



# RESEARCH & INNOVATION INSTITUTES POLICY

<b>POLICY TITLE:</b>	Research & Innovation Institutes Policy
<b>POLICY CATEGORY:</b>	COLLEGE ADMINISTRATIVE
<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>	
<b>POLICY OWNER:</b>	Associate Vice-President, Research & Innovation
<b>POLICY APPROVER:</b>	Board of Governors
<b>APPROVAL DATE:</b>	6/4/2025
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	9/1/2025
<b>REVIEW PERIOD:</b>	Every 5 Years
<b>REVIEWED:</b>	N/A
<b>REVISED:</b>	N/A

---

## 1. Preamble

George Brown College (GBC) has a longstanding reputation for research excellence, recognized as one of Canada's Top Research Colleges and actively contributing to Canada's innovation ecosystem. Research acts as a catalyst for innovation at GBC, bringing together education, expertise, entrepreneurship, partnerships and investment. GBC has a strong track record of enabling multidisciplinary research and innovation leading to significant socio-economic benefits for industries and communities. Demand for GBC's research and innovation expertise is high and continues to grow. With a desire to maintain a competitive advantage as part of Canada's innovation ecosystem, valuing and encouraging strategic collaboration around common themes and evidence-informed decision making, GBC's Research & Innovation Institutes establish defined priority areas for research and innovation growth and impact.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the process for establishing, operating, reviewing, renewing and discontinuing GBC's Research & Innovation Institutes and affiliated Studios, including a framework for determining governance, administration, reporting and review obligations. This policy is designed to intentionally facilitate the attainment of inclusive research excellence, enabling the Research & Innovation Institutes to realize their respective missions, ensure accountability and coordination of effort within the College, and mitigate risk for the College.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all College personnel and includes all Research & Innovation Institutes and affiliated Studios, along with all groups seeking to establish a Research & Innovation Institute or Studio at GBC. While certain Research & Innovation Institutes and Studios may use differences in title such as "centre" "hub", or "lab", such titles alone do not imply differences in structure or function. All fall within scope of this policy.

This policy does not apply to entities whose function is primarily physical, administrative or academic.

## 4. Definition of Terms

**College:** George Brown College of Applied Arts & Technology

**College personnel:** College academic, support and administrative employees, students, visiting employees, contractors, consultants and all other persons whose work affiliation is with the College, whether compensated by the College or not.

**Research & Innovation Institute:** An interdisciplinary group of GBC researchers formally brought together under a common thematic area to create and disseminate knowledge associated with that theme or area. A Research & Innovation Institute may undertake activities that are not specifically research-focused including entrepreneurship, knowledge dissemination, policy development or capacity building, but the primary purpose of the Institute should be research, scholarship or creative activity. All Research & Innovation Institutes are established and funded at the institutional level. They advance the strategic priorities of the College and report directly to the Associate Vice-President, Research & Innovation (AVPRI) through a defined governance framework.

**Research & Innovation Studio:** A physical or virtual environment where rigorous scientific and technical exploration coexists with creative inquiry. Much like traditional research labs, GBC's Research & Innovation Studios are dedicated to systematic investigation, experimentation and data analysis, and they also integrate artistic and creative processes. They encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration and imaginative problem-solving to foster new perspectives that might not emerge in conventional research settings.

**Research and Experimental Development (R&D):** Creative and systematic work undertaken to increase the stock of knowledge – including knowledge of humankind, culture and society – and to devise new applications of available knowledge. The term R&D covers three types of activity: basic research, applied research and experimental development. **Basic research** is experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts without any particular application or use in view. **Applied research** is original investigation undertaken to acquire new knowledge directed primarily towards a specific, practical aim or objective. **Experimental development** is systematic work, drawing on knowledge gained from research and practical experience and producing additional knowledge, directed to producing new products or processes or to improving existing products and services (see [OECD Frascati Manual, 2015](#))

## 5. Guiding Principles

### 5.1 Recognizing Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge

- 5.1.1 The College recognizes and upholds the importance of Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems, which have guided communities for generations in their stewardship of land, culture and ways of knowing.
- 5.1.2 Research & Innovation Institutions must be committed to fostering meaningful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities and ensuring that all activities align with Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) principles, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and other relevant frameworks and community protocols that guide responsible research and innovation activities and collaboration in accordance with the GBC Research & Innovation Protocol for Engaging with Indigenous Peoples & Communities.
- 5.1.3 Research & Innovation Institutes will employ community-based and participatory approaches to research and innovation that prioritize collaboration, co-creation and shared decision-making.

### 5.2 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- 5.2.1 Research & Innovation Institutes must ensure and demonstrate the College's commitment to anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion.
- 5.2.2 A Research & Innovation Institute should only be formed when several GBC employees (i.e. more than five, at a minimum), plan to be dedicated to the work of the Research & Innovation Institute. This could be full-time or part-time, reflected in the employee's assigned workload. The viability of a Research & Innovation Institute or Studio should not depend on the work of a single researcher.
- 5.2.3 Students should be intentionally and significantly involved in Research & Innovation Institute activities.
- 5.2.4 Research & Innovation Institutes are often, though not necessarily always, interdisciplinary, providing opportunities for new relationships within the College or broader community.

### **5.3 Mission and Focus**

- 5.3.1 Each Research & Innovation Institute will have a clearly defined mission that supports the major strategic R&D objectives of the College and adds value to both the College and the broader communities served by the College.
- 5.3.2 The mission and activities of a Research & Innovation Institute or Studio should not duplicate those accomplished by an existing College department. Proposed new Research & Innovation Institutes and affiliated Studios should be reviewed in the context of other activities underway within the College to ensure that the College's overall effort in each field of inquiry is strengthened.
- 5.3.3 A Research & Innovation Institute's focus should be defined broadly enough to attract the intellectual and professional participation of a critical mass of researchers.

### **5.4 Authority and Accountability**

- 5.4.1 Research & Innovation Institutes and affiliated Studios are created by the College, draw authority and resources from the College and are accountable to the College for the integrity of their processes. They are created and operated with the expectation of benefit for and obligation to the College. They are part of, not independent from, the College.
- 5.4.2 Decisions related to the development and approval of Research & Innovation Institutes and affiliated Studios should be evidence-informed, building upon and reflecting existing and potential College strengths and priority areas.
- 5.4.3 Research & Innovation Institutes operate with transparency and accountability and are subject to all applicable College and funder policies, procedures and guidelines.
- 5.4.4 All Research & Innovation Institutes must have a plan for fiscal viability, with the first two years of funding committed at the time of approval.
- 5.4.5 Research & Innovation Institutes are transparently created, supported, reviewed and renewed or discontinued.
- 5.4.6 Upon creation or renewal, the AVPRI will document the scope of commitment that will be provided by the College to the Research & Innovation Institute for a five-year term.

### **5.5 Operations**

- 5.5.1 Each Research & Innovation Institute should typically be managed by an appointed Director, except when justified in extraordinary circumstances. The Director may be seconded to the role from their home position (i.e. a seconded faculty or support staff member).

## **6. Policy – Research & Innovation Institutes**

### **6.1 Research & Innovation Institute Creation**

- 6.1.1 Research & Innovation Institutes are typically established for a five-year renewable term starting at the beginning of an academic year (September 1).
- 6.1.2 GBC employees seeking to establish a Research & Innovation Institute must submit an Expression of Interest to the Office of Research & Innovation for pre-approval by the AVPRI in consultation with the College's Senior Leadership Team. As part of the pre-approval process, the AVPRI will also consult with other relevant GBC administrators prior to providing a pre-approval decision. The Institute Expression of Interest should include the elements itemized in Procedure A.
- 6.1.3 After pre-approval has been granted, the person or group of people submitting the proposal must work with the Office of Research & Innovation to prepare a proposal that includes the elements itemized in Procedure B. Information about the required Research & Innovation Institute Terms of Reference can be found in Procedure C.
- 6.1.4 Proposals must be submitted to the AVPRI for approval to move forward for community consultation.
- 6.1.5 A summary of each proposal for new Research & Innovation Institutes will be presented to College Council and posted on GBCommunity for a minimum of 14 days to allow for review and comments by any interested college personnel. All comments and feedback received via the community consultation process will be considered. Following the community consultation, the AVPRI will determine whether any necessary adjustments to the proposal are required prior to approval.
- 6.1.6 The AVPRI will present all proposals for new Research & Innovation Institutes, including a summary of any comments and feedback received during the community consultation process, to the Senior Leadership Team for review and approval.
- 6.1.7 The AVPRI will communicate an approval decision to the Integrated Planning Committee for resource allocation.
- 6.1.8 New Research & Innovation Institutes will have a probationary period for their first year of operation. At the end of the first year of operation, each new Research & Innovation Institute will be reviewed with respect to the attainment of the proposed milestones and deliverables for Year 1. Following the review, the Research & Innovation Institute will be either (a) removed from probation, with review and renewal due in four years; (b) granted a year's extension with the expectation of meeting a set of well-defined deliverables; (c) reclassified; or (d) discontinued.
- 6.1.9 The designation of a Research & Innovation Institute can only be used once the AVPRI has granted written approval to proceed.

## **6.2 Research & Innovation Institute Operation**

- 6.2.1 Once approved, a Research & Innovation Institute must operate in accordance with its approved terms of reference, budget, administrative structure and approved plan.
- 6.2.2 All Research & Innovation Institutes must submit an annual report to the AVPRI by June 30 of each year. The annual report must include the elements itemized in Procedure D.
- 6.2.3 The Research & Innovation Institute must post an Executive Summary of the Annual Report to the Office of Research & Innovation website by September 1 of each year.
- 6.2.4 All Research & Innovation Institutes and affiliated college personnel are expected to adhere to relevant College and funder policies and procedures.
- 6.2.5 All Research & Innovation Institutes are expected to work in collaboration and alignment with other relevant units of the College including the Office of Research & Innovation, Research Ethics Board, Academic Divisions and Facilities with respect to any activities they may undertake.
- 6.2.6 Any modifications to a Research & Innovation Institute Terms of Reference must be approved in writing by the AVPRI in consultation with other relevant College senior management as appropriate and documented in the Research & Innovation Institute's next annual report.

## **6.3 Research & Innovation Institute Review and Renewal or Discontinuation**

- 6.3.1 All Research & Innovation Institutes that pass the probationary period will be subject to a five-year review. The five-year review will be initiated by the Office of Research & Innovation twelve months in advance of the expiry of the current term. The review process includes the elements itemized in Procedure E.
- 6.3.2 Upon completion of the review, the AVPRI will make a recommendation to the Senior Leadership Team regarding whether the Research & Innovation Institute should be renewed or discontinued.
- 6.3.3 The AVPRI will present the recommendation to the Senior Leadership Team for approval. Renewal decisions will be based on an assessment of:
  - a) Past performance as outlined in annual reports;
  - b) Financial viability and sustainability;
  - c) Relevance of the Research & Innovation Institute's mandate to the College, the broader GBC community, and Canada's innovation ecosystem;
  - d) Effectiveness of purpose, mission and objectives as outlined in the Research & Innovation Institute's Terms of Reference, including relevant leadership and succession planning;
  - e) Impact and outcomes measured against the Research & Innovation Institute's stated goals and plans; specifically, the impact of a Research & Innovation Institute must be demonstrated to enhance R&D activity over and above what could reasonably be accomplished by individual researchers; and

- f) Alignment of the Research & Innovation Institute's current activities and future plans with the College's strategic priorities.
- 6.3.4 The AVPRI will communicate a written decision to the Director of the Research & Innovation Institute. The decision may place conditions on a renewal including a probationary period which would necessitate a subsequent annual review as described above. The Director of the Research & Innovation Institute may submit a written response to the decision within 14 days, for consideration.
- 6.3.5 The AVPRI will communicate the renewal decision to the Integrated Planning Committee for resource allocation.
- 6.3.6 At any point outside the review process, a Research & Innovation Institute may be discontinued in the event of, but not limited to, the following occurrences:
- a) A majority of the College personnel affiliated with the Research & Innovation Institute request discontinuation; and/or
  - b) A qualified Director has not been identified within a 12 month period; and/or
  - c) The Research & Innovation Institute has fulfilled its stated goals and has no plans for future activities; and/or
  - d) Reporting requirements are not met for a period of 6 months; and/or
  - e) The Research & Innovation Institute does not meet the mandate articulated in its Terms of Reference or fulfills the requirements described in this framework.
- 6.3.7 The College has the right to discontinue a Research & Innovation Institute at any point due to financial exigency.
- 6.3.8 If a Research & Innovation Institute is discontinued, the AVPRI will initiate a discontinuation process. In any such processes, care should be taken regarding human resources, financial and contractual obligations.
- 6.3.9 Renewal and discontinuation decisions will be communicated to College Council and posted on GBCommunity.

## **7. Policy – Research & Innovation Studios**

### **7.1 Research & Innovation Studio Creation**

- 7.1.1 Research & Innovation Studios are typically established for a three-year renewable term starting at the beginning of an academic semester (September 1, January 1, May 1).
- 7.1.2 GBC employees seeking to establish a Research & Innovation Studio must submit an Expression of Interest to the Office of Research & Innovation for pre-approval by the AVPRI in consultation with the ORI Senior Management Team. As part of the pre-approval process, the AVPRI will also consult with other relevant GBC administrators prior to providing a pre-approval decision. The Studio Expression of Interest should include the elements itemized in Procedure F.

- 7.1.3 After pre-approval has been granted, the person or group of people submitting the proposal must work with the Office of Research & Innovation to prepare a proposal that includes the elements itemized in Procedure G. Information about the required Research & Innovation Studio Terms of Reference can be found in Procedure H.
- 7.1.4 Proposals must be submitted to the Office of Research & Innovation for review and endorsement by the ORI Senior Management Team. The AVPRI will present all endorsed proposals for new Research & Innovation Studios to the College's Senior Leadership Team for approval.
- 7.1.5 The AVPRI will communicate an approval decision to the Integrated Planning Committee for resource allocation, if required.
- 7.1.6 New Research & Innovation Studios will be reviewed 6 months prior to the end of their term. Following the review, the Research & Innovation Studio will be either (a) renewed for an additional three-year term; (b) granted a year's extension with the expectation of meeting a set of well-defined deliverables; (c) reclassified; or (d) discontinued.
- 7.1.7 The designation of a Research & Innovation Studio can only be used once the AVPRI has granted written approval to proceed.

## **7.2 Research & Innovation Studio Operation**

- 7.2.1 Once approved, a Research & Innovation Studio must operate in accordance with its approved terms of reference, budget, administrative structure and approved plan.
- 7.2.2 All Research & Innovation Studios must submit an annual report to the AVPRI by the anniversary of their date of establishment (September 1, January 1, May 1). The annual report must include the elements itemized in Procedure I.
- 7.2.3 All Research & Innovation Studios and affiliated college personnel are expected to adhere to relevant College and funder policies and procedures.
- 7.2.4 All Research & Innovation Studios are expected to work in collaboration and alignment with other relevant units of the College including the Office of Research & Innovation, Research Ethics Board, Academic Divisions and Facilities with respect to any activities they may undertake.
- 7.2.5 Any modifications to a Research & Innovation Studio Terms of Reference must be approved in writing by the AVPRI in consultation with other relevant College senior management as appropriate and documented in the Research & Innovation Studio's next annual report.

## **7.3 Research & Innovation Studio Review and Renewal or Discontinuation**

- 7.3.1 All Research & Innovation Studios will be subject to a three-year review. The three-year review will be initiated by the Office of Research & Innovation six months in

advance of the expiry of the current term. The review process includes the elements itemized in Procedure J.

- 7.3.2 Upon completion of the review, the ORI Senior Management Team will make a recommendation to the AVPRI regarding whether the Research & Innovation Institute should be renewed or discontinued.
- 7.3.3 The AVPRI will present the recommendation to the Senior Leadership Team for approval. Renewal decisions will be based on an assessment of:
- g) Past performance as outlined in annual reports;
  - h) Financial viability and sustainability;
  - i) Relevance of the Research & Innovation Studio's mandate to the existing Research & Innovation Institutes, the College, the broader GBC community, and Canada's innovation ecosystem;
  - j) Effectiveness of purpose, mission and objectives as outlined in the Research & Innovation Studio's Terms of Reference, including relevant leadership and succession planning;
  - k) Impact and outcomes measured against the Research & Innovation Studio's stated goals and plans; specifically, the impact of a Research & Innovation Institute must be demonstrated to enhance R&D activity over and above what could reasonably be accomplished by individual researchers; and
  - l) Alignment of the Research & Innovation Studio's current activities and future plans with the College's strategic priorities.
- 7.3.4 The AVPRI will communicate a written decision to the Directors of the affiliated Research & Innovation Institute(s).
- 7.3.5 The AVPRI will communicate the renewal decision to the Integrated Planning Committee for resource allocation, if required.
- 7.3.6 At any point outside the review process, a Research & Innovation Studio may be discontinued in the event of, but not limited to, the following occurrences:
- f) A majority of the College personnel affiliated with the Research & Innovation Studio request discontinuation; and/or
  - g) The Research & Innovation Studio has fulfilled its stated goals and has not plans for future activities; and/or
  - h) Reporting requirements are not met for a period of 6 months; and/or
  - i) The Research & Innovation Studio does not meet the mandate articulated in its Terms of Reference or fulfills the requirements described in this framework.
- 7.3.7 The College has the right to discontinue a Research & Innovation Studio at any point due to financial exigency.
- 7.3.8 If a Research & Innovation Studio is discontinued, the AVPRI will initiate a discontinuation process. In any such processes, care should be taken regarding human resources, financial and contractual obligations.

## **8. Roles and Responsibilities**

**8.1** The AVPRI is responsible for:

- a) Overseeing the governance and financial administration of Research & Innovation Institutes and affiliated Studios;
- b) Reviewing the annual report from each Research & Innovation Institute and responding to the Research & Innovation Institute's Director with written feedback regarding activities, financial management and compliance with relevant policies and procedures by August 31 of each year;
- c) Establishing a review schedule and conducting reviews of each Research & Innovation Institute and affiliated Studios according to the terms set out in this policy; and
- d) Supporting the promotion of Research & Innovation Institutes and Studios, their activities and accomplishments.

**8.2** The Research & Innovation Institute Director (or equivalent) is accountable for the efficient and effective operations and progress of its mandate as agreed to upon creation or renewal.

**8.3** Members of the College's Senior Leadership Team, the AVPRI and Academic Deans may participate as members of Research & Innovation Institutes but should not be appointed as Director of a Research & Innovation Institute.

**8.4** The AVPRI or their designate is responsible for ensuring the implementation of and compliance with this framework.

## **9. Compliance**

This policy, sanctioned by George Brown College, is an institutional regulation requiring compliance from all college personnel. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary measures commensurate with the offence in accordance with relevant academic and administrative codes of conduct and collective bargaining agreement.

## **10. Procedures**

Procedure A: GBC Research & Innovation Institute Expression of Interest

Procedure B: GBC Research & Innovation Institute Proposal

Procedure C: GBC Research & Innovation Institute Terms of Reference

Procedure D: GBC Research & Innovation Institute Annual Report

Procedure E: GBC Research & Innovation Institute Review Process

Procedure F: GBC Research & Innovation Studio Expression of Interest

Procedure G: GBC Research & Innovation Studio Proposal

Procedure H: GBC Research & Innovation Studio Terms of Reference

Procedure I: GBC Research & Innovation Studio Annual Report

Procedure J: GBC Research & Innovation Studio Review Process

## **11. Related Materials**

[OECD Frascati Manual, 2015](#)

## **12. Related Policies**

Commercialization Policy  
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Policy  
Intellectual Property Policy

## **13. Acknowledgements**

This policy was adapted from Toronto Metropolitan University Policy 144: Research Centres.