University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health
Guidelines for Assignment and Utilization of Laboratory Research Space

Introduction:

These guidelines are derived from “Research Space Guidelines”, a document that was approved by the Medical School Academic Planning Council on March 17, 1999.

Use of these guidelines should take into account the variations in types and amounts of space required by “wet lab” research activities in the SMPH. Competing needs for space should be considered in the context of the strategic priorities of the SMPH and its departments and centers, together with the availability of space in the School. As a basis for space assignments, the vitality of a research program will be assessed in terms of its success in competing for research support, and will also take into account productivity metrics such as peer-reviewed publications and mentoring and placement of trainees.

Guidelines:

1. The Dean has authority over all space assigned to the SMPH and is accountable to the Chancellor and Board of Regents for effective, efficient use of space. Within this authority, the Dean establishes priorities for space utilization within the School.

2. The allocation of research space should be on the basis of articulated criteria. Foremost among these should be alignment of space needs with the missions and priorities of the School.

3. The Dean delegates daily management of space to the chairs/directors of the departments and centers to which space is assigned. At their discretion, chairs/directors may develop and enforce more restrictive guidelines to ensure that assignments of space align with programmatic priorities. If more restrictive policies are to be implemented, these should first be reviewed and approved by the Dean or the Dean’s designee. The Dean retains ultimate control of space, transferring space from one unit to another when needed to advance the missions of the School. Research space may not be changed in function nor loaned by a unit or an individual without the approval of the Dean.

4. Each department or center should be allotted core space sufficient to achieve its missions. Research space will be assigned or reassigned on the basis of productivity measures such as peer-reviewed extramural grants and contracts, training grant support, and internal funding, together with other measures of research productivity. Determinations of productivity should be done on the basis of experience over time rather than a static look at a very short-term period. For faculty with joint appointments, credit for research funding should be allocated (as nearly as practicable) in proportion to the space provided to the research project by each unit.
5. With the exceptions of probationary or new faculty, assignment of research space to faculty who have not had competitive research funding for a protracted period should be limited to no more than ~250 asf. No faculty member should lose space immediately upon the loss of research support; however, a faculty member who has been unfunded for a period of 3 years should be required to contract to ~250 asf, or even less if the research does not require wet laboratory space. Exceptions to this guideline, in either the time period to reallocation or the amount of space, may be granted or imposed by the chair/director of the unit to which the space is assigned, subject to review by the Dean or the Dean’s designee.

6. Chairs/directors will consider extramural funding in making or adjusting space assignments. For research requiring wet laboratory space, the SMPH anticipates extramural grant support of ~$250 TDC/asf annually – thus, a faculty member with annual extramural support of $250,000 could be assigned as much as 1,000 sf of space, if available. Access to shared resources will also be taken into account when assigning space. Exceptions to this funding guideline may be imposed by the chair/director, subject to review by the Dean or the Dean’s designee. Because the space for core activities does not necessarily increase as funding increases, assignment of space to laboratories holding multiple extramural grants will be done according to need rather than a TDC/asf guideline.

7. Departments should discard unused, obsolete equipment and minimize the amount of space devoted to storage of shipping containers or rarely used supplies or equipment.

8. If research activities could be better performed off-campus, the unit should consult with the Dean or the Dean’s designee to explore the possibility of leasing such space.

9. Departments/centers will assign office space to faculty for research and instructional activities. The assignment of office space for research staff and trainees within a unit will be done equitably on the basis of guidelines established by the chair/director of the unit.

10. Space for a new program or faculty recruit must be identified prior to initiation of the program or recruitment of faculty. In general, such space will be identified by reallocating space within the same unit. However, the Dean may assign new space to a unit, outside of productivity guidelines, when the initiation of a new program is in the best interests of the School. Decisions regarding allocations of space should be made before arranging financial support for the initiative.

11. Space utilization is subject to periodic review by the Dean or the Dean’s designee(s). Such reviews may result in changes in the amount or type of space assigned to the unit.
12. A faculty member wishing to dispute a space assignment will first appeal directly to the chair/director responsible for the space. If the dispute cannot be resolved, the faculty member may then follow SMPH procedures for faculty grievances.

Approved by the SMPH Academic Planning Council, 04/18/2012