



UPSA

UNIVERSITY OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES, ACCRA

Scholarship with Professionalism



RESEARCH POLICY



January, 2017

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Preamble

As a higher education provider, University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA) recognizes the importance of research and its mandate to contribute to the research enterprise. This recognition has meant that the University must have a Research Policy document so that all those engaged in research (or the process of research), for, or on behalf of the University can take note and act accordingly. This document, the first version of UPSA Research Policy (UPSARP), is developed to guide and direct the conduct, dissemination and use of research in UPSA. Its overarching goal is to ensure that research conducted in the name of UPSA or on its premises is consistent with the ethos of the University and conforms to the highest quality, ethical standards and international best practices.

1.2 Fundamental Bases for UPSA Research Policy

The formulation of this Policy is within the broader context of the Act establishing the University (Act 850), the vision and mission of the University and its strategic goal for research.

Aims of UPSA

Per the University of Professional Studies Act, 2012 (Act 850), the aims of UPSA are:

- a) to provide higher professional and academic education, through teaching and research;
- b) to provide service through extension and consultancy activities to the communities outside the University; and
- c) to undertake research in courses within the mandate of the University.

Vision of UPSA

To be a world-class higher education provider in both academic and professional disciplines, nationally entrenched, regionally relevant and globally recognized.

Mission of UPSA

We strive to provide and promote quality higher academic and professional education in business and other social science related disciplines, by leveraging a structured mix of scholarship with professionalism in Ghana and beyond.

We believe our responsibility is to the students, parents and guardians, employers, community, country and international partners, who are the reason for our existence; the faculty and staff who are our pride that drives the knowledge and skills development process; the regulators who guide our quality process and our alumni and research output which are the evidence of the success of the University. In meeting their needs, everything the University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA) does epitomizes scholarship with professionalism.

Strategic Goal for Research

In line with its vision and mission, the University has a strategic goal to “enhance research enterprise” by:

- a) Developing capacity for research and publications;
- b) Developing collaboration for international research projects;
- c) Developing capacity for institutional research;
- d) Enhancing the operation of an in-house internationally recognized peer reviewed journal;
- e) Establishing chair system and honorary degrees to attract potential industry partners for action research;
- f) Establishing business incubator system in collaboration with industries; and
- g) Reviewing the list of UPSA prescribed journals for publication by faculty.

1.3 Commitment to Research

As part of its commitment to growing the research enterprise, the University is dedicated to fostering an environment of open inquiry and academic freedom in which individuals can pursue research activities that are compatible with established University policy and procedure, and conform to the terms and conditions of funding agencies and donors. To this end, the University shall:

- a) Make substantial investment into building core competencies for research;
- b) Strengthen the unit(s) responsible for administering and managing research;
- c) Provide resources for research and create opportunities for researchers to access funds or resources both locally and internationally;

- d) Be dedicated to supporting and developing research and scholarship through prudent resource management and the securing of external funding;
- e) Offer financial reward for publications in high ranking journals;
- f) Ensure highest ethical standards of research practices and quality research output;
- g) Institutionalize a national research agenda and annual research output.

1.4 Purpose and Goal of the Research Policy

The purpose of this Research Policy is to establish an overarching framework that will guide and direct the conduct, dissemination and use of research in UPSA. The goal is to ensure that research carried out in the name of UPSA or on its premises is consistent with the aspirations of the University.

1.5 Objectives of the Research Policy

To achieve its purpose and goal, the Policy has the objectives to:

- (a) Stimulate and promote research in the University;
- (b) Enhance capacity for research and innovation;
- (c) Direct the research efforts of the University toward the achievement of its vision and mission;
- (d) Ensure that research conducted in the name of the University is of the highest quality and ethical standards; and
- (e) Promote local, national, regional and international collaborations in research and foster partnerships with industry.

1.6 Applicability of the Policy

This Policy applies to UPSA and all its employees, students, persons with honorary positions, and other individuals who conduct research (or are involved in the process of research) in, for, or on behalf of the University.

2.0 Definitions

Unless otherwise stated, the following abbreviations and definitions apply to this Policy.

| Word/Term | Definition |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| VC | Vice-Chancellor of UPSA |
| Pro VC | Pro Vice-Chancellor of UPSA |
| DRCC | Director, Research and Consultancy Centre |
| RCC | Research and Consultancy Centre |
| Research | Is a systematic inquiry oriented toward the discovery of knowledge, creative cultural and conceptual expressions, or innovative scholarships which may contribute to development |
| UPSA/University | Refers to the University of Professional Studies, Accra and to all affiliated institutions or organisation controlled by the University and governed by the University Council |
| Research Misconduct | Refers to the commitment of fraud in research, which includes fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, theft of research data, or other practices that deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the research community for proposing, conducting or reporting research. It does not include honest errors or honest differences in interpretation or judgements of data. |
| Intellectual Property | The legal rights which results from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary and artistic fields. It includes Inventions, Trade secrets, Creative Works, Scientific Works, Scientific Discoveries, Industrial Designs, Trademarks, Commercial Names and Designations as well as Research Material |

3.0 Research Principles

To ensure quality, avoid research misconduct and uphold highest standards of responsible practices, the University affirms the following principles for the conduct and dissemination of research:

- (a) **Freedom and Autonomy:** By freedom and autonomy, academics and researchers should be free to:
 - i. select the subject matter of their research;
 - ii. seek support, financial or otherwise, from any source for their work; and
 - iii. form their own findings and conclusions.
- (b) **Integrity and Honesty:** Throughout the entire research process, researchers have an obligation to be honest and acknowledge all their sources of information and support (e.g. funding, research assistantship etc.).
- (c) **Objectivity:** Researchers must maintain and seen to maintain a position of independence, neutrality, impartiality and fairness in the conduct and report of research findings.
- (d) **Openness:** While recognizing the policy on confidentiality (data protection and privacy), researchers have an obligation to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and the public. Researchers are also obliged to keep records and data in a way that will allow other researchers to verify their findings and conclusions.
- (e) **Leadership:** Researchers must demonstrate exemplary behaviour and good judgement over research processes and research materials.
- (f) **Accountability:** In conducting research or exercising leadership over research, the Principal Investigator should be answerable to the University (and funders, where it is required) on how the research resources are used and must submit appropriate reports.

4.0 Policy Statements

UPSA expects those engaged in research or the process of research (whether they are employees, researchers or students of the University) to act in accordance with the highest standards of integrity and quality regardless of the funding source(s) for their research. To this end, the University hereby states its Research Policy Statements under twelve main areas, namely:

4.1 Requirement to undertake Research

- (a) All faculty members or academic staff are required to conduct research and publish their findings in reputable journals, where possible. An assessment of the scholarly and research activities will be included in the annual review of faculty members, and, this assessment will count toward faculty promotion.
- (b) All academic staff should, where appropriate, seek research funds in support of their research;
- (c) The requirements to undertake research is a career expectation and do not replace other obligations. Instead, they should be balanced with other obligations of academic staff including teaching and administrative responsibilities;
- (d) Nothing in this policy is to be construed to prevent Heads of Schools, Faculties or Departments from allocating teaching and other responsibilities to an academic staff because of his or her research record;
- (e) Students may also be required to undertake research or project work as part of the requirements for the award of their degree or qualifications

4.2 Priority Areas of Research

- (a) Each Centre, School, Faculty and their constituent's academic units will be required to develop and implement its own research agenda. These agendas should cascade into the University's research plan.
- (b) From time to time, the University may also come out with priority areas of research, from which faculties will draw their research agenda.
- (c) In deciding the priority areas of research foci, the fundamental consideration should be relevance to national agenda, alignment with the University's aspirations, usefulness to industry and benefits to community and societal development.

4.3 Students' Research

- a) Students may be required to submit and defend a research project by the end of their programmes in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a degree.
- b) Where applicable, students may be required to have research/project supervisor to guide them to successfully meet the research/project requirements.
- c) Undergraduate research/project supervisors shall be assigned by the Heads of Departments. Graduate students' research/project supervisors shall be assigned by the DRCC in consultation with the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.
- d) Faculty and Departmental Research Officers are responsible for ensuring that the management of students' research complies with the relevant University policies and procedures.

4.4 Research Funding and Support

Funds for research are generally sourced from Government, GETFund, Internally Generated Funds (IGF), donors etc. For the purpose of this Policy, research funding and support are categorized into University Research Fund (URF), Faculty Research Grants (FRG), and External Projects and Donor Funds (EPDF). Regardless of the funding source, staff are expected to comply with the terms and conditions associated with the respective funding sources. All research proposals and applications, and resulting contracts, are to be submitted through the RCC.

- a) University Research Fund
 - i) This fund will be a university-wide fund accessible by all academic staff
 - ii) There must be clear procedures and guidelines for applying to the University Research Fund for support. These guidelines are stated in the Quality Manual for Senior Members.
 - iii) The general principle for allocating research funding in the University should be that research must be an investment intended to maximize the range of outcomes accruing to staff and students
 - iv) Where, due to limited resources, the University Research Fund cannot support all research demands, allocation would be done in a fair manner taking into account the scholarly and educational merits of the proposed research.
 - v) Based on funding availability, the URF may feed the Faculty Research Grants with funding.
- b) Faculty Research Grants
 - i) Faculty and Schools may establish and mobilize grants to support their members' research
 - ii) Funds from the Faculty and School Research Grants should be allocated according to the Faculty's own internally established processes. The processes should be transparent and fair.
- c) External Projects and Donor Fund
 - i) The EPDF encompass all publicly funded research contracts, privately funded research contracts and donations or philanthropic funding of research
 - ii) The resources of this Fund shall be applied according to the contract or terms and conditions of the donors.

4.5 Research Management and Administration

- a) UPSA has a responsibility to ensure that research carried out by its employees, researchers and students, or by others in its names is properly managed and administered. The DRCC

and Director of Finance (or Research Projects Accountant) are responsible for the effective supervision, administration and management of all internally and externally funded research activities

- b) Within the University, it is the responsibility of the DRCC, Faculty Research Officers and Departmental Research Officers to ensure that a climate is created to support the conduct of research.
- c) The University should have a Research Management and Administration Handbook that will contain all research-related policies, guidelines and protocols.

4.6 Quality Assurance in Research

UPSA encourages its researchers to strive for excellence in research. Researchers must aim to produce and disseminate work of the highest quality. Ensuring highest quality research does not involve only a single action or step that must be taken at some point in the research process, but a continuous process that involves different strategies at different stages in the research life cycle. It is therefore necessary for all academic staff to recognize this, take full responsibility for the quality of their work and accept to follow quality assurance policies hereby stated:

- a) The RCC is responsible for defining and monitoring compliance with the quality policy but the implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the PI.
- b) A proposal to conduct a research must be submitted to the RCC for internal review and compliance assessments. Before a proposal is submitted for internal review, it must have the endorsement of the individuals responsible for carrying out the project and a declaration of any actual or foreseeable conflict of interest. The review and assessments should assure that:
 - i) Given the technical capacity of the researcher(s), the commitments to be entered can be satisfactorily met within the stated time, space and budget.
 - ii) The proposal complies with both the Terms of Reference of sponsor and University policies
 - iii) There will be timely availability of resources to accomplish the research
 - iv) The proposal adheres to ethical standards and principles
- c) Where it is required, researchers must ensure that they submit their proposals for external ethics review and adhere to the outcome of that review.
- d) Before the eventual submission of a proposal for external sponsor or support, it must be endorsed by individuals authorized to commit the University to a legal offer
- e) The University encourages peer review and double-blind review as mechanism for enhancing and assuring quality. For externally funded research project, the peer review process must be agreed upon with the funder(s).

- f) All on-going research projects are to be monitored by the RCC and audited by the Internal Auditor. The RCC is to receive quarterly and annual reports on all on-going projects from the PIs. Upon completion of a research project, the PI shall also submit a final report to the RCC.

4.7 *Statutory Regulations, Institutional Policies, and Contractual Obligations*

- a) University staff and students working on sponsored research must abide by statutory regulations governing the conduct, dissemination and use of their research
- b) Where applicable, the University expects researchers to observe the standards of research practice published by scientific and learned societies and other professional bodies.
- c) University staff and students working on sponsored research must adhere to the terms and conditions of the sponsor's contract as well as the University's policies.

4.8 *Ethical Responsibilities*

UPSA takes ethics in research seriously because it is believed that it can ensure high quality research, protect research participants, assure funders of ethical use of their resources, and help to maintain a good reputation for the research community. For this reason, all researchers must uphold ethical standards in research regardless of the source(s) of their funding. At UPSA, the ethical responsibilities of researchers are considered from five main angles, namely, obligations to oneself, research participants/subjects, funders, colleague researchers and society. Specifically, researchers have a responsibility to:

- a) Participate only in research works that they have the capacity or capability to do;
- b) Protect participants/subjects from undue harm, infliction of pain or injury and risks arising from participation by ensuring their safety and welfare;
- c) Uphold the rights of research participants/subjects during and after the research;
- d) Maintain a balanced relationship with and commitment to the funders;
- e) Uphold rigorous scientific methods and standards, and to demonstrate professional behaviour that reflects the shared values and ethos of the professional research community; and
- f) Conform to the moral and legal order of the society and maintain ethical standards throughout the research process.

The RCC will be mandated to set up an Institutional Review Board (IRB), building on the existing ethics and research review committee, to oversee the ethical clearance for research. The RCC shall put in place a system for monitoring compliance by researchers.

4.9 *Publication and Proprietorship of Research Outputs*

- a) Whenever possible, researchers should publish their research in reputable peer reviewed journals. Publications should be in a form appropriate to the discipline in which the research is conducted and in accordance with UPSA “Publication and Authorship Guidelines”.
- b) Research results or findings may also be presented at conferences, published in conference proceedings or reported in public media before their eventual publication in peer reviewed journals. Where this occurs, the research must make this clear in the publication.
- c) Publications must include information on the sources of financial support for the research, if any.
- d) Duty of care must be taken by researchers when publishing their research outputs to avoid tarnishing the reputation of the University or damaging its interest.
- e) All persons – academic staff, students, research assistants, and others – who have made substantial contribution to a research must be given the opportunity to be included as an author of a publication deriving from that research. Substantial contribution implies participation in conceiving, executing, drafting or finalising the publication sufficient to take responsibility for it.
- f) Staff should be aware that, per the University’s Intellectual Property Policy, many forms of Intellectual Property such as patents, designs, and software that they develop during their employment and /or using University resource belong to the University. In cases where the research has external sponsor, the University acknowledges the legitimate interests of the sponsor in securing protection for the developments made during the research.
- g) The University may require certain publications to be made available the University’s Institutional Repository.

4.10 *Research Centres*

- a) Centres of Excellence may be established by the University to raise the research profile of the University by focussing their attention in well-defined areas to create niches for the University
- b) Consistent with the strategic interest of the University, Research Centres should promote the University’s linkages with industry and facilitate interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary relationships.
- c) The research activities of the Centres shall be coordinated by the Centres and reported to the RCC.

4.11 Research Performance Monitoring

- a) For continual improvement in research performance, the University is expected to monitor quality, quantity and impacts of its research outputs and participate in international rankings and benchmarking.
- b) The DRCC shall monitor the research performance of schools, faculties and research centres based on established criteria.
- c) The research performance of individual staff will be monitored and evaluated by their Heads of Departments and/or Dean of Faculties as part of the appraisal process
- d) Through the Departmental and Faculty research officers, staff are required to supply full and accurate details of their research outputs on a quarterly basis to the RCC in a prescribed format.
- e) The RCC will publish an annual Research Report detailing the University's publications.

4.12 Recruitment and Staff Development

- a) Staff recruitment and development are critical to realizing the research goals and objectives of the University.
- b) The University's selection and recruitment policy also referred to as the appointment process is clearly spelt out in the University's Statutes and in the Conditions of Service for Senior Members.
- c) Staff Development Policy is also stipulated in the University's Quality Manual.
- d) In accordance with the provisions of the Conditions of Service for Senior Members, academic staff are eligible to apply for leave in support of their research.

5.0 Implementation of the Policy

It is the responsibility of all persons conducting research in the University to comply with this research policy. However, the primary responsibility of implementing the Policy is vested in the RCC. The University shall provide the necessary Management support to ensure the implementation of this Policy.

6.0 Review of the Policy

In consultation with all relevant stakeholders, the RCC shall also be responsible for reviewing the policy after every five years.

7.0 References

University of Professional Studies Act, 2012 (Act 850) - 2012

Conditions of Service for Senior Members - 2013

Quality Manual: Senior Members' Handbook - 2015

Fundamental Regulations, 2013

8.0 Version Control

| Version | Approved by | Approval Date | Effective Date | Review Date |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 st | Vice Chancellor | 10 th Jan. 2017 | 14 th Feb. 2017 | Five years from approval date |

9.0 Policy Sponsor

Director of Research and Consultancy

10.0 Contact Person

In relation to this Policy, the following person shall be approached or contacted:

The Director, Research and Consultancy Centre

