

Chapter 1. Administrative Organization of the University

1.1 Academic Units: Departments, Divisions, Programs, Centers, Institutes and Committees

Brown University academic units take various forms, including schools, divisions, departments, centers, and programs, among others. An example of a school is Engineering; an example of a division is Applied Mathematics; an example of a department is French and Francophone Studies. Centers, institutes, programs and committees are less formal associations of faculty that have been established for educational and/or research programs of an interdisciplinary nature. For general definitions of academic departments, programs, centers and institutes, please see below. For information about proposing a new department, program, center, or institute, see the *Faculty Rules and Regulations*. An alphabetical up-to-date listing of academic [departments](#), as well as [centers and institutes](#), of the University is available on the Brown Website.

Contact information of the administrative offices of these units is available on the [Brown website](#) or in the [Brown online directory](#).

1.2 Definitions: Departments, Centers, Programs, and Institutes

The definitions below are provided according to the *Faculty Rules and Regulations*. An academic “Department” is an administrative unit of faculty members joined by a common intellectual field or academic discipline. Departments house both teaching and research programs.

A “Center” is an academic unit of the University, often involving faculty from a number of academic departments, primarily established to support faculty research or to house a multidisciplinary academic program. A Center may offer undergraduate courses and concentrations, subject to the usual scrutiny and approval by faculty committees. A Center may offer graduate courses and programs, subject to approval by the participating departments and the Graduate Council, which may lead to the awarding of the master's degree. The Ph.D. should normally be offered in the discipline of one of the sponsoring departments, subject to the policies that prevail for the granting of such a degree within that department.

A “Program” is an academic configuration whose function is primarily, though not exclusively, instruction. A Program may offer undergraduate courses and concentrations, subject to the usual scrutiny and approval by faculty committees.

An “Institute” is a large configuration of faculty, research faculty and others who oversee a variety of research and other academic programs. An Institute may offer undergraduate courses and concentrations, subject to the usual scrutiny and approval by faculty committees. An Institute may offer graduate courses and programs, subject to approval by the participating departments and the Graduate Council, which may lead to the awarding of the master's degree. The Ph.D. should normally be offered in the discipline of one of the sponsoring departments, subject to the policies that prevail for the granting of such a degree within that department.

1.3 Proposals for New Academic Departments, Programs, Centers or Institutes

As indicated in the *Faculty Rules and Regulations*, a proposal for a new academic department, academic program, center or institute is made by a group of interested faculty to the Dean of the Faculty, Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences, Dean of Engineering, Dean of Public Health, or Dean of International and Public Affairs (hereafter referred to in this chapter as the “appropriate Dean”). The Dean forwards the proposal to the Provost with their recommendation regarding the merits of the proposal. Prior to the presentation of the proposal to the Provost, discussions with the appropriate Dean and all potentially interested faculty and academic units should take place. The proposal should offer a detailed analysis of the scholarly, pedagogical, and financial consequences of the creation of the new department, program, center or institute for the University. Specifically, the proposal should include an academic budget and an analysis of the availability of potential internal and external resources. Proponents of the proposal should seek to gather letters or indications of support from all academic units potentially affected by the creation of the new department, program, center or institute.

The Provost, upon determination that all necessary supporting documentation has been provided and sufficient consultation with the appropriate Dean and faculty has occurred, brings the proposal to the Academic Priorities Committee (APC) for its consideration and review. Simultaneously, the Provost provides copies of the proposal to the President and the Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) to both make them aware of the proposal and to provide an opportunity for their input to be considered by the APC at an early stage of its review.

The APC may, at its discretion, initiate a review of the proposal through the appointment of relevant evaluating committees composed of Brown University faculty or scholars in relevant fields from peer institutions. At an early stage in their review the APC, through the office of the FEC, notifies the Faculty as a whole of the proposal and makes it available for review and comment. This notice is intended to both make the Faculty at large aware of the proposal and to provide an opportunity for their input to be received and considered by the APC in its review. The APC, through the Provost, offers its recommendations regarding the creation of a new academic department, program, center or institute to the Faculty, through the Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee. The APC's recommendation is simultaneously provided to the President and made available to the Faculty.

The Faculty considers the recommendations of the APC and votes to approve or reject the proposal. The result of this vote constitutes a recommendation to the President and is forwarded to the President for their consideration. The Provost, as chief academic officer of the University, also makes their own recommendation to the President at this stage. The President considers the recommendation of the Faculty and of the Provost and makes their own recommendation on the matter to the Board of Fellows, who have ultimate responsibility for the establishment of academic departments, programs, centers and institutes. The President notifies the APC, the FEC, and the interested faculty of the determination of the Board of Fellows.