by PCE.
- d. Non-matriculated students may take courses as non-matriculated students provided:
 - The courses are not offered through PCE; and,
 - They do not take courses as non-matriculated students for more than two terms, in alignment with Academic Policy 303-21 (section 2-2_.

PCE will collaborate with colleges, schools, and departments to ensure that non-degree programs align

with institutional priorities and meet compliance, accreditation, and fiscal management standards.

CHAPTER 4 – ACADEMIC ORGANIZATION CHANGES

4-1. General

Changes to the structure of the Academic Organization are sometimes necessary. Examples of such changes include, but are not limited to:

- creation, realignment, or other modification to a college, department, or other academic unit;
- designation as a school;
- establishment of a center or institute;
- renaming of an academic unit; and,
- dissolution of a department or other academic unit.

4-2. Proposals

Any proposal to modify the academic organization of the university or to create a Center or Institute shall be assessed based on how the proposal supports or complements overall goals and strategic plans of the university.

Proposals for changes to Academic Organization must include adequate justification. Where applicable, each proposal must include the following items:

- Statement of general purpose (disciplines involved, areas of focus, research, and/or service)
- Statement of alignment with University's mission and identified goals
- Feasibility: Description of institutional capability for implementing the objectives including faculty strengths, prior accomplishments, etc.
- Organizational Structure: governance, administrative oversight, responsibilities, and reporting structure
- Description of administrative structure of the organization and reporting relationships
- Resources: a 3-year fiscal plan to include revenue/source of funds, and estimated expenditures.

Also required is a description of facilities and personnel that will be necessary.

- Mechanisms for collaboration with traditional departments.
- Budget plans for faculty reimbursements and program costs.
- Administrative structures to support curricular and operational needs.
- Proposals must include a tracking system for majors or participants to ensure accurate representation of program impact and enrollment statistics.
- Proposals for post-secondary non-degree instructional programming must be submitted through PCE for review and approval, except in cases where exceptions for graduate certificates are sought under section 3-4.

4-3. Specific Proposal Requirements

In addition to the requirements in section 4-2, the proposals identified below must also satisfy the specific requirements shown.

a. School Designation: Proposals for designation as a school must include evidence that academic units at comparable institutions are so designated.

b. Dissolution of a Department: Proposals must specify mechanisms to protect the interests of students currently enrolled in such programs and to allow those students to complete their degrees in a reasonable time period. Such proposals must also address Collective Bargaining Agreement provisions relative to affected faculty personnel.

4-4. Procedures

Proposals under this chapter shall proceed according to the process flowchart at appendix A.

4-5. Approval Authority

The University President is the final approval authority for proposed changes to academic departments or units, school designations, establishment of centers or institutes, and similar initiatives that do not constitute a college-level change. The Board of Trustees is the final approval authority for college-level changes.

Appendix A – Academic Organization Change Flowchart

ACADEMIC ORGANIZATION CHANGES

This process governs changes to the academic structure of EWU including:

- **Creation or Substantive Modification of an Academic Department / Unit / College**
- **Academic Unit Name Changes**
- **Designation as a School**
- **Establishment of a Center or Institute**

