

CAES Laboratory Designation Process

# OVERVIEW

The laboratory space within the Center for Advanced Energy Studies (CAES) building provides unparalleled opportunities for energy-related research. These laboratories enable the CAES mission, benefit multiple entities, and create collaborations that produce best in class research by leveraging the capabilities, expertise, and resources of the CAES member institutions.

This framework defines the process to designate the interdisciplinary theme of each of the eight laboratory rooms. The intent is to foster collaborative, multi-institutional lab activities that provide value far beyond what INL or universities can individually provide, especially in Focus Areas relevant to the CAES strategic plan. Once a laboratory is designated via this framework, researchers can submit project proposals through the established approval process.

CAES laboratory designation will be conducted in a consistent and strategic manner designed to optimize the productive use of resources and to impact CAES missions and strategic priorities. Laboratory designation will be determined under the following premises:

* Laboratories will be designated according to priorities established in the [CAES strategic plan](https://caesenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2011_CAES_Strategic_Plan.pdf).
* Laboratories are a shared and limited resource and not utilized by any one entity, project, program, or researcher.
* Laboratory designation will be in alignment with the CAES foundational documents.
* Laboratory designation processes will be transparent and inclusive.
* Ultimate responsibility and unanimous decision-making authority rests with the CAES Director and Associate Directors, with input from the Chief Operations Officer (COO) and CAES Safety Officer (CSO).
* The Executive Board reserves the right to review and reconsider all Lab Designations at any time

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The CAES collaboration model leverages expertise, capabilities, equipment, and facilities across five institutions. Striving to become a hub and spoke model, CAES building laboratory designation decisions must weigh the following principles under this new framework:

* Collaboration
* Leveraged capabilities, expertise, and resources of the member institutions, both within and beyond the CAES building (including equipment, startup packages, mentoring)
* Alignment to CAES pillars and focus areas
* Multi-institution touchpoints, inclusiveness, and transparency
* Safety excellence
* Student opportunity
* Return on investment, sustainability, flexibility for growth, and impact
* Determined to be most beneficial at CAES building rather than a spoke location (INL, Boise, Pocatello, Moscow, Laramie, University Place, etc.)
* A user facility / recharge center may be considered with a strong business plan.

# PROCESS

*BIENNIAL REVIEW*

1. Designation for each CAES laboratory will be reviewed biennially[[1]](#footnote-1) to evaluate its return on investment, its alignment with guiding principles, upcoming project end dates and compatibility with planned initiatives, infrastructure and staffing needs, and the allocation of available resources.

*Note: If a circumstance arises that requires an immediate review, the CAES Director, COO, or ADs may request an out of cycle action beginning with Step 2.*

*PULSE CAES STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY ON NEEDS*

1. To begin the designation process, CAES leadership will solicit input regarding current and future research needs from (a) Working Groups that are implementing the CAES strategic plan, and (b) individual CAES researchers.
2. The CAES Director and Associate Directors will determine, based on the information submitted, rough categories under which these proposals may be grouped, to further explore collaborative lab space utilization.

*CONVENE CAES STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP FULL PROPOSAL*

1. The CAES Director and Associate Directors will then establish or assign an existing working group of CAES stakeholders for each category, who will be charged with developing a collaborative laboratory space proposal. The appropriate CAES stakeholders may include CAES Associate Directors, INL researchers and managers, university faculty/chairs/deans, amongst others.
2. The working group will work through an inclusive, transparent, and collaborative process to expand the submitted designation ideas, combined with ideas from the working group, into full lab space concepts. The working group will prepare a proposal, which will include a narrative speaking to the Guiding Principles. The working group recommendation will be sent to the CAES Director and Associate Directors for a final, unanimous decision, with input from the CAES operations team.

*STAND UP NEW LAB*

1. After selection, the lab lead process will be followed to select the lab lead(s). Staff needs will be identified.
2. The COO, lab lead(s), research operations lead, CSO, and other relevant staff will prepare plans to develop, construct, and prepare the lab (non-project specific) using established procedures and business protocols.
3. CAES leadership will review the facility modifications and arrange the funding to complete the laboratory changes.
4. Communications and planning will commence to prepare for lab operations.

*UTILIZE EXISTING PROCESSES*

1. To begin project work in the lab, potential users will follow existing processes.

# EXAMPLE

CAES CTK Laboratory is moved to an INL facility, leaving an open, undesignated lab in the CAES building. A request for information is sent out to all CAES stakeholders to solicit research needs. The CAES Director and ADs determine that the submitted ideas fall into two different buckets: a multi-disciplinary cybersecurity laboratory and a nuclear-based laboratory. The CAES Director charges the existing CAES Focus Area Working Groups on cybersecurity and nuclear energy to each review the received research needs, determine overlaps and growing needs in that focus area, and brainstorm ideas for how the space can be used effectively and collaboratively, leveraging resources and capabilities across multiple CAES entities. The working groups convene or communicate to scope the ideas for these potential laboratories into detailed recommendations (proposals). The CAES Director and Associate Directors select one of the laboratory proposals for implementation or request changes to the proposals. Once a lab is selected, a lab lead is selected through the established process, and plans to build out key components of the lab are completed aligned with the established, desired outcomes of the lab space. New users apply through established project plan templates.

1. This requires a stand-alone process. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)