

NOAA Research Council Terms of Reference

NOAA Research Council Executive Secretariat

Revised January 11, 2016

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Purpose:

This document creates and defines the NOAA Research Council. The purpose of the NOAA Research Council is to coordinate all matters of research and development within NOAA and to provide strategic advice to NOAA leadership on matters of science and research, including social sciences.

Mission:

The mission of the NOAA Research Council is to engage on all matters of science and research across the NOAA portfolio. The Council oversees NOAA's R&D portfolio and may choose to provide a higher degree of oversight on specific topics (e.g. RESTORE Science Program). The decision to address topics outside of this scope may be made by the Chair of the Council.

Council Roles and Responsibilities:

The Council shall be guided by the appropriate governing documents, including but not limited to NOAA Administrative Orders, and may generate such documents as appropriate to fulfill the purpose of the Council. The Council may establish priorities within the research portfolio of NOAA and create subordinate bodies to address or implement its activities.

The Council shall endeavor to administer consistently across NOAA: NAO 202-735D, "Scientific Integrity"; NAO 216-105, "Research and Development Transitions"; and NAO 216-115, "Strengthening NOAA's R&D Enterprise"; and, such other NAOs or documents that the Research Council or higher authority may generate.

The Council shall establish Committees to support its activities. A Research and Development Enterprise Committee (RDEC) shall help strengthen NOAA's R&D enterprise through effective planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. A Committee of Line Office Transition Managers shall focus on improving the effectiveness of NOAA's transitions of research to applications, on which the outcomes of NOAA's Strategic Goals critically depend. A Cooperative Research Committee shall focus on compliance with policies for cooperative research activities (e.g. Cooperative Institutes, Cooperative Science Centers, etc.) and to assist the Research Council with general oversight of cooperative research. A NOAA

Libraries Committee shall advise the NOAA Research Council concerning the structure and operation of the NOAA Library System, working toward the vision of a Library System that is sustainable and meets the most critical needs for researchers to continue accomplishing NOAA's mission

The Council shall keep abreast of new developments and priorities in relevant research and development inside and outside of NOAA. The Council shall prepare an annual guidance document, a Strategic Research Guidance Memorandum (SRGM) for approval by the Chair and issuance to all Lines by the NOAA Chief Scientist. As a strategic council, the Research Council shall periodically report matters, via the NOAA Chief Scientist to the NOAA Executive Council, and the NOAA Administrator.

Council responsibilities include but are not limited to matters of:
Scientific communication including fundamental research communications;
State of the Science Fact Sheets review and approval;
Oversight of the NOAA Cooperative Institute policy and program implementation;
Coordination of NOAA engagement with the National Academies of Science; and
NOAA's competition for Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE).

Membership:

Chair:	NOAA Chief Scientist
Vice-Chair:	OAR Assistant Administrator
Executive Secretariat:	Assigned by Chair

The Research Council is a high-level advisory and coordinating body that reports to the NOAA Chief Scientist. Assistant Administrators (AAs) of each of NOAA's Line Offices (LOs) and the Director responsible for NOAA's fleet and aircraft assets shall appoint a member to the NOAA Research Council to represent their office's perspective on the R&D interests of NOAA. This person will be the chief science advisor for those offices having such a position, or a person with a comparable role in the office. Members shall be authorized to make policy and strategic decisions and speak on behalf of their office's leadership, particularly in the capacity of coordinating across offices to plan, monitor, evaluate, and report R&D.

The Research Council representative should closely coordinate with the AA, Strategic Planning Director, and Chief Financial Officer for their office. Principal and Advisory Members (or their designees) will constitute the core of the Council's regular attendees.

Principal Members:

In addition to the Chair and Vice Chair, Principal Members will include representatives from the following:

- Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR)
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- National Ocean Service (NOS)
- National Weather Service (NWS)
- National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS)
- Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO)

AAs and the OMAO Director should review their representation on the Council annually to ensure the best fit. If a Principal Member is unable to attend a meeting, an alternate shall be sent with full authority to act on behalf of the Principal Member.

Advisory Members:

- Council of NOAA Fellows (CNF) Representative
- NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) Executive Director
- Cooperative Research Committee Chair
- Research and Development Enterprise Committee (RDEC) Chair
- Social Science Committee Chair
- Line Office Transition Managers Committee (LOTMC) Chair
- NOAA Library Advisory Committee (NLAC) Chair
- NOAA Chief Financial Officer
- NOAA Chief Information Officer
- NOAA Observing Systems Council (NOSC) Liaison
- NOAA Oceans and Coasts Council (NOC-C) Liaison
- NOAA Office of Education Liaison
- NOAA Scientific Integrity Committee Chair

Advisory roles may be fulfilled by a Principal Member if a Principal Member holds an Advisory Member position specified above. Advisory Members may also appoint designees to serve in their stead.

Other Meeting Attendees:

Research Council meetings are open. Relevant staff from LOs and implementation planning teams are encouraged to attend Council meetings to express their views and support/advise Principal Members.

Committees:

The Research Council may form standing and ad hoc committees to achieve specific tasks. Such committees may include persons who are not members of the Research Council, but the Research Council shall include at least one Council member (may be a Principal or Advisory Member) on all committees.

Committee Chairs are *ex officio* Advisory Members of the Research Council and will attend all Research Council meetings or appoint a designee to do so. Committees will develop their own Terms of Reference based on requirements outlined by the Council. Terms of Reference for committees must be approved by the Council. The Research Council may terminate ad hoc committees at will, and it may terminate standing committees by majority vote of the Council.

The Research Council has four standing committees:

1. Research and Development Enterprise Committee (Focuses on strengthening NOAA's science enterprise through effective planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting)
2. Cooperative Research Committee (Focuses on ensuring compliance with the NOAA Policy on Cooperative Institutes (NAO 216-107))
3. Line Office Transition Managers Committee (Focuses on fostering, tracking, and reporting on transitions of research to applications).
4. NOAA Library Advisory Committee (Focuses on strengthening and coordinating NOAA's library and scholarly publication enterprises)

The Terms of Reference for each Committee are available on the Research Council website at <http://nrc.noaa.gov>.

Meetings, Council Management, and Coordination:

Council meetings are generally held biweekly, or as needed, and are scheduled for two hours per meeting unless longer is specifically requested by the Chair. Meetings will be led by the Chair, or in his/her absence, by the Vice-Chair. Attendance by a majority of the Principal Council members (or their alternates) will constitute a quorum needed for decisional briefings. Video teleconference and teleconference capabilities are routinely available, and participation via these technologies constitutes full attendance. In-person participation is expected when feasible. The Research Council Executive Secretariat manages and maintains content on the Research Council website (<http://nrc.noaa.gov>) and the Council's shared-site. All meeting minutes and official (approved) Council decisions and documents are stored and maintained on a shared site (currently Google Drive), along with current and past Council actions and upcoming meeting dates. Typically, meeting materials are posted to the Council materials site no later than the Thursday prior to a meeting.

Agenda items for consideration are submitted to the Executive Secretariat, and approved in advance by the Chair or Vice-Chair. Agenda items are categorized as informational (e.g. to enhance situational awareness of the Council membership), directional (in which the Council discussion provides guidance for the entity bringing the item to the Council), or decisional (see below, for decision-making process).

Decision-Making Process:

The Council, with the support of Council staff, Committees, and Line and Staff Offices, will collect and analyze information to support its recommendations and its oversight responsibilities. Topics brought to the Council for consideration must be sponsored by a Principal or Advisory Member.

Most decisions will be accomplished informally through informed consensus. The Chair will strive for consensus on every issue. Whether or not there is consensus, the Chair will submit each decisional issue to a vote of the Principal Members. Notwithstanding a vote of the Principals, the Chair maintains 51 percent of the vote and has final decision-making authority when consensus is not achieved. Principal Members may also move for a formal roll call vote on any decisional item for the record.

Terms of Reference Revision Process:

The Council will review this document every two years or at the request of the Chair to ensure continued accuracy and utility. Based on the recommendation of the Chair, the Council Executive Secretariat will make revisions to the document as appropriate. The Chair will approve the Terms of Reference for a decisional briefing to the Council. Once approved by the Council, the final Terms of Reference must be approved by the NEC to enter into effect.