New operating model for administrative services
**Timeline overview**

**DISCOVERY WORKBOOK**

**DISCOVER**

**INFORMATION GATHERING**
Understand research admin processes and activities across the institution, identify opportunities for optimization and streamline service deliveries.

**IMPACT ANALYSIS**
Synthesize the collected information, analyze the functional needs and identify gaps in research admin services, and prioritize processes to support the new organizational structure.

**PREPARE**

**ANALYZE AND VALIDATE**

**PLAN**

**TRANSITION**

**TRANSITION**
Develop and implement transition plans to align the delivery of research admin services with the new operating model.
The integrated research enterprise

Research
Discovery and inquiry, publications, presentation, scientific reporting.

Research Operations
- Lab shared services, internal research administrative matters, research capacity inventory, lab space/infrastructure allocation, library, logistics, equipment, etc.
- HR/financial transactions
- Communications
- Personnel/space resourcing
- SOPs
- Project mgmt support
- ADR/VDR

Research Administration
- Policies/procedures
- Joint reporting
- Compliance
- Resource sharing
- Best practices
- Funding
- Efficiencies

Services in grant development support, funding sources, negotiations, fund management, technology transfer, ethics, clinical trials regulatory processes, etc.

Undertaken by faculty members and the people they supervise, including trainees and staff consistent with university requirements, operating environment and scholarly standards

< Project Scope
Delivered by VPRI Portfolio according to university policies and procedures, best practices and external requirements
Discovery updates

1. 146 workbooks distributed and 89 completed
2. Responses represent 17 faculties (includes FGSR), 37 departments, 16 units/institutes, and 22 individual researchers
3. 12 focus groups, 7 consultation meetings and 7 Q&A sessions held with over 300 participants
4. Over 260 non-standardized processes identified in the research community; There are over 50 processes within VPRI. We need to identify where and how all these processes intersect.

Examples of processes include:
   a. Prepare monthly GL reconciliation and provide quarterly, semi or annual reporting to researcher
   b. Approval processes for grant applications within a faculty
   c. Support to researchers with writing animal ethics applications
Discovery updates — preliminary comments

1. Researchers want to focus on their projects instead of spending time on admin, they need quick and reliable guidance and access to details of their application/project.

2. Preference for a single, trusted point of contact to navigate all of research administration.

3. Fair level of comfort with having most of the transactional/tactical support “pooled” or even “centralized.”

4. Strategic research advice, decision-making, training, grant development support, etc. should be easily accessible and provided by highly knowledgeable individuals.

5. Most FTEs are fractional for research administration support (even as low as 0.1 FTE of a position). (The majority of the positions are not specialists in research but generalists doing a little bit of everything in various administrative processes, even not research-related).

6. Lack of clarity about what research administration means: confusion between project management, research operation and research administration, including HR and finance transactions supporting research.
Research administration model

Centres of Expertise
Services provided by the VPRI portfolio to colleges/faculties/departments to support the university’s research and innovation mission.

Roles: Advising, Delivering, Navigating, Resolving, Training

Service Partners
Embedded within the academic units, they are the proactive liaison officers between the VPRI portfolio and the academic units.

Help Desk
Timely response to inquiries from the research community and the public.

Researcher Development & Success
Research Certification & Oversight
Research Strategy, Training & Skills Development
Research Administrative Services
Technology Transfer & Commercialization

College, faculty, or department-level

Request made
Request fulfilled

public
## VPRI portfolio Centres of Expertise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher Development &amp; Success</th>
<th>Research Certification &amp; Oversight</th>
<th>Research Strategy</th>
<th>Research Administrative Services</th>
<th>Technology Transfer &amp; Commercialization</th>
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| ● Promotion of research funding opportunities  
● Research application/proposal development  
● Research recognition awards | ● Ethics certification  
● Clinical trial regulatory support  
● Animal care and use | ● Institutional strategy  
  ○ Strategic planning  
  ○ Policy development | ● Research application/proposal pre-submission  
● Research-related and IP-related contracts  
● Institutional programs (such as CFI, WED, etc.)  
● Fund management | ● Technology protection and transfer |
**DEFINITIONS OF THE PARTNERS’ (P) ROLES**

- **Advising (Adv):** Identify areas for improving effectiveness and efficiency of services; communicate and collaborate with VPRI to improve the research administration system. Assist faculty/departments in creating priorities to ensure alignment with the institution’s research goals and strategic needs.
- **Delivering (Del):** Provide hands-on assistance in offering direct services to researchers as required.
- **Navigating (Nav):** Help researchers navigate and understand the system relating to research and innovation. Act as a liaison between faculties/departments and VPRI and is accountable for the dissemination of all pertinent information.
- **Post Doctoral Fellows (P: Adv, Nav, Tra):** Provide resources to develop support services and foster postdocs’ research training and professional development to help prepare them for the next step in their careers; serve as a liaison between postdocs, faculty, and administrators.
- **Training (Tra):** Identify areas of education opportunities and professional development, engage with experts from COEs, coordinate (and potentially deliver) training sessions.

**PLANNING SERVICES**

- **Institutional Strategy (P: Adv, Nav):** Strategic planning, high-level vision-setting, and needs assessment for the research and innovation mission overall.
- **Policy Development:** Maintain a current and effective policy framework.

**Research Recognition Awards (P: Adv, Del, Nav):** Working with academic units, providing institutional coordination and input for researcher recognition through internal and external award nominations (Killam, CRC, etc.).

**Provincial, National and International Connections (P: Adv, Nav):** Foster, monitor, and maintain interdisciplinary and innovation relationships (e.g., Helmholtz, WUN, WEUN, individual institutions, etc.) and engage with stakeholders that may contribute to any research activities.

**Post Doctoral Fellows (P: Adv, Nav, Tra):** Provide resources to develop support services and foster postdocs’ research training and professional development to help prepare them for the next step in their careers; serve as a liaison between postdocs, faculty, and administrators.

**Research Training and Professional Development (P: Adv, Del, Nav, Tra):** Develop and deliver training to meet the emerging needs in all sectors that are relevant to research.

**PRE-AWARD SERVICES**

- **Promotion of Research Funding Opportunities (P: Adv, Del, Nav):** Gather and maintain information database; target promotion of relevant funding opportunities; ensure dissemination of funding opportunities in related events.
- **Research Application/Proposal Development (P: Adv, Nav, Res):** Create and deliver institutional wide application development support (including major grants); provide direct assistance with the goal of increasing the number of applications as well as the success rate.

**POST-AWARD SERVICES**

- **Ethics Certification (P: Adv, Nav, Res, Tra):** Deliver integrated, effective, and efficient ethics certifications with oversight for the full range of university research involving human participants or animals; create and maintain institutional compliance programs that are consistent with external requirements and support the responsible conduct of research and scientific integrity.
- **Research-related and IP-related Contracts (P: Adv, Nav, Res):** Review and negotiate research contracts and agreements to ensure compliance with university’s policies and researcher’s needs; liaise and consult with internal stakeholders as needed.
- **Institutional Programs (such as CFI, JELF, WEU etc.) (P: Adv, Del, Nav, Res):** Provide admin support for researchers pursuing major infrastructure awards, including relationship management with funders, creation and management of application submission process and sponsor’s reporting requirements.
- **Fund Management (P: Adv, Nav, Res):** Administer research funds based on deliverables and timelines as set out by sponsors, researchers and other stakeholders; responsible for providing financial reporting, quality assurance, and collections.

**GENERAL SERVICES**

- **Information Management (P: Adv, Res):** Develop and maintain existing research statistics and reports, including the preparation of annual institutional reports required by central units and faculties; Maintain and improve research administration system (PeopleSoft G3).

**HELPDESK**

- **Manages inquiries from researchers, trainees, administrators, and external parties by responding with appropriate information as timely or by forwarding inquiries when appropriate to other individuals or units for resolution.**
- **Maintain the Research Services website such that the content is timely, accurate, useful, and organized in a way that information is easily accessible to campus users and the public.**
Indigenous Research Strategy Task Force

- Difference in expectations of funding agencies, researchers, and Indigenous communities
- Crosses all disciplines of research: natural and applied sciences, social sciences and humanities, health sciences
- The U of A requires a coordinated approach in order to meet the changing expectations across: ethics, data management, research ethics, and community engagement—which span the planning, pre-award, post-award, and general services offerings
Question time