

UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

DRAFT

**RESEARCH MANAGEMENT
POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human civilizations are driven by the application of knowledge, which comes from education, both formal and informal and research into specific issues and challenges facing humanity in one form or another. The intention of developing a research strategy is to set direction for the future. The future in the case of this University, the development as it relates to this strategy coincides with the emergence of a knowledge society, globalisation and the dawn of the 21st century. Thus, research strategy in the making therefore should seek to set out the direction that the University of Port Harcourt should take amenable to the exigencies of the times and to articulate the specific contribution it will make towards the shaping of Nigeria's future in the 21st century. The University has a critical role to play in determining this future as what goes on in the lecture hall and laboratory has a direct bearing on the wellbeing of the nation in the years ahead. The Role of Universities in knowledge Generation, Utilization and Dissemination for Development Management and Poverty Reduction cannot be over-emphasized.

The traditional mandate of universities is classified into a three-fold function of teaching, research and public service. The basic product of teaching and research is knowledge, which energizes people to be useful onto themselves, their communities and societies. Development, thus, depends on the transformation of people who are the agents of change.

Public service is the direction of research to specific problems of society in the drive to provide understanding of the causes - the forces at play, the key relationships, the character of play, tendencies and the intensity factors (the strategic parameters) - which suggest the solutions, indeed the best solutions as well as control measures. Control is a powerful tool at the disposal of humans to obstruct whatever is not desired for desirable and propagate all pleasant or desirable experiences.

Thus, public service is the universities' response to the aspirations, goals, objectives and priorities of society with understanding, knowledge and solutions. In all these is found one thread, namely, responsible application of knowledge. So, higher education institutions, in particular the University of Port Harcourt cannot be separated from the concrete realities of the development crisis of Nigeria as producers of knowledge and skills endowed in people referred to as human resources in cadres of scientists, engineers, technologists, medical doctors, managers, administrators and many others endowed with all sorts of high quality knowledge and skills of relevance are in short supply. The knowledge production process like any other production process utilizes real resources. Therefore, funding reflecting the supply of resources to research is at the heart of the problems of the University in developing local research capacity to find solutions to socio-economic development problems and increase its social and policy relevance. But it must be emphasized that funding is only but one of the

- ▼ Enhance its research culture
- ▼ Participate in National and International research programmes.
- ▼ Contribute to developments in the humanities, social and life sciences, technology, medicine and other fields for national growth and development and overall welfare of mankind.
- ▼ Use human and capital resources efficiently in generating new knowledge and ideas with the goal of enhancing quality of life of the community and mankind in general.

2. RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

2.1 University Research Support: This is necessary to ensure that researches to be carried

out in the University have unhindered access to all the facilities and equipment within the

University needed for successful implementation and completion as well as seen to be

contributing or have the clear potentials to improve the livelihoods of the community and

thereby enhancing the University's ability to attract more research opportunities.

Specifically, such a support will be that:

- a. The Centre for Research Management (CEREM) shall coordinate all research activities in the University.
- b. The University Research Committee (URC) shall make and review, from time to time, the strategies and policies governing research administration in the University.
- c. For the smooth and effective administration of research activities in the University, CEREM shall liaise with departments and faculties of the University to ensure the establishment of Departmental and Faculty Research Committees (D/FRCs) charged with specific functions.

2.2 Assessment of Research Proposals: Among other functions that shall be assigned to

2.3 Research Focus/Priority: It is necessary to ensure that scarce resources are channeled properly to achieve the maximum possible public good and improve the capacity of the University in contributing to achieving global goals such that:

- a. URC, shall from time to time identify and review priority areas of national and international research interests vis-a-vis their alignment with the University of Port Harcourt's contribution(s) towards achieving them through demand-driven research efforts. *Emphasis shall be placed on issues, opportunities and challenges of national and international dimensions.*
- b. The University, through appropriate organs, shall advertise its expertise to the private and public sectors with a view to fostering sustainable relationship with industries and other bodies/agencies operating within the Nigerian economy.
- c. Staff, students and other persons, partners and/or collaborators working in the University can initiate and pursue research consistent with the University's philosophy and mission.

2.4 Appraising Research Proposals: The URC will **only** consider proposals submitted to it by the FRCs based on the following:

- a. Priority shall be given to type of research which seeks to exploit theme researches addressing important national and international issues. This should be within the areas of priority of the nation and are problem-solving. Such research themes could be fundamental, basic or applied.
- b. Emphasis shall be placed on multi-disciplinary research(es) at the disciplinary interface. The soundness of the research plan shall be an advantage.
- c. The feasibility of the research proposal within the time frame, the financial estimates as well as the available material and human resources.
- d. The potential for training and involvement of junior researchers and postgraduate students shall be added advantage.
- e. Expected outcomes and/or anticipated benefits to the investigators, the University of Port Harcourt, the Nigerian nation and the international public good of the research findings shall be accorded high priority.
- f. Compliance with existing ethical standards and provisions within the primary field(s) in focus shall play significant role in determining the suitability of a project being funded either from internal funds or external donor funding.
- g. A clear research results/findings dissemination plan must be included in the research proposal. *This is because projects published in outlets that attract international readership stand better chances to improve the reputation of the University of Port Harcourt in the international community since the reputation of a University is as good as the quality of research outputs.*

- c. All PIs must understand the University's policies relating to the conduct of research(es).
- d. The PI shall bear the overall responsibility for the management of their sponsored project(s) within the funding limitations.
- e. The PIs must ensure that appropriate (in terms of quality and numbers of) reports are submitted to CEREM as at when due.

2.6 Dissemination of Research Findings: The dissemination of research findings should a top priority and as result of that:

- a. All offices in the University of Port Harcourt are accessible to the intranet of the University and the internet for ease of communication and for submission of research papers and other reports since the current trend by international publishers is online submission of papers and research findings.
- b. Copies of all publications emanating from research(es) approved and/or sponsored by the URC must be submitted to CEREM.
- c. The CEREM shall publish an annual document containing all the research publications emanating from members of the University community.
- d. It is the responsibilities of researchers to ensure authorship rights of staff and students alike *as a veritable tool of academic mentorship and a sustainable means of building a critical mass of researchers.*
- e. In case of problems that may arise pertaining to matters of academic authorship, attribution and acknowledgement, the URC shall be the final arbiter.
- f. Before publication of any sponsored research, the PI should consult with the Intellectual Property Right Unit of CEREM.

2.7 Departmental / Faculty Research Seminars: URC shall encourage, emphasize and sustain a culture of Departmental / Faculty Research Seminars to provide avenues that:

- a. Promote the conceptualization of research ideas.
- b. Enhance the updating of knowledge.
- c. Identify areas requiring further research(es).
- d. Ensure presentation of preliminary research proposals and outcomes for reviews.

2.8 Access to Research Data: Accessibility to research data shall help enlighten members of the University community and other stakeholders on the research efforts of staff and students. Thus:

- a. The PI is responsible for the collection, collation, management and retention of research data.
- b. To ensure appropriate access, the University shall take custody of all

- have worked. However, an electronic copy of the original data should be retained at CEREM depository.
- e. All sponsored research shall be bound by confidentiality clause before the commencement of research.

3. RESEARCH STRATEGIES

- a. Any research project, sponsored or non-sponsored, embarked upon by a staff must be registered at CEREM and the investigators clearly indicated. Such registration shall be at the start of the project.
- b. The Principal Investigator in any sponsored research project must disclose all potentially patentable research outcomes.
- c. Articles emanating from researches carried out using university facilities shall be submitted to CEREM to enrich the research output database of the university.
- d. The research component of staff appraisal and promotion assessments will be based on a cumulative of articles published earlier and current articles submitted to CEREM prior to submission of appraisal form.
- e. A validated research output database will be used for all matters relating to staff research activities.
- f. All proposals for external funding shall be checked and approved by URC prior to submission and monitored for progress thereafter.
- g. The university will provide training in the management and practice of research to enable staff to continue to develop their research abilities.
- h. Progress of staff undertaking graduate studies overseas will be monitored regularly. Such staff shall be encouraged to have University of Port Harcourt advisor(s) approved by the School of Graduate Studies

should also be encouraged to participate in competitive research grants and individual staff also be encouraged to participate in competitive research grants.

The University should provide the support needed to assist staff obtain external grants.

Research funding from any funder (local or foreign) should be coordinated with the Centre for Research Management (CEREM).

The University should through the URC have procedures to recognize and reward successful researchers who attracted external funding.

5. RESEARCH PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

5.1 Pre-Requisite Requirements

Criteria for research proposal assessments must be comparable to international norms and standards in the light of the impact of globalisation on quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of the quality of research work; and equally important, must be objective and verifiable by any other assessors. The assessment process itself must be open and transparent, and its integrity and fairness should be beyond doubts. The framework should assist the development of consistency, quality management, accountability, and strategic direction for research activities. It should develop a research culture that encourages and rewards excellence in Research, Innovation and Development; builds research capacity; generates resources; builds knowledge which enhances teaching and outreach activities; and leads the University towards the realisation of its Vision and Mission.

5.2 Expert Panel of Judges (Peer Review Process)

The concept of Expert Panel of Judges or equivalently the adoption of a peer review process is restricted to mean persons imbued with professional competence in the proposed research area. This is required for the credibility of the process and quality assurance of the assessment process itself. In addition, the process should be expeditious. The Departmental and Faculty Research Committees should be formed within their membership and beyond the University

- e. Research outputs, policy outcomes and impact [socioeconomic (development) and policy relevance - local, national, regional and international]
- f. Sustainability — funding, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, retention, ownership, utility/impact
- g. Innovation, creativity and self-determination
- h. Opportunities for training and involvement of postgraduate students and junior researchers
- i. Ethical values and practice and behavioural responsibility
- j. Collaborative multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary research
- k. Cost (funding level required)
 - 1. Equality of access to all opportunities and service
- m. Dissemination plan
- n. Compliance with funding calendar
- o. Accountability
- p. Nature of Research - Demand vs. Supply driven research — academic entrepreneurship

6. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

In order to encourage serious involvement of members of staff in the research activities of the University, such members of staff shall benefit from the proceeds derived from their intellectual efforts. However, there is no national policy for now in Nigeria specifying any sharing formula for our sort of research activities. Thus, each university/institution determines its own sharing system depending on the issues considered for the sharing.

6.1 Issues for Consideration

Issues that are usually considered in the sharing of proceeds from institutional research which should guide our formula include:

- a The role played by the researcher(s) in initiating and securing the research project; b The scale of the intellectual inputs invested by the researcher(s) in the implementation of the research project;
- c The level of support by the University in terms of contacts and financial/material cost incurred;
- d The commercial viability of the innovation/product arising from the research;
- e The need for enhanced/stable institutional capacity for sustainable research

- g. I hat the sharing formula should be dynamic, such that it can be adjusted from time to time as new realities emerge without unduly harming the interest of any party involed.

6.2 Sharing Formula

Based on the above , no one-for-all sharing formula is usually applicable to all cases, as circumstances may vary from one project to another. However, the following criteria shall be adopted in our sharing formular:

- a. The role played by the researcher in initiating and securing the project shall attract 10% of the net income accruing from the research product to the university.
- b. I he amount of intellectual input invested by the researcher/innovator in the research implementation shall attract 25% of the net income accruing to the university from the research. This shall be different from the allowances for field trips, etc which the researcher shall receive during the research activities and such allowances should be part of the running project.
- c. Where the innovation is patented and attracts running income (royalty) the innovator should be entitled to 10% of the income accruing to the University from the innovation.

7. RESEARCH ETHICS & SAFETY

Research is defined as a systematic investigation which includes research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalized knowledge.

Ethics is the study of moral standards and how they affect conduct. It is a system of moral principles governing the appropriate conduct of a person or a group of persons.

Science has been used to develop technology which raises complex ethical questions especially in the fields of biology and medicine. Research involving genetic engineering; cloning and in vitro fertilization gives scientists the unprecedented power to bring about new life or to devise new forms of living things. At the other extreme, science can also develop technology that is deliberately designed to harm or kill, such as chemical and biological warfare, as well as nuclear warfare, which is by far the most destructive weapon the world has ever known.

Medical ethics involves the study and application of moral values, rights and duties in the fields of medical treatment and research. Medical decisions involving moral issues are made every day in diverse situations such as the relationship between patient and physician, the treatment of human and animal subjects in biomedical experimentation, the allocation of scarce medical resources, the complex questions that surround the beginning and the end of a human life. and the conduct of clinical

be compliance with the principles of research ethics to ensure a pure and perfect research design with no harm to participants and researchers.

7.1 Scope and Purpose

The aim of the University Research Ethics policy is to encourage high quality research, with a focus on integrity and practice. The policy applies to staff and students of all disciplines who are undertaking research, and other researchers using university facilities and equipment.

7.2 Human-Related Research

Research involving humans raises ethical concerns about the subject's right to privacy, possible harm or discomfort caused by the procedure, and use of deception. Human-related research includes:

- a. Direct involvement through physically invasive procedures such as collection of blood samples.
- b. Direct involvement through non-invasive procedures, such as laboratory-based experiments, interviews, surveys, questionnaires and observation.
- c. Indirect involvement through access to personal information or tissue.
- d. Involvement requiring consent on behalf of others, such as by parents for a child.

7.3 Animal Subjects

There are laboratory experiments that use rats, mice, rabbits, pigeons, monkeys and other animals. They are an important part of research and serve three distinct purposes: to learn more about certain types of animals, to discover general principles of behaviour pertaining to the species, and to study variables that cannot ethically be tested with human beings.

Animal rights activists have questioned the ethics of animal experiments as animals also have the capacity to suffer and feel pain. Therefore, strict ethical guidelines should also be followed for animal studies. Pain and discomfort should be minimized as much as possible and the least invasive procedures used.

7.4 Basic Ethical Principles

- a. Respect for participants: The rights and dignity of the Research Participant must be respected and protected at all times, and their right to self-determination and freedom acknowledged throughout the research process.
- b. Voluntary participation: No Participant should be forced or coerced into agreeing to participate in any Research.
- c. Informed consent: All necessary information including risks and benefits required to enable a Participant make a decision whether or not to participate in the Research

should be given to the Participant in a language he / she understands. The participant should be given an opportunity to ask questions and honest answers provided. A written consent should be obtained.

- d. Subject is free to withdraw at any stage: Because participation is voluntary, the subject may withdraw at any time he / she feels without any sanctions.
- e. All harm and discomfort should be minimized: The researcher will not deliberately cause harm to the Participant, and all discomfort should be minimized.
- f. Confidentiality: The researcher may not divulge privileged information concerning any Participant without consent. It may be preferable to use codes and numbers rather than names.
- g. Proper monitoring (Non-maleficence): The protection and well-being of the subject is the primary responsibility of the Researcher. This is more important than the pursuit of knowledge and benefit to science that will result from the research.
- h. Beneficence: Participants should be treated in an ethical manner and all efforts made to secure their well-being. Benefits should be maximized with minimal or no harm.
- i. Follow-up: Participants should be followed up for a period of time even after the conclusion of the research, especially when the research is invasive or is an intervention research, to ensure no late development of complications.
- j. Justice: All participants should be treated equally, and benefits and risks distributed fairly. It is unjust to use subjects for a research and deny them the benefits without good reason.

These basic principles transcend geographic, cultural, economic, legal and political boundaries. They must be followed in all researches involving living participants. However, resource constraints may limit their maintenance in resource-limited settings, but efforts must be made to maintain them in all researches.

7.5 Ethical Issues in Medical Research

The Helsinki Declaration in 1964, amended last in Scotland in 2000 serves as a guide to govern researches involving humans. In that declaration, it is noted that the well-being of the subject should take precedence over the interests of science and society.

Different countries have developed guidelines to guide the conduct of research involving human subjects in the environment. In 2006, the National Code of

The basic principles as outlines above should govern all research as well as the following:

- ▼ Relevance
- ▼ Scientific integrity of the proposed research
- ▼ Investigator's competence
- ▼ Accountability
- ▼ Transparency

A Research Ethics Sub-Committee of the University Research Committee (URC) should review all research proposals and a written approval obtained before commencing any research in the University.

8. FINANCIAL MATTERS

8.1 Sources of Research Funds.

- a. The University should on annual basis budget for University funded (sponsored) research in disciplines that are related to its Mission of relevant research that addresses the challenges of contemporary society.
- b. Externally funded research grants such as the NUC Senate research funds.
- c. Goal-specific research grants from external agencies, companies, industrial establishments etc.

8.2 Management of Research Funds

- a. Research expenses must be reasonable and in compliance with university financial rules and regulations.
- b. Research funds must be expended as approved by the University Research Committee or any other funding organization and within the restrictions of the grant.
- c. Recipients of research grants shall be required to report both on the academic content of their research and on their use of the funds.
- d. The Bursary of the University must maintain a separate dedicated account for all research funds for ease of disbursement as and when necessary.
- e. URC is to set up an *ad hoc* audit Committee to audit expenditure of research funds every year.

8.3 Externally Funded Research Grants.

- a. Research funded by outside agencies will be surcharged 10% of the direct cost of the research grant as overhead cost. Waiver may however be granted at the discretion of the University Research Committee.
- b. A grant in foreign currency shall be disbursed to the awardees in that currency. Where this is not feasible, the grant should be drawn as the Naira equivalent at the official exchange rate at the material time.
- c. Procedures will be put in place to ensure that all externally funded research proposals and projects are checked and approved prior to submission and monitored for progress thereafter.
- d. Staff shall not receive additional payments for undertaking research for projects which are funded from internal or external research funds, where conducting research is identified as part of their job description (staff shall however be able to use part of the overhead fees collected from their externally funded research projects for research- related activities).