

NOTE: Units are strongly encouraged to establish internal space guidelines and should ensure that their internal guidelines align with the information provided in this document. This document was developed with all types of research space assignments in mind, although some sections of this document apply specifically to dedicated research space.

Overview

Research and graduate education are critical missions of the University of Michigan that often require substantial infrastructure, including laboratory and office space. The space needs that arise from research activities vary greatly both within and across academic disciplines. As a result, management of research space has traditionally been accomplished at the school/college/unit and departmental level. In this way, informed decisions can be made regarding the allocation, renovation, and the creation or discontinuation of research space.

However, within this diversity of needs, there exist some over-arching principles and goals regarding the allocation of research space. Application of these guiding principles across the University can help school/college/units as they work with central administration to efficiently use their existing space or seek support for the creation of new space.

With this in mind, the following guidelines were developed jointly by the Office of the Provost and Office of the Vice President for Research to help General Fund units on the Ann Arbor campus plan and assign research space and align these decisions with campus-wide practices. Schools/colleges/units should refer to these guidelines when allocating or assigning both sponsored and non-sponsored research space.

Guiding Principles

- As with all types of space on the Ann Arbor campus, research space belongs to the institution and is a valuable resource. The Provost is ultimately responsible for the allocation of research space to schools/colleges/units.
- Research space is allocated based on programmatic needs and priorities as determined by the dean or director of a school/college/unit in consultation with his/her faculty and staff. Decision-making authority may be delegated to chairs/directors for space that is assigned to their units to ensure that those with the most in-depth knowledge of the activities and needs of subsets of researchers determine appropriate allocations.
- Schools/colleges/units should develop metrics to assist in the evaluation of research space utilization and periodically determine how the current allocation of research space meets their stated programmatic needs and priorities. Although quantitative measures may not be the final determinant of space allocations, they provide an important step in the evaluation process.
- Research space assignments are not permanent. Space is assigned to activities and not individuals. As such, it may be reassigned as activities change.
- Space that is vacant or deemed underutilized should be reassigned or repurposed. A school/college/unit should have a defined plan to improve the utilization of this newly released space.
- Schools/colleges/units may choose to subsidize research activities that do not generate sufficient indirect cost recovery to fully support the infrastructure and operating costs associated with space usage, based on their research priorities and operating budgets. In such cases, the rationale and time period for the subsidy should be clearly defined.
- Optimal use of research space includes shared use of resources and facilities.
- Research space allocations should be based on existing facilities, where possible, to ensure that current facilities are fully utilized before pursuing major construction or renovations. Space renovations must follow school/college/unit approval processes to ensure that utilization meets the strategic needs of the unit.

- Research space, equipment, and materials must adhere to all health and safety regulations and procedures, as defined by U-M Occupational Safety and Environmental Health (OSEH).
- Research conducted in University facilities must only support University interests and relationships. All research conducted in such facilities must adhere to University conflict of interest policies.
- Research space assignments must adhere to all University policies and procedures that prohibit discrimination.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following individuals are responsible for managing, allocating, or using research space on the Ann Arbor campus.

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs	Is the steward of all General Fund space at the University, including research space, and is responsible for ensuring that this space supports the academic and research mission of the University.
Vice President for Research	Supports and promotes research activity at the University, integrates research into the academic mission of the University, ensures it is compliant with University and government regulations, and consults on research space needs with the Provost. The Vice President for Research is also the steward of space allocated to units that report directly to the Office of the Vice President for Research.
Deans/Unit Directors	Are stewards of all space allocated to their units and are responsible for allocating and maintaining this space to support the programmatic need and priorities of their school/college/unit.
Department Chairs	Assign research space to faculty members based on department or unit needs and priorities.
Faculty members	Effectively utilize space under their direction to meet the research and educational needs of the school/college/unit.

Considerations for the Allocation or Reassignment of Research Space

When allocating or reassigning research space, it is important to consider the following questions to optimize existing research space and avoid unnecessary renovation or construction costs:

- Will the new allocation bring the space into alignment with the long-term programmatic needs and priorities of the unit?
- Is the new allocation part of a long-term plan for research space management?
- Will the new allocation offer opportunities for the renovation or upgrade of existing space?
- Does the new allocation offer the opportunity to “right size” departmental or individual space allocations?
- What is the length of the space commitment? Is this commitment explicit or implicit?
- What one-time and recurring costs are associated with the new allocation? Will the research activity ultimately support the costs that directly result from its execution or will subsidies be needed?
- Are there opportunities to co-locate similar types of research to share core or common space and equipment?
- Are there opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration as a result of the space allocation?
- How will space assignments, equipment placement and/or infrastructure plans affect health, fire, environmental, and life safety and compliance?

Commitments to Faculty for Research Space

Faculty are expected to formulate and conduct a robust program of academic research as part of their professional activities. Therefore, the school/college/unit should strive to provide a member of the faculty with sufficient research space to support these activities. However, the dean or director of the school/college/unit must balance the needs of individual faculty with the needs of the other faculty and the overall programmatic needs and priorities of their units.

New Faculty

When new faculty join the University, the school/college/unit should communicate, in writing, any commitment for space to the new faculty. A commitment for research space should be as detailed as possible, including the following:

- The general characteristics of the space to be provided (e.g. square footage, presence of chemical hoods, and presence of specialized utilities).
- The location of the space, if it has been identified.
- The plan for identifying space in the future, if it has not been identified at the time of hire.
- Any plans to renovate the space, including a realistic timeline, budget, and source of funds.
- Any time limits for the occupancy of the space.
- The terms under which the assigned space may be re-allocated in the future.

Current Faculty

The research space usage of current faculty members should be periodically reviewed to determine if the faculty member has a shortage or excess of research space, or if the space is in need of reconfiguration or renovation. These reviews can be done individually as part of the annual review process, and/or as part of an overall assessment of the unit.

Sponsored Research

It is the responsibility of the unit leader to provide adequate space (as identified on the Proposal Approval Form) for the duration of any sponsored project conducted by the faculty. When the school/college/unit indicates on the Proposal Approval Form that space is available and specifies the building and rooms, the sponsor is assured that space necessary to conduct the research will be made available. The lead-time involved in submitting proposals may dictate that units "hedge their bets" in terms of the assignment of space. Therefore, in some cases, the space identification may include the phrase "or equivalent space, as available." Careful review of the research space identification portion of the Proposal Approval Form by all units involved in the proposal is essential (including involved units that are not the one submitting the proposal).

It is incumbent on principal investigators to identify and seek approval for all significant space requirements at the time of proposal submission.

Reallocation of Research Space

In some cases, the reallocation of research space may result in the displacement of equipment or other infrastructure. The unit should work with the current faculty occupant to properly relocate or dispose of these items. The unit is not obligated to compensate the faculty member for investments the faculty may have made in the space during the time of occupancy.

Emeritus Faculty

Emeritus faculty may be provided with research space at the discretion of the unit, if space is available and if the emeritus faculty remains actively engaged in research that aligns with the programmatic needs and priorities of their unit. Priority for research space should not be given to emeritus faculty, however.

Research Space Productivity Measures and Annual Review

A common need across many academic units and within the Offices of the Provost and Vice President for Research is to better understand how research space is used. Having quantitative and qualitative metrics and measures in place helps schools/colleges/units to assign, allocate, and optimize use of this space for current and anticipated research needs.

Productivity measures for dedicated research space may vary, depending on factors that are deemed most important or valued by each school/college/unit or discipline, and may or may not be directly linked to the level of financial activity. Therefore, financial measures should only be one part of the overall assessment of research space productivity allocation and assignment.

Financial Measures of Space Productivity

The following basic metrics have been established to provide campus with a common method for measuring research space usage, regardless of discipline, using financial and space data from the central M-Pathways systems and delivered through Business Objects reports. Calculations are based on financial transactions and space data that are specifically coded as research.

- Total externally-sponsored research expenditures (direct and indirect costs) (\$) / sq. ft.
- Total research expenditures (direct and indirect costs) (\$) / sq. ft., regardless of funding source
- Indirect costs (\$) / sq. ft.

Other Important Measures of Productivity to Consider

Schools/colleges/units may also identify other types of quantitative or qualitative information to aid in assessments of research space productivity and assignments or to establish internal target goals to support their needs and priorities. Examples of additional information that schools/colleges/units may consider include the following:

- Quality and impact of the research being conducted
- Alignment of the research activity with the strategic priorities of the school/college/unit
- Number of students participating in the research
- Proportion of effort dedicated to research (versus instruction or service)
- Proportion of the research activity supported by external awards
- Type of research conducted in the space (*e.g.* theoretical, computational, heavy equipment)

Questions about these guidelines should be directed to space.utilization@umich.edu.