



Centers of Excellence

Description (AcAf Policy 2.05A) and Listing

Recognized by the Board of Regents

(As of January 2016)

Institution	Center of Excellence	Initial BoR Approval	End of Approval Period
Baton Rouge CC	Center for Workforce Excellence in Transportation Technology	June 2013	06/15/2017
Fletcher TCC	Deepwater Center for Workforce Excellence	February 2014	03/01/2020
Delgado CC	Culinary Center for Workforce Excellence	April 2014	12/01/2019
LSUHSC – Shreveport	Center of Excellence for Arthritis and Rheumatology	August 2014	12/31/2019
LSUHSC – Shreveport	Feist-Weiller Cancer Center of Excellence	December 2014	12/31/2019
LSUHSC – New Orleans	Stanley S. Scott Cancer Research Center	March 2015	05/01/2020
LSUHSC – New Orleans	Neuroscience Center of Excellence	April 2015	04/01/2020
LSUHSC – New Orleans	Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center of Excellence	March 2016	06/01/2021
LSU A&M and LSU AgCenter	Center of Research Excellence in Plant Biotechnology & Crop Development	October 2014	03/01/2021
McNeese	Southwest Economic Entrepreneurial Development (SEED) Center for Workforce Excellence	September 2014	12/01/2020
Sowela TCC	Industrial & Process Technology Center for Workforce Excellence	December 2014	05/05/2021

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS POLICY 2.05A

Centers of Excellence

(Revised – March 2015)

A *Center of Excellence* is uniquely focused and specific in its designation. It may consist of a unit, program, or functional area that, as a Center, is accountable to higher expectation of performance and productivity, including contributions to the body of knowledge and to economic development, placement of graduates, generation of external interest and support, formation of joint ventures and partnerships, and positive recognition of the area and its faculty and students. If not the sole provider of education and research in the focus area, the designated *Center* is recognized as a leader in the field and a concentration of expertise.

A Center of Excellence must demonstrate that it is a statewide leader in the area of designation and must address how it does so in a proposal to the Board of Regents. With designation as a *Center of Excellence* comes the responsibility for leadership within the state and, if applicable, beyond. Implied in the designation is a commitment to concentrate and build on this strength by advancing knowledge and skills, thereby creating better opportunities for the citizens of the State. The Center will be expected to serve as a resource to support similar programs offered by other institutions.

A Center of Excellence should have the following attributes:

1. The Center has a strong performance record and advances the strategic goals of the institution and the State of Louisiana.
2. The Center is designated by and focused on an area of education, training and/or research relevant to the State's needs. This area is clearly and finitely defined, avoiding overly broad descriptions or goals.
3. The Center provides a range of academic, training and/or research opportunities in its area of expertise. The programs should be nationally accredited, when applicable.
4. The Center is engaged with the greater community; its programs focus on addressing current issues and provide opportunities to improve the quality of life of Louisiana citizens.
5. The Center is a hallmark of the institution. Though not necessarily the only source of education, training, research, and/or economic development in the topical area, the Center is recognized as uniquely strong in its focal area.

There are three types of statewide Centers of Excellence to emphasize: workforce training, academic programming, or research and innovation. Where legislation allows, differential tuition may be charged for programs offered by the Center. For example, RS 17:1875 (Act 555 of 2010) provides for Centers of Excellence within LCTCS to be established in collaboration with and subject to approval of the Board of Regents, with private sector support, including funding or the donation of land or equipment, to offer programs run on a business model conducive to real-time market responsiveness and flexibility, for which the LCTCS Board of Supervisors may establish a differential tuition and fee structure for programs offered through the Center. In addition, designated Centers of Excellence may attract special state investment commensurate with their contributions to state workforce, academic, research and/or economic development goals. The provisions of this Policy shall govern the criteria and process for obtaining the Board of Regents' designation as a Center of Excellence under R.S. 17:1875 as well as under R.S. 17:3139.2.

Centers for Workforce Excellence provide opportunities for education and training programs to meet areas of need as identified and supported through partnerships with business and industry across the State. They are established with private sector support to be responsive to real-time market needs; their operation provides for a leveraged return on the institution's and community's investment. A Center for Workforce Excellence provides significant opportunities to establish greater efficiencies for the postsecondary education system and the individual institution and its partners by focusing investment and state-of-the-art training

around a workforce theme in a centralized location. Centers for Workforce Excellence should be consistent with the institution's role, scope, and mission and its focal areas should be addressed in the Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education as a special program/feature of the institution.

A Center for Workforce Excellence focuses on an area of workforce training in which a public postsecondary institution, in partnership with business and industry, excels or has the clear potential to become a statewide center of training excellence. It entails a commitment to concentrate and build on this strength to create better opportunities for the citizens of the State.

Centers for Workforce Excellence are important economic drivers, generating public and private investment, attracting talent, and creating an energized, entrepreneurial environment that prepares students to enter or advance in the workforce.

Centers of Academic Excellence not only have an established record as a foundation of excellence in teaching, research and service, but also show potential for future growth and increasing quality. They encourage cross-collaboration, creativity, and vision with a singular, unique focus within Louisiana's public postsecondary education system that is aligned with current and strategic regional or statewide workforce needs.

A Center of Academic Excellence represents a focal area of the institution, as evidenced by reputation, enrollments and productivity of its component programs along with investments in resources and facilities by both the institution and the regional community. Its ability to generate support and recognition from external sources attests to its ability to maintain a highly responsive level of research and scholarly productivity.

Based on distinctive and successful undergraduate and/or graduate programs, the degree programs, and resources that undergird the area are healthy and strong, able to demonstrate the quality of its graduates and projections of growth over the next five years. The Center of Academic Excellence has established partnerships between the institution and business and industry, the community, area economic entities, and/or other postsecondary institutions. Disciplines associated with the Center of Academic Excellence align with key industry or academic sectors identified by regional/local economic development entities and with statewide goals for economic development

Centers of Research Excellence are campus or multi-campus hubs which develop new knowledge, enhance the research productivity of faculty, integrate education and research, and positively impact economic development in the state. They are structured around a highly specialized research effort, usually of a trans-disciplinary nature, which is unique in the State or which demonstrates unique assets and resources.

Centers of Research Excellence are well supported through external funding partnerships with both federal agencies and with industry, at higher levels than the institutional average. Research Centers of Excellence attract from the federal government and industry the significant investments for discovery and innovation which make possible sustained growth in the university itself, its surrounding communities, and the State's economy. A key indicator of the quality of and strength of many (but not all) Research Centers is the degree to which the centers contribute to doctoral and post-doctoral research, scholarship, and education.

Proposals for Center of Excellence Designation

The process for the designation as a Center of Excellence is meant to be rigorous and include a demonstration of the proposed center's qualification for the distinction. The initial (conditional) Center of Excellence designation will be for a one-year term, based on the nominee's demonstration of excellence in both program productivity and private/external recognition, which may include financial support. Subsequently, based on its record of impact and performance, an institution may request continued (full) designation for a period of up to five years. Proposal templates are in Appendices I and II.

An applicant for Center of Excellence status may have a strong proposal based on other components but cannot demonstrate corresponding productivity because the academic/training program/s creation (e.g. within a unique state-of-the-art training center) is a critical component of the Center concept. In exceptional circumstances, an applicant for Center status may be approved for conditional Center status on a year-to-year basis if the following three circumstances are met:

- The institution presents a clear plan for quickly achieving program viability, which could be strengthened by having a legacy of relevant service to and collaboration with industry.
- The institution has strong private sector support of and investment in the proposed Center's program(s).
- An external reviewer's evaluation of the proposed designation, conducted for the Board of Regents at the institution's expense, supports a recommendation for approval.

The new Center must submit an annual self-review/assessment until awarded full approval, which may be granted for a period of up to five years.

In addition to the regular renewal process, to be maintained as a Board of Regents' designated *Center of Excellence*, the Center's component academic programs must meet Board of Regents' viability standards as measured during periodic program reviews:

<u>Average Completers</u>	<u>Program Level</u>
8	Bachelor and Associate Degree; Diploma, CTS
5	Master, Specialist, Graduate Certificate
2	Doctorate and Professional Degree

Designation as a Center of Excellence is an honor as well as a commitment. Recommendations for maintaining at-risk academic programs and for maintaining Center status will be made separately during the program review process.

Proposals for Center designation must address all of the elements listed in the proposal templates and be vetted and endorsed by the management board prior to submission to the Board of Regents.

LA Board of Regents' senior staff will review proposals and make recommendations to the Academic Affairs Committee during a regular Board meeting. To ensure that the applicant is fully and best qualified for the designation, staff may seek input from Chief Academic Officers and/or call together a team of consultants from system offices, institutions, or relevant agencies to review proposals and conduct interviews with campus teams, as applicable. At the agency's discretion, additional recommendations may be sought from external reviewers.