



MEMORANDUM

TO: VSE Faculty

FROM: Kimberly Goodwin-Slater, Director of Finance
Arthur Pyster, Associate Dean for Research

SUBJECT: VSE Chartered Labs

DATE: May 12, 2019

In addition to operating chartered research centers, VSE faculty also operate labs as a means to brand their research efforts and to build cohesion and collaboration among faculty in related areas. Labs are typically smaller than centers, often supporting just one, two, or three faculty, may have limited or even no special laboratory space, and often have a relatively narrow research focus. Until now, VSE has not chartered labs, but will begin to do so as a way to publicly recognize and financially incentivize highly successful faculty whose labs meet specific criteria.

1. The director of an unchartered lab may submit a request for their lab to become chartered. The director must complete an application and submit it to the Associate Dean for Research and the Director of Finance. Chartering lasts two years and may be renewed.
2. The two primary benefits of being a chartered lab are:
 - a. Special recognition as a chartered lab on the VSE website and other VSE communications venues
 - b. Eligibility for the director to receive a stipend to reflect the additional effort that it takes to operate, manage, and grow the lab
3. Organizationally, a chartered lab can either be part of a department or a center.
4. The director of a chartered lab must be a full-time VSE faculty member and cannot be a center director.
5. Faculty participating in a chartered lab may come from any Mason academic unit, and a faculty member can belong to more than one lab. However, a VSE faculty member can only direct one chartered lab.
6. Chartering will be based primarily on satisfying two criteria:
 - a. *Expenditures*: the director of a chartered lab must be:
 - i. the PI on lab projects with annual expenditures of at least \$250,000, or
 - ii. the PI on lab projects with annual expenditures of at least \$200,000 and the Co-PI to a tenure-track PI whose project has annual expenditures of at least \$50,000. This criterion is intended to encourage senior faculty to mentor junior faculty.

Only expenditures, not recovered indirect, apply to this criterion.

- b. *Students:* at least three doctoral students must be supported in total as GRAs on research projects associated with the lab
7. The stipend level for the director will normally be \$5,000 annually for chartered labs which satisfy the two criteria above during the previous year and are reasonably expected to satisfy them in the current year. The stipend level will normally increase to \$10,000 annually when expenditures were at least \$400,000 in the previous year and are reasonably expected to be at least \$400,000 in the current year (or \$350,000 if the faculty member is Co-PI to a tenure-track PI whose project has annual expenditures of at least \$50,000). The dean reserves the right to set the stipend at a different level based on the best interests of VSE and Mason. The stipend is only paid to the director and not to another faculty member participating in the lab.
 8. Stipends will be paid following standard Mason business practice. Currently, a stipend is treated as taxable income paid in equal installments per pay period with state and federal taxes deducted. The stipend does not affect the amount of salary that can be earned in the summer, nor does it affect effort reporting for grants.
 9. During the academic year, the director must charge academic year effort equivalent to their stipend amount to their sponsored projects to offset the total value of the stipend.
 10. A chartered lab does not receive any special consideration for indirect fund distribution.