

Pratt Recognized Research Units

Building an Infrastructure for Research at Pratt Institute

The Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
All Provost's Centers	3
ORSP Oversight Structure	4
Partnerships with Provost's Centers	4
Funding Model for Centers	5
Succession of Directors	6
Renaming a Provost's Center	6
Provost's Center Life-Cycle	7
Intellectual Property	7
New Provost's Centers	8
Creating a New Center	8
Funding	9
Existing Provost's Centers	11
School Centers	11
Structure	12
Oversight	12
Funding	13
Lifecycle	13
School Labs	14
Hubs	14
Structure	14
Leadership + Oversight	15
Funding	16
Research Accelerators	16
Leadership + Oversight	16
Lifecycle	17
Benefits	17

Transitioning to a Different RRU Type	17
Appendix 1: RRU Comparison Chart	18
Appendix 2: Relational Chart of RRUs	19
Appendix 3: Organizational Chart of Current RRUs	20

Introduction

This document describes the procedures in the formation and operations for Pratt Institute's Recognized Research Units (RRUs) - the structures that create and support a system for innovative and impactful research and scholarly inquiry at Pratt Institute. It also outlines new approaches and strategies to ensure that research thrives at Pratt and advances its mission to graduate responsible, creative professionals.

This statement is a further revision to the RRU policy which was first issued in May 2023. The original policy was developed in recognition of the growing importance of and interest in research by faculty and students at Pratt. It sought to better define the Provost's Centers and other infrastructure for research such as School Centers, School Labs, Research Accelerators and Hubs. Each of those research structures had different scopes but all created mechanisms to advance inquiry, as well as to develop and maintain important strategic relationships over time and beyond an individual faculty member's interest or research. They also created mechanisms for seeking funding beyond a single, specific project, in support of a cluster of similarly themed or related activities.

School and **Provost's Centers** enhance the Institute's mission to educate artists and creative professionals who shape the world we live in. These centers do so by building on Pratt's ongoing commitment to resourcefulness and collaborative problem solving inextricable from Pratt's pedagogy, and toward curricular development committed to supporting socially responsible and equity-centered creatives.

In addition, these research structures have the potential to enhance the Institute's reputation as inquisitive and compassionate community members able to recruit faculty and students, create ongoing opportunities for scholarship and impactful work in communities, and act as adaptable and resilient global stewards.

Finally, they create a readily recognized vehicle for building partnerships with industry partners, academic institutions, government counterparts, and other entities for potential public and private funding opportunities.

It should be noted that while there are Provost's Centers whose mission is not research (e.g., Center for Teaching and Learning, Center for Career and Professional Development, etc.), this document only focuses on those whose mission and oversight sit with the Provost's Office and the Research and Strategic Partnerships team.

In addition to the discussion on different forms of centers, **Research Accelerators** are also described. Accelerators, that make up the IDC Accelerator Hub, are the newest configuration that can support the growth of research at Pratt's Research Yard. Research Accelerators are temporary in nature, and are designed to incubate new ideas and areas of research. Research Accelerators can evolve to become School Centers or Provost's Centers if they have necessary funding and/or external partnerships. Accelerators however do not need to be established with the set goal of graduating into a School or Provost Center. Accelerators can, contingent on approval, be concentrated effort on a specific scholarly area or goal, and their duration can be bounded without expectation of renewal or expansion.

School Labs are structures that incorporate aspects of a school's broader work and hone the school's resources towards a narrower, sharper focus in order to tease out new insights or opportunities for research. School Labs are also units in which students and faculty can take advantage of specialized tools for fabrication, research or study.

Finally, there is a short description of the **Hubs** concept developed and supervised through the ORSP. This is another path that can be taken by faculty to explore research topics that may have a temporary timeframe, exploratory focus or grow into a larger program, such as a Research Accelerator or School Center. Note that Hubs research tends to be more intimately connected with teaching programs.

Each of these structures have varying expectations of durability, longevity, and self-sufficiency, but it is important to note that for all of them, these descriptions may be amended, from time to time. Additionally, there can be a fair degree of variation not only between these structures but also *within* them. In other words, not all Provost's Centers are completely alike in structure, operation, etc., nor are all Research Accelerators. This document is merely intended to provide guidance on structures and processes but should not necessarily be treated as strict definitions of scope or conduct. .

For any questions related to this document and RRUs in general, please contact the Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships (ORSP) at research-partnership@pratt.edu.

All Provost's Centers

Provost's Centers are specialized structures that, under the guidance and oversight of the Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships, advance the mission and strategic goals of the Institute through interdisciplinary research, policy work, and community action. Policy regarding new and existing Provost's Centers may differ in some cases, but the information in this section applies to all.

The current roster of active Provost's Centers as of October 2025 is below:

- [Pratt Center for Community Development](#)
- [Center for Art, Design, and Community Engagement K-12 \(Center K-12\)](#)
- [Pratt Sustainability Center](#)
- [Spatial Analysis and Visualization Initiative \(SAVI\)](#)
- Center for Environmental Research (in development, target launch date: January 2026)

ORSP Oversight Structure

The Provost's Centers are accountable to the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships and ultimately to the Provost, and they are overseen by the ORSP (see [Appendix 2](#) for an org chart). The nature of this oversight on Provost's Centers may vary, but as a broad overview they may consist of:

- Monthly one-on-one meetings with ORSP staff to:
 - Review management processes;
 - Ensure support for research goals;
 - Consider budgetary needs for continued operations.
- Quarterly all-center Director meetings to ensure priorities are consistent with the Provost's mission and to identify opportunities for collaboration and improvement.
- Quarterly revenue benchmarking discussions with ORSP staff and (when needed) the Provost's Office.
- Yearly budget development meetings with ORSP and Provost finance staff.
- Periodic meetings to develop strategic partnerships or grant proposals for new funding opportunities.
- Meetings as necessary with other interdivisional departments within the Institute, e.g. Institutional Advancement, regarding philanthropic funding in support of scholarships, physical space enhancement, as well as promising fundraising opportunities.

Partnerships with Provost's Centers

All Provost's Centers are encouraged to partner with faculty and other internal entities as well as to prospect and foster external partnerships beneficial to both the Center and to the Institute at large. When possible, and in alignment with Center goals, providing a bridge for faculty to support their community-engaged work is encouraged.

- Typically, when a Center decides to partner with an internal group (e.g., department, school or group of faculty) at Pratt, it is not expected that the internal group should have to fund work with a Provost Center. However if the partnership imposes significant new costs (e.g., for materials), additional costs can be requested of the internal group if feasible and/or the internal group and Center may also choose to seek external funding together.
- Provost's Centers may also be directly compensated by their external partners such as when they are doing specific short-term research/project work, as outlined by a project agreement, collaboration agreement, or contract.
- A recommended practice is for each partnership to be outlined in a collaboration agreement, which spells out a shared understanding of goals and objectives, the roles and responsibilities, and any financial expectations including revenue raising. Consultation with the Provost's Office on these agreements is strongly recommended, and any agreement may be reviewed through the Institute's legal office prior to approval.

Funding Model for Centers

Each of the Provost's Centers has different annual revenue and/or fundraising and/or governmental allocations expectations and goals, which are mutually discussed and agreed upon during the yearly budget process, for each fiscal year (July 1 - June 30). A Provost's Center should demonstrate financial sustainability or promise to become financially self-sufficient from the Institute. A Center's budget will be periodically assessed based on growth in the years prior with the expectation that the Center shows potential to be self-supporting.

As such, all Provost's Center Directors are expected to fundraise – with guidance from the Provost's Office – to support their center either through awards of grant funding or development of strategic partnerships outside of Pratt that generate research and consulting fees, as well as private and public funding.

- ORSP staff can support the development of research grant funding opportunities for Provost's Centers through identifying federal/state/city grant RFPs or competitive private opportunities from industry or foundations.
- Financial gifts, e.g. scholarships, fellowships, programs, capital improvements and/or any naming opportunities, events, etc. are typically coordinated by Institutional Advancement (IA).
- Once a possible revenue source and a strategy is confirmed, continued updates and discussions between the Center and ORSP are critical.

A financial allocation from the Provost's Office to the operating budgets of a Provost's Center may be negotiated during Pratt's annual budget process. Historically this process reflects a number of considerations including how a Center advances the Institute's mission and strategic plan as well the origins of a particular Center and the extent to which the Center contributes to the Institute's

revenue goals for research and other objectives. As such, there is no set range or limit to this allocation, however the eventual goal is for all Centers to become self-sustaining. Center Directors should not rely on the Provost's allocation to supplement their budget or to close a deficit.

Succession of Directors

Planning the transition from the Center's initial Director to a successor is critical to the continued success of the Center, to protecting the Institute's investment, and to being inclusive in its search process and outcomes. This is best thought of as a selected panel role, not an academic faculty role, and the succession process should ideally last no more than four months. In the event that there is insufficient time to conduct a search before the Director leaves, the Provost or Vice Provost may appoint an Interim Director until such time as the nomination process has been completed and the new Director is able to assume responsibilities.

When the initial Director leaves their position, the succeeding Director is selected through a nomination process, in which nominees are solicited via this [linked form](#), to be circulated by ORSP staff when a vacancy arises. Candidates can nominate themselves for consideration or be nominated by others based on (but not limited to) the following criteria:

- The ability to identify, plan and execute interdisciplinary research initiatives that build a portfolio of projects aligning with the Center's goals. This can be demonstrated by past and existing projects that show creativity and innovation, and projects able to incorporate different types of expertise, including collaborating with non-academic, external partners.
- The ability to collaborate with and/or mentor faculty and students.
- A proven track record of fundraising from a variety of funding sources, e.g. government, private and corporate foundations, etc.
- Ability to work in a collaborative model for governance, which requires open and direct communications, ability to incorporate various perspectives, and willingness to commit to an ongoing assessment of how specific projects and methodologies advance the overall mission.

The Provost's Office will review the nominations based on these criteria and the specific needs of the Center, and finalists will be asked to interview with the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships and other staff before a final decision is made.

A Center may have a sole Director or multiple Co-directors, depending on the needs of the Center, and in the case of the latter, the division of responsibilities will be determined by the current leadership of the Center with guidance from the Provost's Office. Sole Directors must be full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty, and of the total number of Co-directors per Center, at least one must be tenured or tenure-track faculty.

Renaming a Provost's Center

In the event that a Provost's Center changes its research priorities or there is a significant change in the Center's scope or mission (e.g., in the case of a new Director), it may become necessary to change the name of the Center.

Directors may suggest a few (1-3) candidate names in consultation with ORSP staff and the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships, with final approval granted by the Provost.

Provost's Center Life-Cycle

There is no required number of Provost's Centers that can remain active at any given time. The number is dependent on the resources available from the Institute and from outside grants and contracts. The number is also dependent on strategic planning goals, and the learning outcome objectives of the Institute.

A Provost's Center may be closed by decision of the Provost, in consultation with the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships, and other relevant parties. That determination should include a recommendation for any necessary provisions for how to wind-down the center which may have grant and contract obligations, important relationships which may need to be maintained, and other assets and obligations.

A recommendation for closure of a Center may come from the Provost or another member of the Institute's senior leadership (e.g. CFO) – including but not limited to the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships and other ORSP staff – after a documented investigation that demonstrates:

- A financial (lack of funds) or managerial (mismanagement of personnel, lack of appropriate use of funds) cause,
- And/or that the Institute's priorities have shifted and the Center is no longer central to the Institute's mission.

A Provost's Center may transition into a School Center should the scope of research and/or the level of funding be reduced, and should a school Dean be interested in seeing it continue (see [New Provost's Centers - Funding](#) and [Transitioning to a Different RRU Type](#) for more information).

Intellectual Property

The attachment, production, and technological transfer of intellectual property within a Provost Center falls under the purview of Pratt Institute's Ownership and Use Rights of Intellectual Property Policy. As a Center overseen by the Provost and Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships, researchers must notify the ORSP upon filing a discretionary patent. As part of the Provost's purview, the ORSP will guide Center researchers' navigation of Pratt's IP policies, patent filing and

tech transfer policy in collaboration with the Pratt Legal Team, with option to seek outside counsel as needed.

New Provost's Centers

Creating a New Center

Decisions to launch a new Institute-level research center are made by the Provost, in consultation with the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships and other relevant partners.

Typically, a new Provost's Center is born from a broad area of study, open to multiple forms of inquiry, or based in work that has a strong possibility of developing into an interdisciplinary collaboration. Provost's Centers may have an initial Director or number of Co-directors, who are chosen by the Vice Provost in consultation with the Provost as part of the new center planning process. There is a strong presumption that the initial Director(s) will have been one of the individuals who researched an issue, built a body of work around that issue and developed the plan for the Center able to drive a related broad discourse of discovery.

Launching a new Provost's Center requires extensive time and commitment to develop a plan that merits investment not only from the school but from third-party funders. All Provost Centers should have a mission statement, goals, and an implementation plan which articulate the underlying strategies and desired impacts of their programs. This planning process can be intensive and requires development of a financial model, assessment of funding sources and projected income and expenses not unlike a business plan/pitch deck, and an outline of how the Center relates back to Pratt's strategic plan and how the Center and its operations will advance both the Plan and Pratt's commitment to community representation.

Compensation for effort put forward by Directors may be counted as service, provided as stipend, a course reduction, or other possible forms, at the discretion of the Provost, Vice Provost and Dean. As part of its support of new proposals, the Provost Office staff can advise during the development phase of a new center.

The application process is as follows:

- Faculty submit a brief summary, which asks for some preliminary information such as the following:
 - Proposed topic area and scope, including a brief summary of the related work that has already been completed or is in progress,
 - Dedicated initial funds (either internal or external),

- Proposed Director or Co-directorship model,
 - Proposed community partners, government or industry sponsorships, etc.
- The Vice Provost and ORSP will review the form and evaluate it based on whether the proposed Center could presumably advance the strategic plan of the Institute and meet the financial standards for the launch of a center.
- If so, a concept proposal and a proposed budget will be requested.
- ORSP will review the proposal documents, and if they are deemed viable, the proposal will be shared with the Provost for further review. A review of revenue and fundraising potential may also be done in conjunction with the AVP of Institutional Advancement.
- The final decision is made by the Provost in consultation with the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships and other relevant partners. Written terms for establishment will be set and the new Director and a representative in the Provost's Office will sign this agreement. It will cover expected Center focus, directorship term (if any), Pratt allocation (if any), revenue raising goals, and the possible life-cycle of the Center (e.g., it will be a Center for X years, reviewed each X cycle).

Some of the essential elements to be included in an initial concept proposal are descriptions of its vision, mission, goals, background on the issue or problem being addressed, the services or strategies to address that problem, metrics for measuring impact, projected income and expense for three years, analysis of the landscape of other organizations already active on the issue or in this field, how this initiative will advance Pratt's strategic plan and support research, teaching and learning. A comprehensive Provost's Center proposal also specifies what funding upfront is available to launch the center, either from government grants, external academic partners, foundations, or industry partners.

It is important to develop strategies to ensure that the process for creating new Centers advances Pratt's commitments to community representation in its leadership, research and teaching. To further these commitments, the Provost's Office is committed to providing assistance to faculty and staff where needed.

- Demographic information may be collected to fully understand who is leading research and what research is being supported at the department, school, and Institute levels.
- When exploring and developing a plan for a new Center, additional consultation and planning time, help identifying potential funding sources, and creating income and expense projections based on past experience of other Centers will be shared as a way to train and expand possible Center leadership.

Funding

A new Provost's Center should provide support to Pratt's research infrastructure. Fiscal viability is an important component of any proposal for a new Provost's Center, and a demonstrated potential

for financial self-sufficiency is an expectation by the end of its first 3 year term. At their inception, Provost's Centers will in some cases negotiate a Pratt allocation.

All Pratt allocations for new centers are dependent on not only the mission of the proposed Provost's Center, but the financial capacity of the Provost Office. It should be noted that the Pratt allocation may also be offset by Provost's Centers who provide services to internal partners for which there is no additional compensation. In some instances, the value of the services (as reviewed by VP for Finance, and the Vice Provost for Research & Strategic Partnerships) can be very significant because of the expertise the Center brings, the expense or burden which the school would otherwise have to bear but is deferred by the center's services, and the extent to which the services advance Pratt Institute's strategic plan and objectives.¹

During the 4th year of operations, new Provost's Centers should plan to be self-sustaining (i.e. operating without reliance on an operating allocation from the Institute). In instances where a Center has been unable to generate sufficient external funding to support operations, a viable plan must be presented to the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships describing how this goal will be achieved within the following 12 months. An important consideration in this plan, however, is the extent to which Pratt Institute receives financial returns and other benefits from the Center such that Pratt Institute is "net positive" after its allocation. Quarterly reports will provide the necessary tracking to indicate financial trends for the centers.

If, however, at the start of the 5th year the new Center has been unable to operate without a subsidy from the Institute and Pratt is not "net positive," a plan must be developed to close the center or transition it to a School Center. The transition plan must be supported by both the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships, as well as the respective school's Dean.

See below for a chart detailing a simplified version of these funding requirements:

Years 1 - 3	A Pratt allocation may be available, the annual amount is consistent with fiscal capacity and in line with overall goals for Center's to become self-sustaining.
Year 4	Ideally, by this point the Center should be self-sustaining, with external sources of funding secured. If not, a funding plan to be implemented in the next year must be submitted to ORSP for approval.
Year 5	If the new Center is not self-sustaining by now, a transition plan must be developed to either close or transition to a School Center.

¹For example the Pratt Sustainability Center provides training and curriculum assistance for the faculty, organizes campus events and is responsible for documenting and reporting on the Institute's efforts to reduce carbon emissions and climate change in compliance with New York City's requirements. The Pratt Center funds the Taconic, Made In NYC and Pratt Center Fellowships which together provide in excess of \$150,000 each year to faculty and students.

Existing Provost's Centers

The existing² Provost's Centers have evolved over decades and there is a legacy of different types of funding, oversight, internal and external partnerships and levels of engagement with Pratt's strategic plan. Current models of operation should not be used as a template for new Center proposals.

Moving forward, the Provost's Office is seeking to develop more cohesive, consistent and measurable assessments for the existing centers. For example, several of the provisions above that could be phased in for the existing centers include:

- Development of metrics to measure impacts, and establishing accountability mechanisms.
- Development of metrics to measure beyond direct revenue. For example, this might include: stipends for faculty and students, assistance to faculty and students undertaking community-based projects, and assistance to Pratt's operations and administration.
- Engagement with or recruitment of industry partners.
- Program development with international counterparts, particularly university partners.

School Centers

School Centers are another important piece of Pratt's research infrastructure. School Centers provide certain important benefits, including innovative research mechanisms to develop and maintain over substantial time and relationships that are beyond a particular faculty member or the school year. While they may not be interdisciplinary beyond a particular school, they may nevertheless be interdisciplinary within the spectrum of disciplines in one school. Perhaps most importantly, they create a mechanism for seeking funding beyond a single, specific project but rather a cluster of similarly themed or related activities within a particular topic or field of study. It should be noted that the research ideas explored may be less mature than a Provost's Center, but not less important to the school.

Further, school centers have the potential to have a significant curricular component, which sets them apart from Provost's Centers. For example, a School Center may be focused on a discourse of study, have curriculum on that area, provide a curricular emphasis, and a curricular minor. In this way, School Centers expand the curricular and interdisciplinary scope of their school's, and provide varied methods of engaging students and recognizing competency within the field (e.g. credentials, micro-credits).

² As of December 2025.

A current example of a School Center is the [Center for Digital Experiences](#) within the [School of Information](#), and the [Center for Experimental Structures](#) in the [School of Architecture](#).

Structure

A School Center is classified as a research unit that typically involves faculty and staff from one or more academic units within the school engaged in a research, educational, or service activity focusing on a common theme or problem.³ Centers require a formal proposal and a significant internal or external funding source.

School Center personnel are faculty/staff/students who are primarily within a school but may have collaborating partners in other schools or centers.

There are no required number of School Centers within a school. In fact, schools may decide they are not interested in establishing a center, or that they want a center in every department if they meet the minimum requirements. It is up to the school leadership to decide in collaboration with the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships.

All Centers should have a disciplinary or interdisciplinary focus which is aligned to their School.

Oversight

School Centers are managed by a school Dean and appointed faculty with the consultation of the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships. This oversight includes budget, selection of a Director, periodic review of the Center Director and the goals/outcomes of the center, center space, and funding strategy.

Two or more schools may choose to partner to establish a School Center, in which case the oversight of the Center is shared between the Deans with consultations from the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Partnerships.

Schools may receive mentorship and support from the ORSP leadership to develop School Centers. Some of the ways the ORSP can be helpful include:

- Assistance in identifying and preparing grant applications including drafting applications, and developing a budget with projected income and expenses.
- Providing guidance on the development of partnerships including identifying prospective partners, providing templates and other assistance to create agreements with partners.
- Overall guidance, including the planning and assessment of the viability of prospective centers.

³ Source: [NYU School of Professional Studies Guidelines for Establishing Centers, Institutes & Labs](#)

Funding

The operating budget is approved by the Dean of the school in consultation with the Center Director and the Provost's Office. While there is no financial allocation from the Provost's Office to the operating budget, the ORSP can provide in-kind support in the form of assistance with raising resources for research and other projects. Note that Institutional Advancement may be able to partner on an opportunity to raise revenue for a School Center that has been deemed a strategic priority by the Dean.

Lifecycle

School Centers participate in an application process for the coming year to allow Deans and the Provost's Office to consider and coordinate the full scope and fit of existing and proposed centers, and for the Dean to consider staffing needs. Faculty may apply for a School Center by drafting an application to be submitted to a Dean that outlines the following criteria:

- The need, or the particular research gap that the School Center will hope to fill;
- Any work that faculty has done that works to address that gap;
- The particular goals of the Center, and;
- The resources (funding, supplies, etc.) that the Center both has access to and will request from Pratt.

Once received, a Dean will review the application, with consultation from ORSP and the Provost, before making a final decision.

When starting a new Center the terms for establishment will be set and the new Director and the Dean will sign this agreement. It will cover expected Center focus, directorship term, school funds contribution (if any), revenue raising goals, and the possible life-cycle of the Center (e.g., it will be a Center for X years, reviewed each cycle).

A School Center could emerge from a Research Accelerator or Hub (see sections below). Conversely, a School Center could be selected by the Provost's Office to participate in the Research Accelerator program to receive additional space or resources if available. In all cases, the Dean of the school (or schools) would participate in this process.

Any existing School Center wishing to continue as such should submit a request to their need, so long as they continue to meet the classification criteria for a Center, as defined above and also include a summary of important milestones and achievements over the past four years.

It is possible for a School Center to transition to become a Provost's Center should the research expand in scope to become interdisciplinary, and the Director(s) have secured enough funding to support the center, enabling it to become self-sustaining. In this case, the Dean and the potential

Center Director would work through the process of proposing a new Provost's Center (see process above). If a School Center loses its funding, or, if the Director departs from Pratt and cannot be replaced, then the Center may be reclassified or discontinued.

School Labs

Similar to School Centers, a School Lab is another research structure that is typically under the supervision of a school Dean, with consultation from the Vice Provost's Office. School Labs are collaborative ventures that foster innovative research, but with a tighter focus than other RRUs, either on method, material, topic, service, or scope. Some are centered around the provision of services, machines, and tools to the Pratt community, like the Knit Lab and the Laser Lab, while others, like [the Material Lab](#), affiliated with the [School of Design](#), may be more robust.

Many operational aspects of School Labs are the same as School Centers, particularly around governance, budgeting, and oversight. Most School Labs are staffed by faculty and students, though some opportunities exist for external collaborations, depending on the particular Lab.

A School Lab provides an opportunity for faculty interested in exploration and inquiry around a single theme that is often but not necessarily multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary. Labs are meant to be testing grounds for faculty initiatives and projects, especially but not only those that cut across multiple units. Labs may begin with or without internal or external funding, but the expectation is that they will have some amount of internal support/funding. Instead of using the title "Lab," other terms may more appropriately describe new faculty-led projects.⁴

Hubs

Hubs are a fourth structure for Institute-affiliated faculty and students to incubate research projects under a common objective. The research support structure of Hubs was created to galvanize colleagues and students, encourage interdisciplinary collaborative efforts between teams, nourish connections to the Pratt curriculum and learning landscape, and to support innovative projects producing interesting artifacts or experiences through research.

Structure

Hubs can be thought of as fluid, umbrella structures under which smaller projects or initiatives, linked together in mission, focus, or other qualities, may be collected. As of June 2025, there is only

⁴ Source: [NYU School of Professional Studies Guidelines for Establishing Centers, Institutes & Labs](#)

one active Hub, the IDC Research Accelerator Hub, within which the Research Accelerators (see below) operate, but this should *not* be taken as a template or model of what Pratt-established Hubs can be—future Hubs can look similar to this or differently depending on many factors, not least of which being the nature of the intended research.

For example, Hubs are also envisioned as arenas of cross-disciplinary practice, teaching, events, and research around a field or subfield that connects departments or schools with each other. Such a model would incorporate exhibitions, public programs, workshops, and fellowships around a singular theme of particular interest.

Hubs projects are limited in their time-scope, and the number of Hubs the Institute can support is also limited.

Unlike Research Accelerators, space is not necessarily provided to Hub teams unless external funding has been secured, and a work plan or business model has been provided.

Hubs may operate as single units, parts of a collection, like the IDC Accelerator Hub, or, as sub-groups of Research Centers.

Leadership + Oversight

Hubs are established and supervised by ORSP. Hubs are led day-to-day by faculty, and can involve staff and students depending on the projects. Team size can range from 2 to 5 personnel.

The Provost's Office may organize ad hoc meetings at their discretion to assess the needs of a Hub and its progress, and more concretely, a yearly review and progress report is required, generally sometime in Q4. These yearly reviews should include an overall assessment for a change in status which might vary from winding-down programs to being considered as Research Accelerators or School Centers. This criteria may be as follows (but is not limited to):

- Availability of external funding
- The need for space
- The maturity and scalability of the project
- Potential interdisciplinary scope of the research
- Connection with the Institute's mission and goals

It is highly unlikely that a Hub would become a School Center without a more mentored research support structure, secured multi-year funding, and the development of a thorough Provost's Center plan.

Selection of Hub projects is done once a year by the Provost's Office through a brief proposal and review process similar to one for Provost's Centers (see page 8).

Funding

Generally, internal funding is not provided to Hubs for their establishment or operation, and most are expected to secure external funding. As with other RRUs, ORSP can assist with prospecting and assisting faculty in applying for these funds.

Faculty may be provided limited stipends for their work at the discretion of the Provost's Office.

Research Accelerators

Research Accelerators are the most recent of the Institute's research support structures, borne from an initiative launched in 2023 by the Institute and supported by a grant from the IDC Foundation (see [Hubs](#) above). The overall purpose of the grant and the corresponding initiative is to identify and incubate new, innovative research and to provide mentorship and workspace to new and early-career researchers, namely graduate students and tenure-track faculty.

These teams typically have received a small grant from inside of Pratt (see below re: seed grants) or from an outside organization. They show great promise in their research, but do not have the space to work together or have access to a fabrication lab or collaboration space. Research Accelerators are meant to be temporary in scope, their key objective being to accelerate the development of promising research. As such, they may transition to becoming a School or Provost's Center, or a startup, but this transition is not considered a metric of an accelerator's success.

Leadership + Oversight

Currently, Research Accelerators are led by faculty, and can involve staff and students depending on the project, with an overall team size of 3-10. The current, inaugural group of Research Accelerators consist of eight teams and all of the schools are represented in at least one Accelerator. Some examples of Research Accelerators are [AquaSteady](#), the [Mindfulness Collaboratory](#), and the [Decarbonization Working Group](#) (Cohort 1); and AI and Filmmaking, the Pattern Studio, and the Participatory Ecologies Lab ([Cohort 2](#)).

The selection, oversight, and review of Research Accelerators is managed and coordinated by the ORSP team. Deans may refer certain research groups in their school to the Provost's Office for possible development as a Research Accelerator. In some cases, School Centers have been referred to the Provost's Office so they can be mentored and supported with space. But most typical are research groups not "officially formed" as a School Center that would like to grow. Research Accelerator Teams are selected based on their research synergy with the strategic interests of the Institute (e.g., design innovation, creative economy, workforce development, climate change/sustainability), their funding trajectory, and their team leadership.

Lifecycle

Research Accelerators are limited to 1-3 years. On a yearly basis, teams will be reviewed to assess their growth, potential, and how they have been able to meet stated expectations. Evaluations may indicate the needs for increased support, or, the recommendation to sunset the accelerator. At the end of their term, Research Accelerators can grow into different RRUs, such as a School Lab, however this should not be an indicator of an Accelerator's success—Accelerators may be intentionally limited in scope by the faculty lead from the outset. The Vice Provost will consult Deans in setting the duration of terms for selected faculty leads.

Benefits

One of the key benefits of being a Research Accelerator is access to a community workspace space at the [Pratt Research Yard](#), a 20,000 square foot research and fabrication facility located within the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The Research Yard was built to allow for maximum collaboration between teams and as such each space includes meeting tables, chairs, storage, and pin-up space, with access to fabrication labs, conference rooms, and a shared kitchen/cafè. No more than 10 Research Accelerators can be supported given the space limitations in the Research Yard.

Additionally, Research Accelerators may receive a small yearly seed grant of up to \$5,000 in the service of supporting the Accelerator's primary goals and underlying research. While they can be broad in scope, these seed grants are best thought of as small grants that operate within certain conditions – they are not necessarily unrestricted, and all grantees must submit a detailed budget and justification prior to approval. They can be used for most research-related purposes, and in limited cases, a portion may be dedicated towards staff stipends of up to \$1500. More detailed information on these seed grants can be found [here](#).

Transitioning to a Different RRU Type

During the lifecycle of an RRU, there may come a situation, often stemming from funding challenges, levels of development, available resources, etc., in which an RRU may transition into a different classification. For example, as alluded to earlier, a Research Accelerator may transition into a School Center at some point during its lifecycle.

The chart below outlines the pathways that an RRU can typically follow when transitioning:

RRU	Can transition to...	Cannot transition to...
Provost's Center	School Center, Hub	RA, School Lab

School Center	Provost's Center, Hub, School Lab	RA
School Lab	School Center, RA, Hub	Provost's Center
Research Accelerator (RA)	Hub, School Lab	Provost's Center, School Center
Hub	School Center, School Lab	Provost's Center, RA

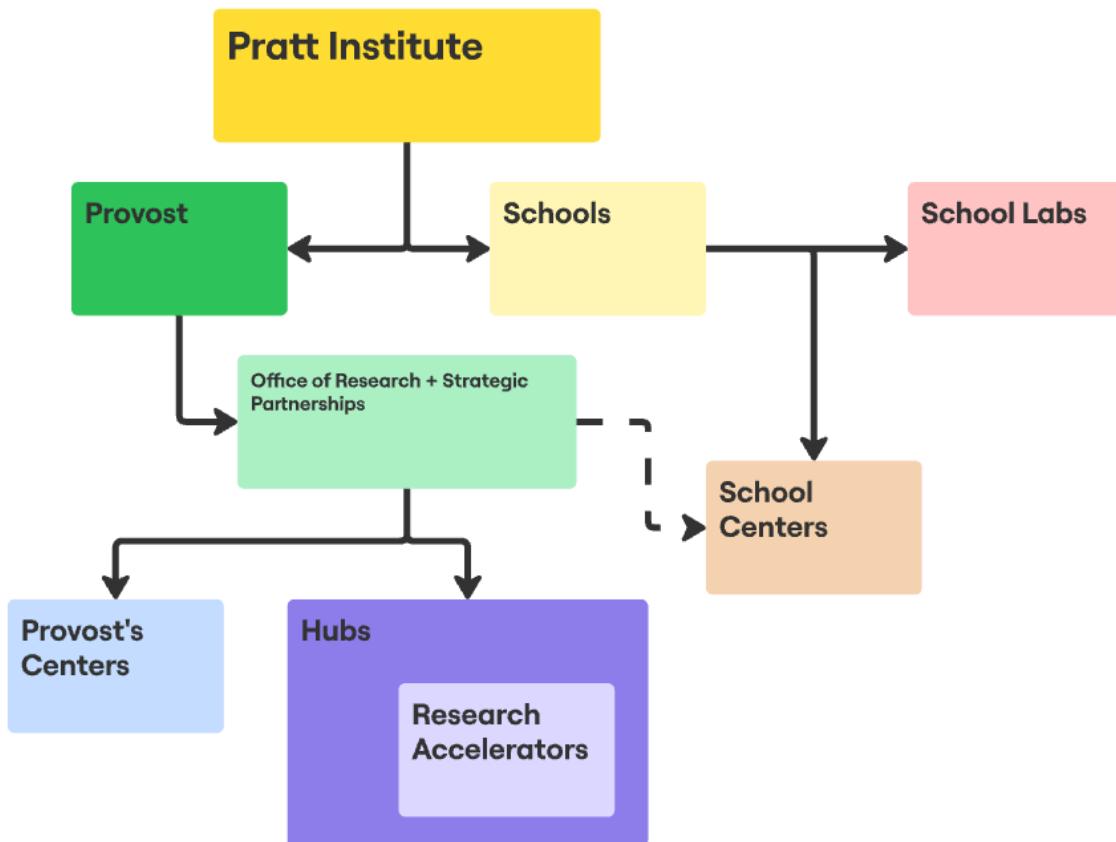
Appendix 1: RRU Comparison Chart

The chart below highlights at a glance the similarities and differences between RRUs:

	Provost's Centers	School Centers	School Labs	Research Accelerators	Hubs
Multi-disciplinary	Yes	Possibly	Yes	Possibly	Yes
Funding	Internal and external	Mostly Internal	Mostly Internal	Internal and external	External
Team Size	25+	5-15	5-10	3-10	2-5
Research Maturity	Established	Established	Maturing	Early stage	Early stage
Timescale	Continuing	Variable to Continuing	Variable to Continuing	Temporary (1-3 years)	Variable
Leadership	Director or Co-Directors + ORSP	School Deans + ORSP	School Deans	Faculty + ORSP	ORSP
External Partnership	Yes	Not necessarily	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Curriculum Development	Possibly	Yes	Yes	Possibly	Possibly

Appendix 2: Relational Chart of RRUs

The org chart below illustrates the relation of RRUs to the Institute and to each other, as well as their leadership structure.



Appendix 3: Organizational Chart of Current RRUs

ORSP Research Units

As of January 2026

