

Texas A&M University at Galveston Research Space Management Process

Final Approval: June 5, 2017

Typical Use of Research Space at TAMUG

- To carry out original research supported to a large degree by external funding sources
- To train graduate students to become productive and innovative members of the future scientific work force and scientifically literate members of our society
- To supply hands on, “in laboratory”, training to our best undergraduate students – this is particularly important to the Galveston campus to support our high impact teaching efforts.

Space at TAMUG should be allocated in accordance with these priorities, and to maximize the overall effectiveness of the university. It is recognized that space reallocation will incur “cost” to the University and the faculty; all efforts need to be taken to minimize disruptions in research activities of existing groups. For example, reallocating space for a new faculty member should not disrupt the productivity of existing faculty members.

Criteria for Space Allocation

1. Usage commensurate with special design features of space (e.g., wet labs, hoods, elephant trunk exhausts); these are expensive features that always are in short supply, and should not be squandered.
2. Sufficient space should be allocated to allow laboratory work to proceed safely. As a result, some activities will require more space per worker than others.
3. Other TAMUG-PI affiliated research personnel (undergraduate students, post-doc, research scientists.) may be considered in space allocation, but funded projects and graduate students will be given priority in the decision making process. We currently have no independent research scientists at TAMUG, should we start to hire people in this category this issue needs to be addressed again.
4. Shared spaces: Faculty sharing common research interests should be encouraged to explore options for shared spaces for specialized equipment or sample handling.

Allocation Principles

Space allocation should be reviewed periodically as part of the annual evaluation process to ensure that the most effective usage is achieved. Each tenure/tenure-track faculty member is expected to maintain an active research program. Therefore, an approximately equally sized BASIC research space should be available to all PIs (with the possible exception of continued unsatisfactory post-tenure reviews). It is our experience that the BASIC space currently available to the PIs is enough to run 2-3 parallel large research projects or one Megaproject with an annual budget of >U\$ 400,000 per PI (we define large research projects as 3 year projects with a budget of >150,000 per year) without causing a space shortage. Any space needs beyond the BASIC space will be assigned by the Department Heads, in consultation with the RSC and the TAMUG leadership in order to include objective and diverse inputs into the

process. Following the new post-tenure review guidelines, 3 consecutive unsatisfactory annual evaluations will trigger a professional review at which time research space assignment could also be discussed. However, it is also important to consider that research space is necessary for faculty to return to full productivity. Reallocations should proceed after reasonable notice and on a schedule designed to minimize negative and maximize positive impact on individuals and TAMUG as a whole.

Additional Considerations

- Priority should be given to newly hired faculty members in accordance with the strategic plans of the campus and departments.
- Nonfunctional research equipment, computers, and instruments should be appropriately surplused in a timely fashion following the university procedures in order to free up space.
- For additional space allocations beyond the “Basic Lab Space,” external grants/contract funding should be given appropriate consideration during space allocation decisions.
- Overflow and equipment lab space should be allocated and kept in usable conditions for temporary projects. The project manager (PI) will be responsible for removing project equipment when the project is finished. This will avoid costly and time-consuming renovations and disruptions due to moving labs for short-term changes.
- Newly funded research often requires additional personnel; space needs for incoming graduate students and postdocs (including office/cubicle space) should be considered in this context. We currently have postdocs and students occupying research space as office space. This situation needs to be solved asap before starting to look at new applications for research space. This is where the committees for research space and office space overlap and need to coordinate. A similar situation exists for non-laboratory type research space for computer based research. We consider this as office space rather than laboratory space and this should also be dealt with in coordination with the committee in charge of office space.

Space Allocation Procedure

All departments will be tasked to identify flex space that can be easily adopted for temporary use.

The need for additional research space has to be formulated in a detailed proposal using the [Requests for Research Space form](#) to the Research Space Committee (RSC). This proposal needs to justify additional space needs beyond the existing BASIC space (why is the existing lab not enough?). The proposal also needs to state how much more space is needed and what kind of space is needed (any special needs?). The proposal also needs to include detailed information on funding which needs to be the foundation for each research space request.

Research space requests are submitted in writing to the department or unit head for approval prior to submission to the RSC. There will be two annual deadlines for submission to the RSC on April 1st and October 1st of each year. This will coincide with the annual review of flex space usage.

The proposal will be reviewed by the RSC within 4-6 weeks and the decision will be forwarded to the Committee of the Built Environment (CBE). Applicant information and criteria upon which the RSC will decide about proposals include the following and should be addressed in the proposal:

- Name of the faculty
- Name of the department or unit
- How much more space is needed (square footage, bench space, type of space needed)
- Known target location (room number)
- Documentation of use of existing space (most PIs run 2 or 3 parallel funded projects in the existing BASIC lab space without problems, therefore proposals should be limited to faculty that have more than 3 large funded projects at a time or more than one “megagrant” (>U\$400,000 per year).
- Justification for additional space needs, including additional instrumentation, special requirements, and number of additional graduate students, post-docs, and research assistants, associates and scientists to be accommodated by the project
- Identify the possibility of shared space with other PIs
- Identify the availability of flex-space for this temporary need
- Necessity for remodeling or renovations

New Research Space

The RSC will submit the request and their recommendation to the Chair(s) of the Council for the Built Environment (CBE), through the Executive Assistant for the Executive Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer.

The CBE will schedule presentations from the requesting party(ies) and will vote to support or decline the request. A [New Research Space Allocation Rubric](#) has been created to help with the decision making process. The CBE Co-Chairs then forward the recommendation to the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for final approval or rejection.

Summary

This Committee believes that with the newly established post-tenure review guidelines, inefficient research space allocations will be minimized over the next few years. Moreover, the appropriate use of research space should become one of the criteria used in annual evaluations as well as in the post-tenure review process.

Resources

[Request for Research Space form](#)

[New Research Space Allocation Rubric](#)