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UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

RESEARCH POLICY

(Abridged Edition)

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision
A world-class university committed to scholarly excellence

Mission
To provide quality university education and training and to embody the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the global community through creation, preservation, integration, transmission and utilization of knowledge

Core Values

- Freedom of thought and expression
- Innovativeness and creativity
- Good corporate governance
- Team spirit and teamwork
- Professionalism
- Quality customer service
- Responsible corporate citizenship
- And strong social responsibility
- Respect for and conservation of the Environment

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FOREWORD

This abridged University of Nairobi Research Policy is intended to provide the reader a quick preview of the key areas of the policy. The complete policy together with the implementation strategy may be found at www.intranet.uonbi.ac.ke/researchpolicy. The research policy development is anchored on the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan of the University of Nairobi, the Kenya Constitution 2010, Kenya Vision 2030 and other Government of Kenya policy documents and guidelines. The research policy outlines the general vision of the University with regard to the utilization of cutting-edge research knowledge targeted at current development needs and demands in the near future. It also constitutes a baseline for the participation of academic units and staff in research career development within the University of Nairobi.

Through this policy, the University shall pay particular attention to the appropriate support of research activities, including such key aspects as permanent staff education, the rigorous implementation of this policy at all unit levels, and establishing an appropriate embodiment within its management systems for the success of this research policy.

Prof. G. A. O. Magoha
Vice-Chancellor

1.0: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH POLICY

1.1 National Context

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 expressly asserts the freedom of Kenyans to express themselves. In particular, Article 33 (1) states that "*Every Kenyan has a right to freedom of expression*" which includes among others (c) "*academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.*" Thus, the freedom to conduct scientific research is not only recognized in government pronouncements but is also enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya 2010. Furthermore, in order for the country to attain Vision 2030, three core pillars—economic, social and political—have been identified as the engines of Kenya's development. The delivery of Vision 2030 is underscored by the need to carry out relevant research in order to inform decision-making. Research is, therefore, a strategic component of Kenya Vision 2030.

The National Strategy for University Education reform process emphasises the creation of a culture of innovation through acquisition, generation and application of knowledge. In the strategy report, the strategic goal for quality and relevance of University is stated as: To improve quality and relevance of learning through research for socio-economic transformation of society. Further, recent developments in University education management have resulted in the enactment of The Universities Act No. 42 of 2012 which gives provisions within which universities will operate.

In the Universities Act No. 42 of 2012, the objectives of university education are defined in Article 3(1). Specifically these roles *inter alia* are defined as *"(a) advancement of knowledge through teaching, scholarly research and scientific investigation; (b) promotion of learning in the student body and society generally; (c) promotion of cultural and social life of society; (d) support and contribution to the realization of national economic and social development;(e) promotion of the highest standards in the quality of teaching and research; ... and (g) dissemination of the outcomes of the research conducted by the university to the general community."* In addition, Article 3(2) section (e) emphasises that a university shall *"promote private-public partnership in university education and development"*. The University of Nairobi intends to discharge fully these roles and in particular to participate in the discovery, transmission and preservation of knowledge and to stimulate the intellectual life, economic and socio-cultural development of Kenya.

In its Strategic Plan 2008-2013, the University of Nairobi has highlighted the need for enhancing research activities through a policy as strategic objective 4. Thus this University of Nairobi Research Policy shall provide a clear orientation and direction of research at the University. In recent years, the University of Nairobi has laid ground for improvement of its Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) infrastructure, sufficient to serve cutting edge research needs. Innovation, Research and Development are key strategic issues that the University must address in order to remain relevant and to extend frontiers of knowledge. This can only be achieved through a responsive research policy to guide research activities at the institution.

1.2 University Statement of Commitment

The vision, mission and core values of the University of Nairobi demonstrate the importance attached to research by the University. The University finds itself with the inherent role of providing leadership in the domain of higher education and research. This role, however, has now to be fulfilled in the context of changing paradigms, characterized by an ever shrinking resource base, due to diminished capability of the exchequer to continue fully funding the

needs of the universities and due to the continuing global economic crisis. Against this background, the University commits itself to living up to the highest ideals of good research governance, to be socially responsive, and to promoting and pursuing excellence in training and research. This research policy will ensure that research is facilitated and strengthened at the University of Nairobi. In order to achieve the University corporate goal, the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research Production and Extension) has defined the vision, mission and core values relating to research at the University of Nairobi.

The University research policy shall:
- Espouse the virtues of *truth, integrity, honesty, tolerance, professionalism, teamwork and meritocracy*;
- Uphold the *ethics* and etiquette of teaching, learning and research;
- Promote and defend the *freedom of thought* and *academic enquiry* as well as freedom of association;
- Ensure *openness* and *transparency* in all its dealings and operations;
- Nurture *responsible corporate citizenship and strong social responsibility*;
- *Respect the beliefs and values of others*;
- *Respect and protect the environment*; and
- Have the courage to *initiate and adapt to change*.

1.3 Purpose of the University of Nairobi Research Policy
The policy will enable the University to fully contribute towards the development of the nation of Kenya and the world. It will provide a guiding framework to facilitate research-related policy development and review, and planning, and implementation of research activities within the university. It will also ensure that all research activities have a clear purpose drawn from the mission and vision of the University of Nairobi and that all resources mobilized for research activities are directed towards the fulfilment of institutional goals. These resources include policy framework and supportive infrastructure, human resources, sound knowledge and information, physical infrastructure, equipment, services and finances.

The research policy will also provide minimum standards for implementation of research and related activities that encourage efficient and effective communication, efficient, ethical and honest research conduct and availability of all essential human and material resources. It will ensure that research activity will underpin the educational activities of the university thus facilitating the development of sufficient numbers of highly-skilled human capital for national development.

1.4 Scope
The University will facilitate, host and conduct research in areas where latest developments promise to offer new knowledge or address problems constraining development initiatives in Kenya and Africa and where it can complement and add value to other national, regional and international activities: capacity building is a major goal of all research activities. The research scope shall: facilitate the sharing of information through conferences; workshop; seminars and other mode of international exposures; include broad areas such as cultural, social, health, agriculture, industry, environment, education, and legal issues and should capture major priority areas within the university research framework, as well as the national, regional and global agenda; and capture creative and innovative technologies to advance research within the university while contributing to global knowledge.

2.0: THE RESEARCH POLICY AREAS

2.1 Introduction

One of the hallmarks of world-class universities is the level and nature of research undertaken by their students, staff and research affiliates. In order to the ensure that research activities carried out by researchers at the University of Nairobi make impact nationally and internationally, the University has established structures to facilitate the research processes at all levels. The research conducted by the university community is facilitated by various policy positions as elaborated below.

2.2 Guiding Principles of Key Policy Areas

2.2.1 Creating an Enabling Environment

The University of Nairobi recognizes the central role research plays in its mandate as the premier institution of higher learning in Kenya. The research function of the University of Nairobi dovetails into the teaching mandate. The generation of new knowledge directly influences curriculum development and teaching. In order to continue to play the key function of research, the University of Nairobi commits itself to establishing, maintaining, and protecting an enabling research environment that promotes innovation, production, domestication and stimulating exchange of ideas within the University community and with the outside world.

2.2.2 Research Governance Structure

The research governance structure at the University of Nairobi takes into account existing university structures and how they interface with research activities. Research governance is grounded upon three pillars, namely the research grants office, direct research activities and support services. The Research Grant Office shall provide support to grant sourcing, grant management and monitoring and evaluation. The second pillar provides direct support to research activities including managing the human resource and products of research activities. Lastly, the third pillar provides supportive services by relevant university units. The three pillars are buttressed by the University Legal Office.

2.2.3 Academic Policies, Academic Freedom and Research

In its academic policies the University emphasizes the need for staff to balance between teaching and research and extension activities. Thus, the University shall include research in the job description of every academic member of staff and ensure that time is allocated for research purposes and each member of academic staff is evaluated and rewarded for successful conduct of research. Further, the university recognizes the rights of staff and students in respect of academic freedom and research as enshrined in the Kenya Constitution 2010. These rights are recognized in the University of Nairobi's Vision, Mission and Core values as well as in the Vision, Mission and core values of the research office.

2.2.4 Objectivity in Research

Fair and honest reporting is the hallmark of scientific endeavours. Researchers are expected to: maintain the highest degree of intellectual honesty in the design, conduct, data analysis, reporting of research findings and in acknowledging significant direct and indirect contributions made by colleagues and collaborators; be honest regarding reporting of any conflicts of interest that might exist in relation to the specific works they are carrying out; and report any real or potential conflicts of interest to the University and in reporting of their research findings.

2.2.5 Research Approval Process

The University shall endeavour to continually improve the research approval process both for students, staff and research affiliates by creating specialized institutional review boards. Due to the varied nature of the University of Nairobi, the University shall require that the Colleges set up specialized College-based Institutional Review Boards to facilitate research clearance at that level. The Institutional Review Boards shall develop and present for approval by the relevant University organs guidelines for seeking ethical clearance exemption.

2.2.6 Ethical Practice

The University of Nairobi shall ensure that researchers working within the University and/or who are associated with the University of Nairobi shall work in accordance with established international ethical standards. The University shall review these ethical standards from time to time as dictated by advances in knowledge. To this end, the University shall create a balanced Institutional Review Board to enforce established Ethical Standards. All research conducted by staff of University of Nairobi shall be required to receive ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board within reasonable time and before the research work can be conducted.

2.2.7 Sponsored Research Services

The University of Nairobi recognizes the special challenges that come with sponsored research projects. In particular these projects may be prone to conflict of interest, conflict of commitment and may thus require special attention from the research grants office. University of Nairobi shall expand the mandate of the Research Grants Office to include seeking donor research funds; guiding researchers to potential funding sources; negotiating with potential donor funding agencies; keeping a record of recipients; managing research funds; and detecting and managing potential conflicts as well as research misconduct. Thus the Research Grants Office will ensure that the University of Nairobi is fully compliant with research sponsor terms and conditions, University policies, government regulations and requirements. Sponsored research activities shall be subject to specific Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement.

2.2.8 Consultancy

The University shall create a conducive environment in order to avail its extensive human resource for consultancy as a way of contributing to the overall university mandate and national development. In particular the University undertakes to support its staff to create a vehicle through which staff can compete for consultancy services.

2.2.9 Undergraduate and Post-graduate Research

The University of Nairobi undertakes to train and create sufficient interest in research among its students both at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The University through the Board of Post-Graduate Studies (BPS), faculties, schools and institutes shall create an enabling environment through appropriate provisions in approved syllabi and regulations. The BPS shall take the lead in facilitating a research environment which supports post-graduate students to complete their studies within the stipulated period and in line with approved Statutes. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (SA) shall play a facilitative role to support the research functions through mentorship programmes, student placement and counselling.

2.2.10 Research Supervision and Research Risk Compliance

The University of Nairobi shall ensure that researchers who carry out research under the name of the University adhere to research protocol, research ethics and guidelines provided by funding agencies and the University of Nairobi. The University shall identify and mitigate

potential research compliance risks.

2.2.11 Environmental Health and Safety
Recognizing that the environment provides an important link in our research output, the University of Nairobi has an obligation to protect and preserve the environment—the biological, physical and social environment. In all its operations as well as operations of individuals affiliate, the University of Nairobi shall enforce the protection and preservation of the biological, physical and social environment. The guiding principle shall at all times be continuous improvement of the environment in its totality.

2.2.12 Deans Committee Research Development Fund
The University of Nairobi manages a Deans Committee Grant whose aim is to provide funds in order to develop capacity and strengthen the research culture. The Deans Committee Grant shall be transformed into a Deans Committee Research Development Fund whose purpose will be to provide support to research of strategic importance to the University through a competitive process. The granting process will therefore be aligned to emerging research themes and with national strategic priorities.

2.2.13 Protecting Human Research Subjects
The involvement of humans as research subjects shall be governed by procedures consistent with established international standards espousing the principles of respect, beneficence and justice. In particular, the University of Nairobi Researchers shall subscribe to the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences in respect research involving human subjects. These standards shall be enforced by an Institutional Review Board established for the purpose of reviewing proposals to ensure adherence to ethical standards. For the time being, these functions are managed by a joint Kenyatta National Hospital/ University of Nairobi Ethics and Research Review Committee (KNH/UoN ERRC).

2.2.14 Protecting Experimental and Laboratory Animals
The use of animals for research shall be governed by the established international conventions on the use of laboratory animals for experimentation and other forms of research. This would include, but not limited to, the humane treatment of animals used for research purposes. In particular minimum standards for housing and care, regulation of the use of animals and in particular regular assessment of pain, suffering distress and lasting harm caused to animals will be set based on internationally agreed standards.

2.2.15 Research Quality and Research Assessment
In order to ensure that researchers of the University of Nairobi attain the highest research standards, the University shall train its researchers so as to produce quality research. The University shall establish mechanisms through which research activities are conducted and assessed to ensure that they attain the highest standards.

2.2.16 Intellectual Property Rights
The university shall provide an enabling environment that encourages knowledge and product creation. In order to protect discoveries and inventions by its researchers, the University shall institute appropriate mechanisms to protect intellectual property rights in line with University of Nairobi Intellectual Property Policy.

2.2.17 Incubation Lab/Fab Lab/Mentoring Lab/Science Park
The University of Nairobi shall nurture talent and facilitate the incubation of new ideas and

mentoring of incubates. To facilitate this, the University Science and Technology Park shall enable technology transfer through commercialization of technology. In this regard, researchers shall be required to take cognizance of the procedures of business incubation including the mentoring of incubates as espoused in the University of Nairobi Science Technology Park procedures.

2.2.18 Plagiarism
The University of Nairobi shall endeavour to nurture academic integrity among staff and students. Specifically, the University takes seriously academic dishonesty. The University shall have zero tolerance towards plagiarism and shall institute deterrent measures to ensure academic honesty. To this end, an anti-plagiarism policy is in place to provide direction.

2.2.19 Research Utilization
The University shall institute processes to ensure that research conducted at the University is made available to researchers, industry, policy makers, target users and the general public through publications, conferences, workshops, outreach and extension services.

3.0 STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE RESEARCH CAPACITY
In order to realize goals of research policy, the University has identified a number of areas which are key to enhancing the research capacity. These are: university research fund, human resource and capacity building, research systems and value addition, linkages with industry, research management structure, communication, sensitization on the research process, commercialization of innovations/inventions, and Information and Communication Technologies infrastructure.

3.1 Deans Committee Research Development Fund
The University shall establish University Research Development Fund to support research on a competitive basis through provision of short and long term fellowships and competitive grants for research.

3.2 Human Resource and Capacity Building
The University shall continue to provide opportunities to increase the research capacity of faculties/schools/institutes, centres and departments and individuals to conduct research in relevant fields and to develop and deliver new concepts and technologies. This will be achieved through use of appropriate avenues as spelled out in the policy implementation plan.

3.3 Research Systems and Value Addition
In order to achieve the policy strategic objectives, there is need to identify and prioritize strategic institutional innovation systems that provide extension and outreach services. The University will facilitate, host and conduct relevant research activities whose focus will be on improving productivity and sustainability of Kenya's development, through provision of improved product with high impact on socio-economic development.

3.4 Industry - Academic Research Interphase
Partnership of the University research units with private sector will be encouraged. Engagement will be through joint research ventures and other appropriate avenues. The management of such partnerships will be conducted through instruments of engagement such Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement and Letters of Intent.

3.5 Development of appropriate Research Management Structures

To mitigate research compliance risks, the University shall re-organize the functions and role of Research Grants Office to: provide support for research policy formulation and strategic planning; provide support service for the administration of internal and external research grants scheme; act as a focal point for internal and external research information dissemination and external liaison; develop and maintain a central database and institutional repository for research activities; support services for University Research Centre funding allocation and progress monitoring; compile submissions for Research Assessment Exercise including assessment of research risk areas; and provide secretarial support to the University Research Committee and other Working Groups, evaluating research proposal for funding.

3.6 Research Communication

The university shall: establish a well-structured and objective information delivery system and network to enhance research activity and information sharing; coordinate and organize a University-wide or college-based research conferences and make outcome publications available online and on print; support (fund) local international-standard journals to create more avenues for disseminating research findings.

3.7 Sensitization on the Research Process

The University of Nairobi shall endeavour to sensitize students and staff on the research process on a regular basis including new requirements by donor agencies.

3.8 Commercialization of Products

The University shall develop a clear strategy to link research activity to commercialization of products through, for example, establishment of Science and Technology Parks. Commercialization of research products, would improve the image of the University globally.

3.9 Information and Communication Technologies Infrastructure

The University's investment in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) infrastructure and training of staff on ICT literacy skills has improved adoption of ICT in teaching and research. The University shall continue to expand ICT adoption and use it to improve research delivery at all levels.