



**Guidelines and Procedures for Establishing Research Units, Centres  
and Institutes**

Approved by Senate meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015

## Table of Contents

<b>I. PREAMBLE.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>II. DEFINITIONS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
II.1 Research Unit .....	3
II.2 Research Centre.....	3
II.3 Research Institute.....	4
<b>III. GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A RESEARCH UNIT/ CENTRE/ INSTITUTE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
III.1 General Guidelines .....	4
III.2 Guidelines for application to establish a Research unit.....	5
III.3 Guidelines for application to establish a Research Centre.....	5
III.4 Guidelines for application to establish a Research Institute .....	6
<b>IV. PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING A RESEARCH UNIT/ CENTRE/ INSTITUTE .....</b>	<b>7</b>
IV.1 General.....	7
IV.2 Guidelines for Departmental/ School Research Units.....	8
IV.3 Guidelines for Research Centre .....	8
IV.4 Guidelines for Research Institutes.....	8

## I. PREAMBLE

The University of Rwanda has developed a Research Strategy for the purpose of driving its initiatives to substantially increase of its research productivity. Targets have been set for the next ten years in terms of proportion of enrolment of doctoral students, extent of internationalization, publishing of articles in credible journals per staff, socio-economic impacts of the produced research, and all these culminating in improved ranking in the global metrics. The strategic use of Research Units, Research Centres, Research Institutes and other University wide Centres is one among other methods to accelerate the process to attain the set targets and even surpass them. Such centres will work towards the following:

- Promote existing and emerging areas of research strength
- Enhance the University's national and international profile
- Promote strategic linkages with external partners
- Attract outstanding researchers
- Attract external research funding
- Foster renowned research teams
- Attract Doctoral and Masters by research students
- Boost high quality research output involving training of postdoctoral fellows.

These Guidelines set out the mechanisms for establishment of Research Units/Centres/Institutes. As for operation, the Procedures set out the principles and operational criteria for initiating, managing and evaluating Research Units/Centres/Institutes. These guidelines and procedures also seek to ensure that interdisciplinary research and postgraduate education structures at the University are established in an appropriate and consistent manner.

These guidelines apply to:

- A Department or School proposing to establish a **research unit**,
- A College proposing to establish a **research centre**,
- The University proposing to establish a **research institute**, and
- The University or a College proposing to establish a **centre** involved in operating facilities that provide university-wide collaborative research infrastructure, e.g. Animal Facility Centre, Central Science Laboratory Centre with equipment such as Electron Microscope and NMR and Audio-Visual Centre.

## II. DEFINITIONS

The concern here is the establishment of an organisation called a research unit or research centre or research institute, with a commitment to undertake an activity that is greater than or different from the activity that would be undertaken by the individual members in the absence of a centre. Centres are named differently based on location within the UR Structure, size and mandate. Centres will usually have research as their main focus, however, some may be postgraduate education centres and some may be involved in operating facilities that provide research infrastructure. A centre has a formal management and reporting structure, a critical mass of staff and preferably a group of research students whose work is part of the centre. Unlike the case of a Department or a School, which have a permanent status in the UR Structure, a centre status is not permanent. Based on evaluation after a set time period (e.g. 5 years) a centre could be closed. Centres provide a flexible structure that facilitates an appropriate level of interactions with a range of stakeholders.

By the law, the University of Rwanda is mandated to establish research units, research centres and research institutes, defined as:

### II.1 Research Unit

A Research Unit is at the level of a Department or a School. It is a centre that undertakes research activities that are:

- a) greater than or different from the activity that would be undertaken by the individual members in the absence of the unit; and
- b) of a nature and scale that will make a relatively small contribution to the achievement of the University's strategic goals

### II.2 Research Centre

A Research Centre belongs to a College. It is a centre that undertakes research or teaching-related activities that are:

- a) greater than or different from the activity that would be undertaken by the individual members in the absence of the centre and
- b) of a nature and scale that will substantially contribute to the achievement of the University's strategic goals, e.g., contribution to the University's reputation, research profile, or revenue of a sufficient scale and
- c) multi-disciplinary
- d) A research centre *may* have the following characteristics:

- employs a small core of dedicated support staff, including a part-time or full-time director
- receives support from the relevant departments/ schools and University Services where appropriate, given the nature of the research undertaken

### **II.3 Research Institute**

A Research Institute is a title for a University level centre. It undertakes research or teaching-related activities that are:

- a) greater than or different from the activity that would be undertaken by the individual members in the absence of the centre and
- b) of a nature and scale that will substantially contribute to the achievement of the University's strategic goals, e.g. contribution to the University's reputation, research profile, or revenue of a sufficient scale and
- c) multi-disciplinary
- d) and it *has* the following characteristics:
  - Scope and scale of activity similar to that of a research centre
  - International recognition (e.g. attraction of researchers, students and visitors from overseas)
  - Extensive links with external research, business and government groups
  - Revenue from a variety of sources
  - A fully committed Director and relevant administrative support
  - Support from the relevant faculties and University Services where appropriate, given the nature of the research undertaken
  - Finance and HR systems independent of the University

## **III. GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A RESEARCH UNIT/ CENTRE/ INSTITUTE**

### **III.1 General Guidelines**

1. To establish a research unit or centre or an institute, a formal proposal must be submitted by the relevant Department/School/College, through the College Academic Council, to the office of the DVC-AAR. They are established or disestablished on the recommendation of various levels of organs with the approval of the Senior Management or Board of Governors.
2. The proposals to establish the research unit/centre/institute must include:
  - a) Academic and research aims and activities it will undertake, including any goals and targets

- b) An explanation of how the activities undertaken are likely to be greater than or different from the activity that would be undertaken by the individual members in the absence of the research unit/centre/institute;
  - c) A sustainability plan
3. On occasion, the University will need to respond rapidly to opportunities to develop strategic research initiatives. In order to provide some flexibility, VC or DVC-AAR or College Principals, may authorise the establishment of Research Units/Centres/Institutes and the parameters under which they will exist.

### **III.2 Guidelines for application to establish a Research unit**

1. Proposals to establish department/school research units must be submitted by the Academic Head(s) of the department(s) to Departmental Councils or Deans of School(s) to School Councils for discussion and recommendation to College Academic Council, College Management Committee, SMM and Senate.
2. Establishment proposals for department/school research units must include *what is stipulated in the GENERAL GUIDELINES* and:
  - a) Details of the management structure and staff involved, with their departmental/school affiliations
  - b) Anticipated sources of revenue and how this will be managed.
  - c) A plan on how the centre will be sustained

### **III.3 Guidelines for application to establish a Research Centre**

1. Proposals to establish **Research Centre** must be submitted by the College Principals to College Councils for recommendation to SMM and Senate.
2. Establishment proposals for **Research Centre** must include *is stipulated in the GENERAL GUIDELINES* and:
  - a) how the activities undertaken are likely to be multi-disciplinary;
  - b) how the activities that will be undertaken are of a nature and scale that are likely to substantially contribute to the achievement of the University's strategic goals, e.g. contribution to the University's reputation, research profile, or revenue of a sufficient scale:
    - details of the management structure and staff involved, with their department/school and College affiliations
    - details on the proposed governance structure, if there is to be an oversight board and/or an expert advisory board

- any anticipated sources of revenue and how they will be managed
  - details of consultation with stakeholders, and anticipated linkages with domestic and international research, business and government groups
  - details of any anticipated support requirements of the centre, including support staff, space, equipment, facilities, and involvement of University Services where relevant
  - if external parties are involved in the centre, details of the treatment of intellectual property and protection of the right to publish, particularly for students
- c) Before a Research Centre is formally established, the College Principal of the host College must be satisfied with agreements reached between the relevant departments, schools, other research units/ centres, Other University Services (e.g. Library, ICT centre, etc if appropriate), and any external parties (if appropriate) on resource issues. Such issues could include (but not limited to) the following:
- Cost/revenue sharing arrangements for the centre director and staff (including support staff); research students; overheads and provision of infrastructure;
  - Distribution of any surplus returns from activity;
  - Funding for student supervision and teaching activities (based on Full Time Equivalent (FTE) transfers if appropriate);
  - Any required space, equipment and facilities
- d) Where relevant, memoranda of understanding or deeds of agreement with external bodies will be signed

### **III.4 Guidelines for application to establish a Research Institute**

1. Proposals to establish a **Research Institute** must be submitted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs and Research to the University of Rwanda Research and Postgraduate Studies (UR-RPGS) Committee for recommendation to the Academic Senate. Consultations with colleges will be undertaken and will be included in the Senate recommendations to the Board of Governors.
2. Proposals for establishing a **Research Institute** must include all information as for Research Centres and also demonstrate how the Institute meets the characteristics listed in the definitions section of this document.
3. In addition, proposals will include information regarding:
  - the level of support to be provided by the Colleges and University Services;
  - how the institute will contribute to the objectives in the University's Strategic Plan
4. Key criteria are that the institute must:
  - be classified as a University centre; and
  - have strong alignment with the University's strategic goals; and

- have the ability to show international participation and significant financial activity
5. It is envisaged that the University will have relatively few institutes and that use of the term signals a major strategic focus of the University

#### **IV. PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING A RESEARCH UNIT/ CENTRE/ INSTITUTE**

##### **IV.1 General**

1. All funds received, equipment purchased and income accrued by a Research Centre are the property of the University, unless determined otherwise in a legally binding agreement.
2. A University Research Centre may collaborate or share resources with another university, research institution or other external body, provided the arrangements are specified in a legally binding agreement negotiated between the parties. Such arrangements shall be clearly stipulated in partners' collaboration agreements and MoUs.
3. Where the joint venture is intended to result in a new incorporated structure and/or the issuing of shares, it must get the approval of Board of Governors following a recommendation from Senior Management.
4. Board approval is also required for a major strategic initiative or a significant commercial activity.
5. All University Research Centres submit annual reports, according to agreed key performance indicators, which shall be subject to formal reviews, as and when required.
6. Changes to a University Research Centre, that materially affects any matter addressed in the establishment proposal, must be approved by the University Senior Management before being implemented. Significant changes may require a new proposal for the approval by the Board of Governors.
7. The University Senior Management, on advice from the DVC-AAR reserves the right to propose to Senate the disestablishment of any Research Unit/Centre/Institute at any time.



#### **IV.2 Guidelines for Departmental/ School Research Units**

In addition to the General Framework,

1. Research Units will be areas of high quality research activity aligned to the Department/ School goals, and will form an integral part of a Department/ School.
2. A research Unit will be overseen by a designated *Head*, who shall report to the Head of Department or the Dean of School where it belongs (as applicable).
3. The HoD or the School Dean is responsible for its establishment, disestablishment, funding, management, reporting and review.

#### **IV.3 Guidelines for Research Centre**

In addition to the General Framework

1. Research Centres will be areas of high quality research activity aligned to the College goals, and will form an integral part of a College.
2. Research Centres will have a designated 'home' College and be overseen by a Research Centre Director to provide general administrative support. The Director will report to the College Principal.
3. The College Principal is responsible for its establishment, disestablishment, funding, management, reporting and review.
4. The relationships between Schools and Research Centre will be guided by the principles and protocols as defined in their establishment.

#### **IV.4 Guidelines for Research Institutes**

In addition to the General Framework

1. Research Institutes will be areas of very high quality research activity aligned with the University goals, and will form an integral part of the University.
2. Research Institutes will be overseen by a designated Director to provide general administrative support. The Director reports to the DVC-AAR.
3. The DVC-AAR is responsible for its establishment, disestablishment, funding, management, reporting and review.
4. Research Institutes will be established as independent cost centres.
5. The relationships between Colleges and Research Institutes will be guided by the principles and protocols as defined in their establishment.

The authorities for day-to-day administrative support of Research Units/Centres/Institutes shall be in accordance with the University's Delegations of Authority for HoD/School Deans, College Principals and DVC-AAR.

  
**Prof. Nelson Ijumba**  
**Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research**

