Interdisciplinary Research Policy (IDR)

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Purpose

This policy establishes a comprehensive institutional framework to <u>promote, support, measure, and evaluate interdisciplinary research (IDR)</u> across the University, ensuring alignment with national priorities, international research standards, and global sustainability agendas.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All academic and research faculties
- All faculty members, researchers, postdoctoral fellows, undergraduate and graduate students
- All internally and externally funded research projects
- All research outputs, including publications, grants, patents, and societal impact activities

Definition of Interdisciplinary Research

Interdisciplinary Research (IDR) is defined as:

Research that integrates theories, methodologies, data, or perspectives from two or more distinct academic disciplines to address complex problems that cannot be adequately addressed by a single discipline.

Policy Objectives

The University aims to:

1) Increase the volume and quality of interdisciplinary research outputs
2) Strengthen cross-faculty and cross-sector collaboration
3) Enhance success in interdisciplinary national and international funding
4) Maximize societal, economic, and policy impact of research
5) Improve the University's standing in international rankings and impact assessments

Strategic Pillars of the Policy

This policy is structured around <u>five</u> strategic pillars:

1) Capacity & Infrastructure

2) Collaboration & Integration

3) Research Output Quality

4) Funding & Sustainability

5) Societal & Global Impact

Interdisciplinary Research KPIs

1) Capacity & Infrastructure

- Encourage broad faculty participation in interdisciplinary research
- Establish and support interdisciplinary research centers and laboratories
- Allocate internal seed funding to initiate interdisciplinary projects
- Provide interdisciplinary training programs for faculty and graduate students

Key Indicators include:

- Percentage of faculty engaged in IDR projects
- Number of active interdisciplinary research units
- Proportion of research budget dedicated to IDR
- Number of interdisciplinary training initiatives annually

2) Collaboration & Integration

- Promote research projects involving multiple faculties or disciplines
- Support joint supervision of postgraduate research
- Facilitate external interdisciplinary partnerships with industry, government, and civil society

Key Indicators include:

- Number of cross-faculty research projects
- Rate of interdisciplinary co-authored publications
- Percentage of jointly supervised theses
- Number of external interdisciplinary collaborations

> Bibliometric analysis shall rely on internationally recognized databases such as Scopus and Web of Science.

3) Research Output Quality

- Encourage publication in high-quality interdisciplinary journals
- Monitor citation impact across multiple disciplines
- Reward excellence in interdisciplinary research performance

Key Indicators include:

- Number of interdisciplinary publications
- Interdisciplinarity index (diversity of disciplines cited)

- Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI)
- Proportion of interdisciplinary publications in Q1 journals

4) Funding & Sustainability

- Increase success rates in interdisciplinary grant applications
- Attract international and industry-supported interdisciplinary funding
- Ensure financial sustainability of interdisciplinary research initiatives

Key Indicators include:

- Total interdisciplinary research grant income
- Success rate of interdisciplinary grant proposals
- Share of international interdisciplinary funding
- Number of industry-co-funded interdisciplinary projects

5) Societal & Global Impact

- Align interdisciplinary research with national development priorities and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Enhance research contributions to public policy, innovation, and knowledge transfer

Key Indicators include:

- Percentage of interdisciplinary projects linked to SDGs
- Number of policy documents influenced by University research
- Number of interdisciplinary patents, prototypes, or startups
- Documented societal and community impact outcomes

Governance and Responsibilities

Oversight

- Vice President for Research (Policy Owner)
- Sustainable Development and International Ranking Office (SDIRO)

Implementation

- Research & Graduate Studies Office
- Sustainable Development and International Ranking Office (SDIRO)
- Faculty Research Committees

Monitoring and Review

- Data collection: Quarterly
- KPI evaluation: Annually
- Policy review and update: Every three years

Incentives and Recognition

The University:

- Integrate IDR KPIs into faculty appraisal and promotion systems
- Offer competitive interdisciplinary seed grants
- Recognize outstanding interdisciplinary research achievements

Faculty Promotion, Evaluation, and Incentives

1. **Integration into Faculty Promotion and Tenure**

   Interdisciplinary research is formally recognized as a core component of academic excellence and it is fully integrated into performance evaluation systems.

   The University affirms that:

   - Interdisciplinary research outputs are evaluated **on quality, impact, and integration**, not on disciplinary affiliation alone.
   - Faculty members are not disadvantaged in promotion or tenure decisions due to participation in interdisciplinary research.

2. **Promotion Criteria for Interdisciplinary Research**

   For promotion and academic advancement, interdisciplinary research contributions may include, but are not limited to:

   1. **Interdisciplinary Publications**
      - Peer-reviewed publications integrating two or more disciplines
      - Publications indexed in internationally recognized databases
      - High-impact interdisciplinary journals and Q1-ranked outlets

   2. **Interdisciplinary Research Grants**
      - Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator roles
      - National, regional, and international interdisciplinary funding
      - Industry- or policy-driven interdisciplinary research projects

   3. **Interdisciplinary Supervision**
      - Joint supervision of graduate or postgraduate theses
      - Co-supervision across faculties or institutions

   4. **Societal and Policy Impact**
      - Contributions to national development priorities
      - Policy briefs, technical reports, patents, and innovation outputs

- o Community and industry engagement arising from interdisciplinary research

3. **Incentives and Rewards**

To encourage interdisciplinary research excellence, the University well implements the following incentives:

1. **Financial Incentives**
   - o Competitive interdisciplinary seed grants
   - o Performance-based research awards
   - o Publication incentives for high-impact interdisciplinary outputs

2. **Career Incentives**
   - o Reduced teaching load for active interdisciplinary project leaders
   - o Priority access to research infrastructure and shared facilities
   - o Recognition in annual performance reviews

3. **Recognition and Awards**
   - o Annual University Award for Interdisciplinary Research Excellence
   - o Public recognition of interdisciplinary achievements in official reports and media

4. **Early-Career and Graduate Research Support**

The University provides targeted support for:
   - o Early-career researchers engaged in interdisciplinary research
   - o Interdisciplinary doctoral and postdoctoral tracks
   - o Mentorship programs linking junior and senior interdisciplinary scholars

Alignment with National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Standards

1. **National Accreditation Framework**

This policy is explicitly aligned with the standards and indicators of the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) and equivalent national accreditation bodies.

2. **Alignment with Accreditation Domains**

The policy supports national accreditation requirements in the following areas:

1. **Teaching and Learning**
   - o Integration of interdisciplinary research into curricula

- Research-led teaching across academic programs
- Graduate competencies aligned with labor market and societal needs

2. Scientific Research and Innovation

- Clear institutional research strategy
- Defined performance indicators for research quality and impact
- Support for innovation, patents, and applied research

3. Community Service and Environmental Development

- Interdisciplinary research addressing national and societal challenges
- Sustainable development and SDG-aligned research initiatives
- Evidence-based community engagement and impact assessment

4. Governance and Institutional Effectiveness

- Transparent research governance structures
- Regular monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement
- Data-driven decision-making supported by measurable KPIs

3. Evidence for Accreditation and Audit

Implementation of this policy is generating documented evidence for accreditation purposes, including:

- Annual interdisciplinary research performance reports
- Faculty promotion files demonstrating interdisciplinary contributions
- Impact case studies aligned with national priorities
- Verified research metrics and bibliometric analyses

4. Continuous Improvement

The University will:

- Review interdisciplinary research KPIs annually
- Update the policy in response to accreditation feedback
- Ensure alignment with evolving national and international quality standards

Compliance and Enforcement

Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all academic units.

Failure to integrate interdisciplinary research into evaluation, promotion, or reporting processes will be addressed through institutional quality assurance mechanisms.