

# Operational Area Guidance

Updated: June 18, 2015

Definition: An operational area is an area of focus or function in a school, college, division, department or office. An operational area will generally be a subset of a school, college, division, department or office, and need not include the whole unit.

## **Guidance:**

An operational area is not necessarily an individual grant or funding source, or a specific supervisor. An operational area is typically an identified programmatic area within a division, department, laboratory or area of focus.

When identifying operational areas, factors to consider are the position's responsibilities for a particular area or program, the number of employees performing similar responsibilities, and the position's physical location. An organizational chart should play an integral role in the determination of an employee's operational area.

Examples of operational areas and additional guidance regarding the identification of operational areas are identified below.

## ***How is an operational area used?***

An operational area is currently used in the academic staff layoff and non-renewal for reasons of budget, program decision, or funding loss. Beginning July 1, 2015, operational areas will be used in the university staff layoff process as well.

Layoffs within an operational area are determined by layoff group. University staff layoff groups are organized by title. Academic staff layoff groups generally are organized by positions within an operational area that perform similar functions.

## ***How will employees know their operational area?***

An employee's operational area should be identified in the employee's appointment letter or other formal notification.

If an employee moves into a new position or the operational area changes, the employee should receive a letter documenting the updated operational area. An assigned operational area may change as a result of a change in an employee's duties, a reorganization within the division, changes in research or funding shifts.

**An operational area may be a:**

1. **Department, college, school or division.**

*Example:* Department of Chemistry, School of Journalism.

2. **Overall administration** of a department

*Example:* (Department/Division) Administration

*An administrative operational area may include, for example, all HR, payroll, IT, Finance, student service and/or outreach positions for the entire department. In larger areas, these functions may be identified as separate operational areas.*

3. **Research laboratory.**

*Example:* Dr. Smith's Laboratory, HOPE Lab, Johnson Group.

4. **Program area within a larger research laboratory.**

*Example:* Dr. Smith's Laboratory – Drug Development.

5. **Program area outside of a research laboratory**, such as a center, institute or fee for service operation.

*Example:* Center for Dairy Profitability, Center on Education and Work, Asian American Studies Program, Astronomical Journal.

6. **Off-campus physical location.**

*Example:* Spooner Ag Research Station, etc.

7. Or, other **defined criteria.**

**What is not an operational area?**

An operational area is not necessarily a single grant or funding source.

An operational area may be supported by a single grant or funding source, but the grant or funding should not be the determining factor.

An operational area is not necessarily an individual supervisor.

An operational area may be a lab or program area managed by a single supervisor, but the supervisor should not be the determining factor.