

Service Centers – What are they and why are they needed?

Service centers are operating units which provide goods and/or services, primarily to University departments, for a fee based upon actual incurred costs and have total annual direct costs exceeding \$50,000. Two categories of service centers are recognized at the University of Kentucky:

1. Major service centers have total annual direct costs exceeding \$500,000. Cost components that may be included in the billing rate for a major service center are the total direct cost of operations plus indirect costs for building depreciation, equipment depreciation, and maintenance and operations.
2. Minor service centers have total annual direct costs exceeding \$50,000 but not greater than \$500,000. Cost components that may be included in the billing rate are the total direct cost of operations plus indirect costs for equipment depreciation

Recharge operations are usually departmental units which provide goods and/or services, primarily to University departments, for a fee and have total annual direct costs of providing those goods and/or services of less than \$50,000. Billing rates may include direct costs only.

Reasons to have service centers:

- Allow consolidation of expensive technologies
- Provide access to state-of-the-art tools for modern competitive research
- Skilled technical staff dedicated to a specific technology
- Assistance with and training on use of equipment
- Assistance with experimental design
- Coordinate shared resources – meet demands of multiple users
- Expand the base of sponsored research by providing a strong research infrastructure
- Allow the accumulation of funds to upgrade technologies
- Allowable expenditure item on grants and contracts
- Participate in Research sponsored pilot grants for service centers
- Favorable consideration in regards to internal equipment competitions and equipment maintenance pool

Service centers are a cost effective way to provide specialized and/or expensive equipment and services, particularly ones that are small but vital parts of individual research programs. Many service centers are equipped with large and expensive equipment which may be difficult to operate and those facilities can provide expert technical assistance and training for complex technologies while keeping costs at reasonable levels.

Service centers can encourage investigators to embark on new research areas/projects without the hassles and down-time involved in setting up/standardizing routine techniques in their respective laboratories. A centralized facility can also ensure quality control and uniformity in techniques. This could lead to a sharing of technology, which in turn would potentially generate mutual interests in research projects and lay the foundation for fruitful collaborations.

Service centers are a particularly important resource for young investigators building new research programs; they reduce the need to purchase expensive equipment with research grant funds or as part of a start-up package. They also are important for developing research programs since many departments have limited finances, facilities and space for research. Many technologies are expensive for small laboratories to acquire and maintain, yet they are of paramount importance to scientists to remain on the cutting edge of their fields. Thus, demand for these types of facilities will continue to grow. Service centers are an essential part of UK's research infrastructure; they represent a significant long term investment that must be sustained and expanded to meet the growing demands of investigators.

Examples of Service Centers and Recharge Operations at UK:

Major:

Physical Plant
Communications & Network Systems
Division of Laboratory Animal Resources
Medical Center Arts and Photography
Hazardous Materials Management
Publishing Services
UK Mailing Services
UK Stores
PC Sales
Ag Service Center
UK Clinical Research Organization
STEPS

Minor:

H-1B Visa/Labor Certification
UK Creative Graphics
Bequeathal Program
Engineering Electron Microscopy Facility
Transgenic Mouse Facility
Water Analysis
D. O. T. Motor Pool
Flow Cytometry Facility
Microarray Facility
Electron Microscopy and Imaging Facility
Desktop Training

Recharge:

Wellness Program
Parking & Transportation Services
Math Science Workshops
Environmental Protection Services
NMR Center