

Guidelines for Centre of Excellence (CoE) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB)

The guidelines are applicable for all CoE's granted by the Norwegian Research Council.

The purpose of these guidelines is to:

- Assure that CoE's are properly anchored at the top management level of UMB
- Clarify roles and responsibility between UMB, the host Department and collaborative Departments in relation to the organisation and the operation of the CoE
- Make explicit that CoE's have academic and management independence
- Clarify that CoE's forms an integral part of UMB's organisation

Background

1. CoE's must at all times follow and live up to CoE guidelines and requirements given by the Norwegian Research Council. CoE is a time-bound research centre attached to UMB as the host institution. The guidelines for CoE's given by the Norwegian Research Council ("*Krav og retningslinjer for Sentre for fremragende forskning*") dated 28.02.2011 is enclosed.
2. Each CoE shall be given a name that provides an academic understanding of what the centre is about and its research area.
3. CoE's shall be profiled and marketed as a Centre of Excellence at UMB

Organisation

4. CoE's shall be attached to a host Department.
5. In cases where the Centre is based on a cooperation between several Departments, agreements shall be entered into between the host Department and collaborating Departments concerning the operation of the Centre.
6. CoE's shall have academic and management independence towards the host Department and collaborating Departments based on principles outlined in this guideline.
7. Permanently employed academic staff attached to the Centre can either be employed by the host Department or a collaborating Department.
8. CoE's shall be headed by a Centre Manager. The Centre Manager is in charge of the day-to-day running of the Centre. The Centre Manager has decision-making authority related to the daily management of the Centre. The host Department appoints the Centre Manager based on a recommendation from the Centre Board.
9. The Department shall in its recruitment of Centre Manager take heed of the need for attaining gender equality and seek to recruit women to these positions. Gender equality shall be a policy for all appointments in the Centre.

Governance

10. For CoE's based on one Department at UMB and an external consortium of partners, the following applies:

The Centre shall establish its own Centre Board consisting of up to 5 members. The Centre Manager acts a secretary for the Board and is responsible for preparing and putting forward motions for the Board. Members of the Centre Board are appointed by the host Department Board based on a recommendation from the Centre Manager. The Centre Board shall consist of Head of Department of the host Department and a representative for staff attached to the Centre. The representative for the attached staff shall be elected by the attached staff. The additional members of the Board shall preferably be representatives external to the university. This should be representatives from external partners in the consortia, excellent researchers from other institutions or CEO's from business or managers of public bodies. The Board decides who shall be Chairman. The Chairman shall be chosen from among the Board Members.

11. For CoE's based on cooperation between several Departments at UMB and an external consortia of partners, the following applies:

The Centre shall establish its own Centre Board consisting of up to 8 members. If the number of collaborating Departments at UMB consists of more than four Departments the number of members of the Centre Board can be extended after consulting with the Director of Research at UMB. The Centre Manager acts a secretary for the Board and is responsible for preparing and putting forward motions for the Board. Members of the Centre Board are appointed jointly by the host Department and the collaborating Departments` Boards based on a recommendation from the Centre Manager. The Centre Board shall consist of Head of Department of the host Department and the Heads of all collaborating Departments at UMB and a representative for staff attached to the Centre. The representative for the attached staff shall be elected by the staff. The additional members of the Board shall preferably be representatives external to the university. This should be representatives from external partners in the consortia, excellent researchers from other institutions or CEO's from business or managers of public bodies. The Board decides who shall be Chairman. The Chairman shall be chosen from the representatives of the Board .

12. The Centre Board shall convene twice a year or when the Centre Manager or two members of the Board wish the Centre Board to convene. The Centre Board shall be in existence as long as the Centre exists, in the first instance for 5 years.

13. The main task for the Board is to oversee, decide and implement measures that seek to attain the project's main goals and sub-goals and that the project's work plan is followed and implemented in correspondence with the description in the CoE application. This also includes a dissemination plan for the Centre. The Centre Board shall carry out a quality assurance of the annual report prior to submitting it to the Norwegian Research Council. The Board shall deliberate on and approve the annual account, budget and work plan for the Centre. The Departmental Board (in one Department) or the Department Boards (if several collaborating Departments) shall ensure that the operation of the Centre is justifiable and in line with the agreement between UMB and the Norwegian Research Council. The annual financial account and the annual report from the Centre forms part of the annual meetings between the Department(s) and the leadership of the University.

14. In cases where the Centre consist of UMB as the host institution and one or several external partners a consortium agreement shall be signed between UMB and the partners by using the format developed by the Norwegian research Council (see guidelines given by the Norwegian Research Council). The collaborating partners shall be represented in the Centre Board (minimum 1 representative).

15. Besides what is already mentioned, the Centre Manager, Chairman of the Centre Board and the Head of the host and the collaborating Departments shall meet twice a year to discuss and assess the cooperation between the Centre and the Department(s) and suggest and carry out actions that contribute to a well-functioning and effective collaboration between the Department(s) and the Centre.

Location

16. The Centre shall primarily be situated in premises in or preferably close to the host-Department, secondary at other premises at UMB.

Administration

17. Based on an agreement between the Centre and the host Department, the Centre shall be provided with administrative services from the host Department.

18. It is assumed that the host Department sets aside administrative resources for serving the Centre. This includes administrative services for supporting the Centre Manager in his or her duty as head of the Centre, financial administration, reception services, post, ICT-services, accessories and other relevant administrative services.

19. In cases where collaborating Departments provide administrative services to the Centre an agreement shall be entered into between the host Department and the collaborating Department(s).

Finance

20. Centre's of Excellence financed through the CoE-funding scheme in the Norwegian Research Council shall be given an annual contribution of 1 mill NOKs from the strategy component in UMB's budget. If the Centre is based on collaboration between two or several Departments, UMB will consider raising this amount.

The amount shall be regulated annually in correspondence with the salary- and price compensation given by Government through its annual Fiscal Budget. The Centre is financed through this model for the first 5 years with the opportunity for funding for another 5 years.

The size of UMB's basic financial contribution for the next five year period shall be decided on by the University Board in its annual, ordinary budget deliberation. The Centre shall at all times hold two PhD positions provided by UMB. Besides this contribution, no other earmarked funds will be provided by UMB. UMB's basic financial contribution will be terminated when the contribution from the Norwegian Research Council comes to an end. The Centre shall also at all times be provided with two PhD positions in total from the participating Department(s).

21. The tasks and budget for the Centre is given in the agreement between UMB and the Norwegian Research Council which should also be in line with ruling of the University Board.

22. Possible infrastructural requirements in the Centre shall be covered by participating Departments as for any other ordinary research project. Possible infrastructural investments (refurbishing, scientific equipment etc.) are the responsibility of the participating Departments.

23. For temporary employed staff (PhD-students, post docs, researchers, professor II) funded through the Centre, the Centre covers running and travel cost for the persons in question. In the case the host Department or the collaborating Department funds a temporary position and earmarks this to the Centre's key research area, the host Department or the collaborating Department (depending on where the person will be employed) covers the same amount of running costs as other temporary employees in the Department who are in the same category. Possible additional running and travel costs for these temporary employed Departmental staff shall be covered by the Centre having the same rights as those financed directly by the Centre.

24. The Centre shall offer permanently employed academic staff in the host or the collaborating Departments the possibility for being partly relieved of teaching duties through an arrangement of payment from the Centre to the respective Department. The payments and the extent to which persons can seek to be relieved of teaching duties shall be based on the budget and UMB's agreement with the Norwegian Research Council. The Centre Manager makes the recommendation, towards the host Department or collaborating Departments, for scientific staff that one would want to be partly relieved of their teaching duties. The Head of the respective Department has the authority to decide if a person in question shall be partly relieved of his or her teaching duties or not. The Head of Department shall take into consideration both the needs of the Centre and the Department when making the final decision. Agreement on the person or persons that will be relieved of their teaching duties shall be decided in the previous semester to when the teaching is supposed to take place and prior to the deadline for determining the teaching plan for the semester.

25. The Centre shall cover the cost for announcement of positions, measures for recruiting people to the Centre, invitation of applicants for interviews etc., external members of the assessment committee or other measures related to newly employed people in the Centre.

Employment

26. The host Department and the collaborating Departments has personnel responsibility for permanently employed staff that is attached to the Centre. The Centre shall at all times publicise which persons that are attached to the Centre. Being attached to the Centre can for instances imply rights to certain privileges when it comes to covering travel and running costs and research assistance. Which employees in the host Department and the collaborating Departments that shall be attached to the Centre is determined when the Centre is established and through the employment of new people. Attachment to the Centre can be terminated when the Centre Manager and the respective Head of Department decide to do so. New persons can be attached to the Centre when the Centre Manager and the respective Head of Department agrees to this.

27. The Centre Manager has personnel responsibility for persons attached to the Centre, if the position the person in question holds, is financed with more than 50 % from funds from the Centre. For other persons attached to the Centre, but whose positions are financed with less that 50 % from the Centre, the host Department or the respective collaborative Department has the personnel responsibility

28. For new positions in the Centre, to be announced, the Centre shall propose the text for the announcement and how the position shall be announced. The Centre shall propose members of the assessment committee for the separate positions. Nomination and employment of persons in the announced positions shall follow UMBs personnel guidelines.

29. The Centre has the responsibility for providing PhD-education through employment of doctorates, teaching in courses for doctorate students and through counselling of doctorates. If the teaching and counselling is carried out by persons with teaching duties in a Department, their work towards the PhD-students will be a part of their teaching duties. If the teaching and counselling is carried out by persons employed by the Centre, without ordinary teaching duties, their responsibilities towards the PhD-students shall be part of their employment responsibilities at the Centre. If the teaching and counselling is carried out by persons external to the Centre that has no other engagement in the Centre, their work will be paid by the Centre. The last instance holds for courses that will be announced and reported as part of the activities in the Centre and counselling of doctorates attached to the Centre.

The CoE's lifetime

30. CoE forms part of a long-term strategy to strengthen and develop research in areas that represents main thrusts for UMB. UMB wish to consider the possibility of prolonging the life of the individual CoE's as a Centre after 10 years, albeit in a different format, if the Centre has shown excellent progress and has become a Centre of national and international renown within its area of research. A possible prolongation of the Centre after 10 years of existence shall be based on an evaluation of the Centre, agreement and support from the host Department and collaborating Departments and a decision in the University Board.

31. CoE has at the outset a determined lifetime of five years. The Centre's existence can be prolonged, but that necessitates a recommendation from the Norwegian Research Council for a prolongation and that they will support the Centre with funding for a new period. Final decision for a prolongation of the CoE is made by the host Department and the collaboration Departments.

32. CoE can also be scaled down and terminated. This is dependent on the external evaluation, carried out on behalf of the Norwegian Research Council, recommending not to prolong the Centre.