

**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: April 29, 2021  
TO: FAU Faculty and Administrators  
FROM: Bret S. Danilowicz, PhD  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
RE: Florida Atlantic University Research Space Guidelines



1. **Summary** – The FAU Research Space Guidelines (below) were drawn from a comparison of research allocation formulas issued at peer institutions, and from internal discussions within the University, including Deans, Pillar Directors, Research Faculty, and the members of the Faculty Senate. Key principles that guide research space assignment include the following:
  - a. All research space is overseen as a partnership between Academic Affairs and Division of Research with the Provost responsible for space assignment and the VP for Research responsible for research space management.
  - b. When research space is vacated, it is returned to Academic Affairs for re-assignment.
  - c. Each College or Pillar ('unit') will evaluate research space needs on an annual basis. This evaluation will occur at least annually by a Research Space Committee (RSC), appointed by the Dean or Pillar Director. The RSC will assess requests and needs for research space and make recommendations to the Dean or Pillar Director regarding requested research space needs, and assessment of assigned research space. The Dean or Pillar Director will then be responsible for approving the assignment of research space to faculty.
  - d. The assignment of research space by Deans or Pillar Directors will be communicated to the Provost office, Division of Research, and to Facilities (for inventory purposes).
  - e. A modifiable list of metrics for Research Space will be provided by the Division of Research to the unit. Unit Dean/Director *may modify this formula based on the unique infrastructure needs of the projects funded within their unit.*
  - f. Reallocation of space comes at the recommendation of the unit RSC, to the Dean or Pillar Director, and is communicated to the Division of Research. When research space is re-allocated, the faculty member occupying the space is provided at least 6-month notice before moving when possible.
  - g. In instances where there is a disagreement on space assignment, the Provost and Vice President for Research will review, and the provost will make a final decision.

- 2. Introduction.** These guidelines establish the procedures for the allocation and utilization of research space at Florida Atlantic University (FAU). The assignment of research space is dependent upon alignment with university and unit-level strategic planning, availability of budgetary resources, personnel, and the unique infrastructure needs of individual research projects. Among numerous other factors, the assignment of research space will consider the (a) number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) projected to be supported by the project, (b) access to core technology or core facilities, (c) unique laboratory infrastructure needs of the project, (d) configuration of research space required, and (e) access to collaborators. While the use of all physical space and facilities at FAU are governed by federal and state statutes, as well as Board of Governors and FAU regulations and policies, this document aims to establish an orderly process for the review and assignment of research space throughout FAU's campuses. Likewise, these guidelines will not supersede any existing institutional regulations and policies regarding the use or management of University facilities.
- 3. Authority for Assigning Research Space to Faculty.** The Provost designates the College Deans and the Pillar (Institute) Directors with the authority to assign individual research spaces within existing research facilities that they are charged with overseeing. All research space requests and assignments are subject to review by a Dean-appointed, or Institute Director-appointed Research Space Committee (RSC), which in turn reviews the space requests from faculty, assesses current research space allocations, and makes recommendations to the Dean or Institute Director regarding the research space needs of a project. It is expected that Deans and Institute Directors will use a shared-governance process for establishing and utilizing the RSC. The Dean or Institute Director is given the authority to approve, disapprove, or otherwise modify the RSC space assignment recommendation. The unit associated RSC will develop metrics for research space assignments based on the unique needs of the disciplines within their assigned facility. The Division of Research will provide general guidance on the development and use of these metrics. Faculty members assigned to specific space will be responsible for making sure their assigned space is used appropriately and consistent with the research plan for the duration of the assignment. Consistent with existing policies, Facilities Management maintains a ledger of all University space, including research space.
- 4. Research Office Space.** All faculty, staff and students will be assigned appropriate research office space to carry out their roles on the research project. In alignment with best practices, existing policies and governing documents, a faculty member will be assigned one primary office. A faculty member performing official duties at more than one site may share an office at the additional site(s). Emeritus, adjunct, or visiting faculty may be expected to share a research office space and research space, depending on availability and with the approval of the Dean. Graduate students and post-doctoral fellows participating in research projects will be expected to share research office space.

Undergraduate students and Research Technicians, or technical staff, will not be guaranteed office space.

5. **Research Space Utilization.** The designation as Research Space is defined and recorded by the University Facilities for State and Federal inventory purposes. Any space used that is used by personnel (e.g. undergraduate and graduate research assistants, postdoctoral fellows, visiting researchers, and technical support staff) to conduct research would be designated as, or could be redesignated as, research space, however, reclassification would require approval by the University-level Space Committee. Research facilities may be shared and used by multiple personnel. Research office space may be considered “research space” for the purposes of these guidelines, where the research project can be wholly or partly conducted within an assigned office. If a particular space is utilized for both instruction and research on a fractional basis, then as per federal guidelines and for space inventory purposes, the room is recorded as fractional use for instruction and research; the recording of fractional use is instigated by the Division of Research every three years corresponding with negotiations on Federal F&A rates.
6. **Research Space Categories.** For the purposes of these guidelines, research space may fall under any one of the following designations. These space categories are essential to operationalizing these guidelines. Any given space may move from one category to another category following the procedures laid out within this document.
  - a. *Active Research Space.* Research space that, based on a specified outcomes measurement table (see section 7), fulfills the unit and/or university expectations for research productivity. If a faculty member has limited space needs for research and cannot be accommodated with exclusive space, or their projects are better served by working in a co-working research environment, then active research space may be co-assigned to faculty (especially based on shared technology and collaborations).
  - b. *Protected Research Space.* Space allocated to pre-tenure tenure-track faculty members or newly hired tenured faculty members for a specific time period. Research space thus allocated to a faculty member for a specific time period or purpose will need to remain available to the individual, but the location or size of the space may be changed as appropriate as long as it does not interfere with their research effort. The individual assigned Protected Research Space will not be reassigned to other space during the contractually agreed period unless it is requested by the individual.
  - c. *Available Research Space.* Space that is either unassigned or has extra capacity as “Active Research Space” for three or more consecutive annual assessments. Available research space may be transferred by the Provost to another academic unit on a temporary or permanent basis. Space in this category that remains in the control of the college or institute can be reallocated by the Dean or Pillar Director as needed for a faculty project or can be made available for shared use.

- d. *Community Research Space.* Community research space may serve as a location where faculty members who have been inactive can restart projects and regain active status. Alternatively, certain faculty members may choose not to have explicitly assigned space and may opt to conduct their research in a community research space. This community research space will be administered by the Dean or Pillar Director.
  - e. *Core Research Facility Space.* Shared research spaces, such as specialized small equipment rooms or labs designated for research that received this designation by the Division of Research. These are for the community use of specific types of equipment, and do not count towards the assignment space of individual researchers. All aspects of use of this space are managed by the Division of Research.
- 7. Research Space Management (“R-SPACE”) Team.** Under the guidance of Deans and/or Institute Directors, RSC’s associated with each facility should regularly analyze the needs of research projects and review the equity of research space assignments. These reviews should be reported to the Dean or Institute Director who can then review research space assignments. At the University-wide level, a dedicated research space management team (“R-SPACE Team”) will review overall space allocations, utilization, and needs.
- a. *Membership.* Under the guidance of the Provost, the university will establish the R-SPACE Team to manage the reporting of research productivity in research-designated spaces, as well as the prioritization of research space allocations consistent with University strategic planning and priorities. The team will be led by the Provost and consist of a designated Chair or faculty representative from each college, a space committee representative from the Institutes (Pillars), a representative of the Division of Research, and a representative from the Division of Facilities. The Provost may add additional members as needed.
  - b. *Responsibilities.* The team will establish an annual, campus-wide process for reviewing research space allocations that takes into consideration the unique characteristics of research in the discipline, based on verified need and objective productivity measures within the context of the University Strategic Plan.
    - i. On an annual basis, each RSC will submit a space utilization report to the R-SPACE Team. The Team will review the Research Productivity Profile of Space Assignments at the unit level, as described below and make appropriate recommendations to changes in space category. A template for these annual RSC reports will be developed and made available by the R-SPACE Team.
    - ii. Any non-research space that is proposed to be re-categorized as being used for research purposes, will require approval by the University-wide space committee, following FAU’s Facilities Management policies and procedures.

- iii. An annual report will be prepared by the R-SPACE Team and shared with the President and VP of Administrative Affairs.
- iv. The Research Space Assignment Policy described herein will be subject to review every 3 years by the R-SPACE Team, with input from Deans and Institute Directors, and RSC's. Changes in the policy will be advanced to the President for approval.

**8. Research Productivity Profile.** As part of the annual evaluation cycle, each supervisor of a faculty member will review the individual's research productivity profile in light of their assigned space. If needed, Faculty members should include requests for additional space beyond their current assignment; faculty assigned "Community" space may provide additional information if they want to be considered for an "Active" space assignment. The review by the supervisor should compare the individual's performance to their RSC's research performance metrics (described below) in light of the total assigned square footage (ASF) allocated to the faculty member. Research productivity based on their RSC's research reporting metrics will be used by the supervisor to categorize each of the unit's research spaces into those whose productivity meets or exceeds minimum university standards of "Active Research" and those whose productivity would require subsequent review and possible reassignment or recategorization. The appointed RSC for each college or institute will review faculty research space assignments and needs identified by supervisors, and make recommendations regarding any changes to the Dean or Institute Director. It is recognized here that for research space assignments, the needs of diverse colleges may be different, and each college research space committee should develop metrics that define the equitable assignment of space. Space should be allocated based on the infrastructure needs of the funded project, access to technology, access to collaborators, the number of FTEs (Full time equivalence) supported by the project, and other factors appropriate to the unit. Below is a recommended guideline that each RSC may use to develop metrics unique to their college or institute:

- a. The recommended scale for Research Space comparisons is based on 1,000 ft<sup>2</sup>. Units may decide to adjust this scale based on the relative expense of constructing and operating a given space (e.g. wet lab, dry lab, large equipment space, non-STEM space, etc.).
- b. The metrics used to allocate space will be developed locally, at the college level by the RSC with input from the Dean, and/or at the Institute level by the Pillar Director. Ideally, metrics would be judges on a three year average rather than on any individual year. The research performance metrics profile must include by research dollars per year for all external awards in which the faculty member is principal investigator and co-investigator, as well as the annual Full Time Equivalent of faculty, post-docs, technical staff, and students working in the space. Items which might be considered by the RSC for inclusion as research performance metrics include (but not limited to): endowment or other applicable sources of funding, research publications from use of the space, grant/contract applications, juried performances/exhibitions resulting from the space. RSCs may

consider including other metrics that lead to externally observable research outcomes. The final metrics selected are intended to reflect the comprehensive use of the space for research; these metrics should be approved by the R-SPACE Team before being implemented or revised.

- c. While not directly related to square footage, the proximity of the space to core facilities, collaborators, or disciplinary peers is an important consideration. This should be considered by the RSC before moving individuals from or to new locations, and by the R-SPACE Team when considering inter-unit space assignments.

**9. Active Research Spaces Below Minimum Standard.** By the end of each fiscal year (June 30), the Deans and Institute Directors will provide an updated report on space utilization to the Provost and Vice President of Research. This report will indicate if additional criteria, data, or circumstances, including the rubric developed by the RSC's, warrant reclassification of research space to one of the acceptable research space categories noted above. Faculty members occupying space deemed below the minimum standards for Active Research will provide the Dean or Institute Director with a plan for increasing research productivity to meet the level required for Active Research designation.

- a. If a faculty member fails to renew his/her grant, then the Dean or Institute Director should provide that investigator with sufficient time to renew the award prior to vacating the research space, typically no more than 2-3 years.
- b. If a faculty member should need to move spaces, a minimum of six months notice will be given as possible. The move plan will be developed in consultation with the faculty member and the Dean or Institute Director.
- c. Costs associated with a move will be the responsibility of the unit that is affecting the move. For example, if Department 1 wants to move a faculty member from lab 1 to lab 2, then Department 1 pays for the move. If the space is required for institutional programmatic reasons and Department 2 is moving faculty into the space, displacing the faculty from Department 1, then Department 2 pays for the move. If the Provost office or Division of Research requests the faculty move, then the Provost or Division of Research pays for the move.

**10. Research Space Assignments for New Hires.** Designated research space for new hires should be identified and approved in advance of an offer letter from the hiring official. The allocation of space to new faculty must include a research space plan that is approved by the Dean or Institute Director (or designee) upon authorization to hire new faculty or prior to moving or changing a space assignment.

**11. Conflict Resolution.** As noted above, Deans and Institute Directors will assign research spaces to individual faculty members. In instances where no single Dean or Institute

Director oversees a particular facility, a smaller ad hoc cross-college working group will oversee possible conflicts. This working group shall include 2 representatives from the impacted units including the Dean or Institute Director and a representative of the unit level research space advisory committee. The Provost and the Vice President of Research will work together and serve as the final arbiter of cross-college research space conflicts, should the team and impacted Deans and/or Institute Directors not be able to negotiate a plan by consensus.

**12. Requests for Additional Review.** Faculty members can request additional review of the research space assigned to them by the unit RSC. Requests for review are made in writing to the committee, should include a cc to the Chair and Dean (or Institute Director), documenting how activity in the research space in question meets or exceeds the unit or university criteria for research space allocation, in accordance with these guidelines. The RSC will make a recommendation to the Dean or Institute Director regarding the request for additional space, and their decision will be final. In addition to the research productivity profile, considerations for assignment of additional research space may include the following:

- a. Project duration and planned renewal of the project.
- b. Planned changes in hiring or staffing for the project.
- c. Planned changes regarding the configuration of the space and safety concerns associated with the project.
- d. Evidence of an existing or emerging national reputation.
- e. Proximity to supporting research infrastructure, core facilities, and current or potential collaborators.

**13. Retired/Emeritus Faculty.** As long as the associated college or institute outcomes measures are being met, retired/emergitus faculty members may be assigned active research space or community research space at the discretion of the dean/pillar director.

CC: Daniel Flynn, Vice President, Division of Research  
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FAU Deans  
Provost's Advisory Council