

ERC Readiness Diagnostic for Yale Teams

A YRD strategy tool for Yale teams exploring NSF Engineering Research Center concepts

Use this tool to identify where a potential ERC concept is strong, where it is still developing, and what must be built before deeper proposal development.

ERC readiness dimension	Diagnostic question	Current position	Evidence, gap, or next step
Center thesis	What becomes possible only because this is a center?	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Gap	
Engineered system / center outcome	What system, platform, capability, or transformation is the center building toward?	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Gap	
Societal pull	Who outside academia needs this, and why now?	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Gap	
Research integration	Are the thrusts interdependent, or are they parallel projects?	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Gap	
Partner ecosystem	What does each partner make possible?	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Gap	
Workforce development	What is different about the trainee experience?	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Gap	
Innovation / value pathway	How does the work move toward use?	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Gap	
Yale positioning	Why Yale, why this team, why now?	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Gap	

How to interpret the diagnostic

Pattern	What it suggests	Recommended next step
Mostly strong	The concept may be approaching ERC-caliber.	Develop a 2-page ERC Concept Brief and schedule a YRD strategy consultation.
Mixed strong/developing	The concept may be promising but needs strategic shaping.	Use the diagnostic to identify 2–3 priority gaps before consultation.
Mostly developing/gap	The idea may be important, but it is not yet clearly ERC-ready.	Clarify the center thesis, engineered-system outcome, and partner ecosystem before proceeding.

Top 3 readiness priorities for the next 60–90 days

#1	
#2	
#3	

Most useful YRD support

- ☐ Center thesis development
- ☐ Partner ecosystem mapping
- ☐ Funded-center / landscape intelligence
- ☐ Reviewer-facing positioning
- ☐ Concept brief refinement
- ☐ Readiness roadmap
- ☐ Other: _____

Strategic discussion tool only. This diagnostic is not a scoring rubric, eligibility determination, or substitute for future NSF solicitation guidance.