



POLICY

RESEARCH

Introduction

The Foundation for Professional Development's (FPD) Strategic Plan commits the institution to distinguished scholarship and reputable research and innovation, and to the promotion of internationally competitive research as a core strategic goal. To ensure that South Africa can compete in a globally competitive environment, this commitment to research is aligned with the national imperative to encourage postgraduate studies, to increase the production of traditional research outputs (as defined by research articles, books, book chapters, and conference proceedings) and to expand the pool of researchers that can contribute to knowledge production and generation in our society.

Policy scope

The purpose of this policy is to present a policy framework for the management, support and development of research at the FPD, and provide a strategy to achieve the research goals. This is to ensure that effective arrangements are in place for the quality assurance, development and monitoring of research functions related to postgraduate education.¹

The responsibility for the implementation of the research policy resides with the Head of the Research Unit. Such responsibility is exercised through the Institutional Research Committee which functions in accordance with the authority delegated to it by the Academic Committee and the related academic quality assurance structures and committees. The Head of the Research Unit is responsible for implementing the strategy and exercising institutional-level responsibilities and functions, while the Schools take ownership of and manage research operations.

¹ CHE. 2004. Criteria for Institutional Audits: Higher Education Quality Committee. Available at: https://www.ui.ac.za/corporateservices/quality-promotion/Documents/quality%20docs/national/CHE_Institutional-Audit-Criteria_June2004.pdf

Definitions

Research and development	Creative work undertaken systematically to increase the store of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture and society, and the use of this knowledge to devise new applications. ²
Basic research	Experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view. ³ The results of basic research are not generally sold but are usually published in scientific journals or circulated to interested colleagues.
Strategic research (also known as oriented research)	Research carried out with the expectation that it will produce a broad base of knowledge likely to form the background to the solution of recognised or expected current or future problems or offer possibilities for solving them. ⁴
Applied research	<i>Original investigation in order to acquire new knowledge</i> ". It is, however, directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective. The results of applied research are intended primarily to be valid for a single or limited number of products, operations, methods or systems. The knowledge or information derived from applied research is often patented but may also be kept secret. ⁵

Purpose of research policy

The policy outlines the guiding principles regarding the management, support, and development of research to all involved parties in research at FPD. It is applicable to all temporary, fixed-term contract and permanent employees, as well as registered students of FPD. The purpose of the policy is to:

- Provide a framework for the governance of research and research development;
- Affirm research as a priority;
- Provide for continued high-level, effective and efficient support for research;
- Ensure the fair treatment of all researchers, staff and students;
- Ensure effective communication (internally and externally) about the principles and policies which forms the foundation of the research activities of FPD;
- Establish rational, transparent and collective decision-making processes around the allocation of research funds and other kinds of support for research;
- Balance the needs of research capacity development against those of established researchers;
- Integrate support for postgraduate research into the main research system; and
- Clarify roles and functions within the institutional research system.

² OECD (2015), Frascati Manual 2015: Guidelines for Collecting and Reporting Data on Research and Experimental Development.

³ <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/basic-research?wbdisable=true>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Basic_research#:~:text=oriented%20basic%20research%20is%20carried,or%20future%20problems%20or%20possibilities.

⁵ OECD. 2002. Proposed Standard Practice for Surveys on Research and Experimental Development. Available from:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Basic_research#:~:text=oriented%20basic%20research%20is%20carried,or%20future%20problems%20or%20possibilities.

Principles of research policy

- The Managing Director of FPD and the researchers in the various Schools are responsible for the management of research. Where research is conducted outside of Schools, the researcher reports to the Head of the Research Unit who is ultimately responsible (together with the researcher) for the management of research. The Head of the Research Unit, in consultation with the relevant academic stakeholders, is responsible for the provision of research support, within the available resources, and the exercise of institutional-level responsibilities and functions in accordance with relevant institution policies and regulations.
- Support is provided both for sustaining and promoting the research activities of established researchers, as well as the development of less-experienced or less-developed researchers.
- Material and in-kind support for postgraduate (master's and doctoral) students and postdoctoral associates is imperative for creating an enabling research environment.
- Requests for support of research projects or activities are considered on the merits of the proposal, applicant, the need for research capacity development, and the need to sustain existing research activities or capacity.
- The Managing Director must demonstrate their support to researchers who seek financial assistance and their concrete commitment to the relevant organisation of the researchers must be evident.

Custodian of research policy

- The Head of the Research Unit in consultation with the Managing Director of FPD, and the Schools, are responsible to:
 - Compile and maintain an accurate and comprehensive research database containing information about research activities by FPD staff and students.
 - Add and regularly update research information on FPD research website.
 - Compile an annual Research Report with a summary of the nature and scope of the main research activities at FPD and research achievements.
 - Drive external funding campaigns at institutional level and keep a database of all strategic partnerships.

Research strategy

The research strategy identifies the strategic research goals, resources and actions required to achieve the stated goals. The strategic goals for research and the activities designed to achieve those goals, serve to give effect to the Research Mission statement and the related core value. The proposed strategy has been informed by a range of imperatives both external and internal to FPD and is described within the framework of the National Research & Development Strategy.

Actions required to achieve the strategic goals**Create an enabling environment for research**

- FPD Research Unit to provide and coordinate efficient research processes.
- Establish institutional support systems for researchers to develop and maintain research quality.
- Assess, assure, and promote research quality by Academic Committee structures and the implementation of Academic Committee approved policies.
- Adopt efficient research management systems.
- Implemented peer review processes.
- Award and recognise Intellectual Property.
- Establish research alliances and partnerships with national and international universities and research institutions.
- Establish a postgraduate centre to facilitate, support and coordinate post graduate student's activities.
- Establish and implement career development pathways for researchers.
- Run adequately resourced research capacity development initiatives for novice researchers at both institutional and faculty level.
- Attract, retain and provide maximum support for postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers, e.g. a Library and Information Service, a statistical consultation service, a research equipment maintenance facility, access to the state-of-the-art ICT, etc.

Enhance the institutional research profile

- Develop a rational model for the adequate provision of internal institutional resources for research.
- Provide Schools with financial, infrastructural, and human resources to develop and maintain institutional research capacity.
- Create financial incentives for researchers to engage in high quality, internationally competitive sustained research activity.
- Create support for research mentorship structures for emerging and young researchers.
- Identify, encourage, and provide incentives for undergraduate students to pursue fulltime postgraduate research.
- Identify, encourage, and provide support to staff to acquire at least a Master's qualification through specialised programmes.
- Establish a staff-to-student ratio that is conducive to research productivity.
- Increase the number of research students and postdoctoral associates.
- Enhance the postgraduate student profile and the output of FPD.
- Encourage dormant researchers to start publishing.
- Include research output indicators in performance appraisals for FPD staff.
- Increase the number of NRF-rated researchers.
- Provide institutional support to researchers to achieve and improve their NRF ratings.
- Appoint research supervisors.
- Establish Research Niche Areas, Research Centres and Centres of Excellence.

Increase external funding for research

- Engage in dedicated and sustained activity to identify and source all external research funding opportunities, both national and international.
- Establish and expand appropriate strategic research partnerships and collaborative networks, both nationally and internationally.
- Utilise internal research funds as a strategy to attract external research grants.
- Utilise internal research funds only for research activities that cannot be funded – or adequately funded – by external funds, and for strategic research interventions.
- Prioritise some internal funds for emerging researchers, e.g. individualised research funds, annual awards for research excellence and talent management focus on specialized support for priority funding streams of the Innovation Fund (IF), European Union FP7, etc.

Support and promote fundamental scholarship and basic research

- Promote a philosophy of fundamental scholarship within the FPD.
- Develop fundamental scholarship skills in staff and students.
- Promote public understanding and appreciation of scholarship.

Support national, regional, and industry-specific research and development of policies and strategies

- Participate in appropriate national and international organisations that promote research and innovation.
- Identify and develop institutional research strengths that complement national research strategies and priorities.
- Enhance the social responsiveness of research conducted at the FPD.
- Identify and develop opportunities for relevant and applied research and knowledge production.
- Establish and expand appropriate strategic research partnerships and collaborative networks.
- Promote research capacity development of historically disadvantaged individuals through adequately resourced initiatives at both institutional and faculty level.

Maximise the impact and international recognition of FPD research

- Encourage enhanced participation by researchers in national and international funding agencies.
- Encourage enhanced participation by researchers in national research initiatives;
- Encourage researchers to become part of international peer review circles such as those established by the EU.
- Publicise research achievements and research initiatives widely (actively disseminate research results and achievements nationally and internationally).
- Encourage publication of research results in international journals.
- Promote the international exchange of researchers at all levels.
- Enhance social responsiveness of FPD research.
- Establish and expand appropriate strategic research partnerships and collaborative networks.
- Increase the number of NRF-rated researchers.
- Provide institutional support to researchers to achieve and improve their NRF ratings.

Research Quality Care

- Research quality care includes the maintenance and promotion of the highest internationally recognised standards of scientific and research practice, and of adherence to the highest ethical standards in research and postgraduate study supervision. Research quality care is the responsibility of the Head of the Research Unit.
- All applications for external research funds must be signed-off by the Head of the Academic Cluster (or their designee), on the recommendation of the relevant Head of School (or their nominee) before the application can be sent for external research funding.
- All research agreements (except those undertaken within the context of approved private work) concluded by staff with external entities must be approved in consultation with and be signed off by the Managing Director of FPD.
- All research involving human and non-human participants will have to obtain ethical clearance from a research ethics committee registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council. Research designs that involve minimal risk to human participants may obtain ethical approval from the FPDREC ([See FPD REC Policy and Terms of Reference](#)).

Accountabilities

The Academic Committee and Research Unit is responsible for review and approval of this policy on an annual basis. The policy is to be distributed to staff via induction and distributed to students and FPD's community via the website and other publications.