

University of New England
Policy on Academic Centers and Institutes at UNE
Office of the Provost November 2018

Introduction

Colleges and universities typically have academic centers and institutes in addition to traditional academic departments, programs and schools. These are distinct from support functions that may also be called centers (e.g., recreational center, tutoring center, career planning center) or which may also be used describe a physical location or building (e.g., dining center, performing arts center).

Academic centers and institutes typically are formed to organize a specific, focused teaching or research activity that is distinct from what is provided by the academic departments, schools and programs which are more focused on curriculum and arranged by traditional undergraduate or

independent courses or curricula; a center or institute may collaborate with one or more academic departments to develop and support curricula, but any proposed credit-bearing courses, certificates or other academic credentialing will require primary sponsorship and hosting by a UNE college and one or more of its academic departments, and will be listed in the course catalog through that department(s), as well as cross-listing.

The terms center and institute are often used interchangeably in higher education. However, in general a center is usually considered a smaller unit focused on a very specific and narrow scholarship area, whereas an institute is usually considered a much larger and more complex structure. A simple definition of an institute that illustrates the difference is that many institutes contain a collection of centers that are distinct in individual focus (and funding) but which share a common theme that links them in the umbrella organization. Some independent research organizations are named institutes, for example, and their individual research units within them are named centers rather than departments. Like many colleges and universities, UNE centers are a mix of different structures. While most of the existing units at UNE will be grandfathered with respect to their naming and structure, going forward it will be useful and less confusing to follow the formal definitions of a center and institute as outlined above and below for any newly proposed endeavors, and some centers may be reviewed as to their naming and structure as part of the current strategic planning process.

For reference, a list of the current non-academic and academic centers and institutes at the UNE is presented below.

UNE Non-Academic Support Centers and Physical Centers:

- The George and Barbara Bush Center
- Student Access Center
- Arthur P. Girard Marine Science Center
- Student Counseling Center
- Student Academic Success Center
- Student Health Center
- Interprofessional Simulation and Innovation Center
- Clinical Performance Center
- Finley Recreation Center
- New England Osteopathic Heritage Center
- Campus Center
- Oral Health Center
- Dallaire Drug Information Center
- Maine Area Health Education Center
- Maine Geriatric Education Center
- Community Therapy Center
- Harold Alfond Center for Health Sciences
- Center for the Enrichment of Teaching and Learning

UNE Academic Centers and Institutes:

- Center for Global Humanities

