



9.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Since 1998, NSF has funded only *multi-institution* Engineering Research Centers (ERCs) for two reasons: in order to gain the broadest possible impact in research and education, and to maximize the capabilities of research teams without limiting the Center's vision. This requirement means that to all of the day-to-day challenges of operating an industry-oriented, multidisciplinary Center on a university campus are added the extra dimensions—geographic, logistical, administrative, legal, cultural, and psychological—of requiring separate institutions to collaborate closely. This chapter focuses on the issues, challenges, and best practices that are unique to the multi-institution Center. Thus, it overlays and augments the other chapters of the Best Practices Manual, cutting across all the functional and program areas described there.

Loosely paralleling the structure of the Best Practices Manual as a whole, this chapter addresses the following topics. Links take the reader to that section.

2. [Organizational Structure and Center Management](#)
3. [Administrative Management](#)
4. [Research Program Management](#)
5. [Education Program Management](#)
6. [Industrial Collaboration and Technology Transfer](#)

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