

FORT COX AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY TRAINING INSTITUTE

Fort Cox Agriculture and Forestry Training Institute policies will be recorded on the institutional policy catalogue, and will be available at the library and on the institute's website, (as <http://www.fortcox.ac.za/policies/>) which will be regularly updated. As it is important to provide critical information such as when the policy was introduced, what it aims to achieve and who has responsibility for its implementation and review, the council meeting of [Date] agreed that all new Institution-wide policies shall be presented in a standardised format as follows:

TITLE: RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS POLICY

1. POLICY PARTICULARS

APPROVAL BY RELEVANT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:

DATE OF APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL: _____

DATE OF APPROVAL BY BOARD OF ACADEMICS: _____

DATE OF RECOMMENDED FCATIRC: _____

COMMENCEMENT DATE: _____

REVIEW FREQUENCY: [THREE YEARS]

POLICY LEVEL: Academic Departments

RESPONSIBILITY:

IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING:

Principal/Researchers/Academic Department/RC are responsible for implementation of the policy

REVIEW AND REVISION:

RC and TQAC are responsible for the revision of this policy

REPORTING STRUCTURE:

HOD's → HOA → RC → Principal → TQAC → BOA → Council

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1. POLICY DECLARATION

Fort Cox Agricultural Training Institute (FCAFTI) endeavours to be relevant by providing education and training that is characterised by quality management processes and procedures. This will be achieved through the implementation of the strategic plan of the FCAFTI which states the following vision and mission:

VISION

“Leading Centre of Learning in Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry Education and Training in Southern Africa”.

MISSION

- a) *To provide quality education and training in agriculture and forestry*
- b) *To engage in applied research and innovation*
- c) *To engage in rural wealth creation through community engagement*

1.1. PURPOSE

The research and publications policy sets out the standards and processes involved in the administration and implementation of research at FCAFTI. The policy is designed to regulate the development of research proposals, the implementation of academic research, dissemination of research output and/or publications.

1.2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

The policy applies to all forms of research, publications, funding and/or collaboration undertaken at the institution by staff members and students. Any research that is funded by and/or through the institution or that carries the name of the institution as led by sole, collaborative researchers (within and/or outside the institute).

1.3. OBJECTIVE(S)

The objective(s) of this policy are to:

- i. regulate the administration and operation of the research function, activities and processes of the institute;
- ii. periodically define the research focus and determine research niche areas for the institute;
- iii. regulate the procedures followed for the approval of research proposal for institutional research funding;
- iv. regulate the dissemination of research output within and outside the institute (e.g. seminars, symposia, workshops, conferences, journals, books etc.).
- v. monitor and evaluate FCAFTI research performance in line with set research standards; and
- vi. provide appropriate incentives and benefits for research work.

1.4. DEFINITIONS

The following term definitions are used in this document within the context of application of this policy:

Academic staff:	Teaching and research staff members employed by the Fort Cox Agricultural Training Institute.
Head of Department:	The head of the academic department at Fort Cox Agriculture and Forestry Training Institute.
Scholarship:	Financial aid provided to a student on the basis of academic merit.
Research funding:	Funding dedicated towards research activities provided by the Fort Cox Agriculture and Forestry Institute or any other funding body.
Research bodies:	Research bodies established to conduct, fund and regulate research at

FCAFTI/AC/2017/02

Provincial, National and International levels.

Research team

A group of researchers working together in a single research project.

Total Quality Assurance

The manager of total quality assurance for the Fort Cox Agricultural Training Institute.

The following ACRONYMS are used in this document within the context of application of this policy:

ACRONYMS

BOA	Board of Academics
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
FCAFTI	Fort Cox Agriculture and Forestry Training Institute
HOD	Head of Department
HOA	Head of Academics
RC	Research Committee
RFNA	Research Focus and Niche Areas
TQA	Total Quality Assurance
TQAC	Total Quality Assurance Committee

3. RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS POLICY

3.1. ADMINISTRATION OF THE RESEARCH FUNCTION

3.1.1. RESEARCH COMMITTEE

- a) Research at FCAFTI shall be administered under the academic section through the Research Committee (RC).
- b) The Research Committee shall comprise four lecturers (representing academic options) appointed on a revolving two-year term, HODs from the academic departments, the TQA and the HOA.
- c) Nomination for the Research Committee members from the academic staff shall be as follows:
 - (i) Announcement for nomination shall be made with specified cut-off date and time in a period of at least two weeks in advance;
 - (ii) Submission of nominations shall be done in writing through the provided nomination form with the nominee's name, nominator and the seconder; and
 - (iii) The nominees shall be informed within three working days (72 hours) of close of nominations following which they may fill nomination acceptance forms to be submitted together with their CVs within two working days (48 hours).

3.1.2. FUNCTIONS OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The committee shall be mandated to do the following, subject to other provisions set out in this policy document:

- (i) To encourage execution of research and development activities that will be of benefit to the local, provincial, national and international communities and industry;
- (ii) To implement the research policy at the institution;
- (iii) To monitor and approve the annual research budget;
- (iv) To approve applications for research grants and scholarships from government departments and agencies (private & public);
- (v) To encourage researchers to publish their research results in accredited, subsidy-earning journals and proceedings;
- (vi) To monitor the distribution of funding in terms of the institutional research policy;
- (vii) To approve all formal agreements on research with other institutions and bodies prior to signing of such agreements;
- (viii) To monitor the progress of research and development projects within the institution and report these to the council;
- (ix) To allocate and monitor institutional research funds to qualifying applicants for internal research grants and support when other sources of funding are not available; and
- (x) Assess the research performance of the researchers, budget and manage the research incentives.

3.2. RESEARCH FOCUS AND NICHE AREAS (RFNA)

- 3.2.1. Academic staff members may undertake research of their choice or area of specialisation.
- 3.2.2. Industry or corporate bodies may nominate specific researches or area of interest with the approval of the Research Committee.
- 3.2.3. Academic staff may respond to the call for research proposals summoned by different research funding and/or regulating bodies provided that they are in line with the pronounced niche areas of the institute.
- 3.2.4. Partner institutions may promote focus areas of mutual interest subject to the provision of necessary resources.
- 3.2.5. Notwithstanding sections 3.2.1 to 3.2.4 above, the focus area and/or the niche area for research shall be guided by the Research Committee in response to the provincial, national and international research requirements in consultation with researchers.
- 3.2.6. The research plan shall be developed and published by the Research Committee every 5 years subject to review on an annual basis in consultation with the stakeholders.

3.3. RESEARCH PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

3.3.1. CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

- a) The Research Committee shall produce and publish the accepted format for the research proposal notwithstanding 3.3.1 b).
- b) The research bodies may prescribe their acceptable format for research proposals, and the committee shall ensure that such formats are followed.
- c) In the event of a call for research proposal from research bodies, the Research Committee shall, within five working days, invite proposals from interested academics.
- d) Individuals or research teams shall be allowed to cooperate in the development of a research proposal.
- e) The RC shall announce a call for proposals for FCAFTI-funded research with the closing date during the second semester for the following academic year.
- f) A reasonable timeframe shall be set up before the closing of the call for proposals that have fixed funding horizons.

3.3.2. PROCEDURE FOR APPROVING RESEARCH PROPOSAL

- a) All research proposals shall be submitted to the Research Committee for review and approval within the set timeframes.
- b) The Research Committee shall provide feedback with appropriate recommendations within a reasonable timeframe, as announced from time to time, from the date of submission.
- c) After incorporating recommendations, the research proposal shall be presented to the Research Committee, interested people as well relevant stakeholders.
- d) The Research Committee shall decide and approve proposals in response to calls from external research bodies.
- e) A note of approval shall be sent to the researcher acknowledging receipt and approval within three months after the deadline of submission detailing steps to be followed regarding funding and implementation.
- f) In the event of proposal not being approved, the Research Committee shall provide reasons for rejecting the proposal for internal funding.
- g) If not satisfied with the justification for proposal rejection, the researcher may appeal the decision to the academic board.
- h) All research conducted by researchers within the institute and/or in collaboration with other researchers, funded by the institute or any external body, shall be registered in the FCATI research catalogue.

3.4. RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

- 3.4.1. The researcher shall produce implementation plans for approved research proposal/s within one month of approval to the Research Committee.
- 3.4.2. The HOD may recommend approval of the implementation plan if satisfied that the time allocation does not compromise other academic functions (teaching and learning and community engagement).
- 3.4.3. The implementation plan shall be submitted to the Research Committee for continuous monitoring and evaluation.
- 3.4.4. The Research Committee shall take reasonable steps to ensure that resources are available when required, according to the approved implementation plan.
- 3.4.5. The Research Committee shall be responsible for administering external and internal research resources.
- 3.4.6. After closure of a research project, the physical resources (equipment and material) shall remain under the control of Research Committee and as the property of the FCAFTI.

3.5. SOURCES AND PROCEDURE FOR FUNDING OF RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

- 3.5.1. Research funds shall be managed by the Research Committee.
- 3.5.2. A special research account shall be opened for research funds, and two signatories from Research Committee shall have signing powers subject to 3.5.4.
- 3.5.3. Subject to the recommendations and approval of the Research Committee on the advice of the Committee Chairperson:
 - a) The first signatory shall be the Committee chairperson from the Research Committee;
 - b) The second signatory shall be the FCAFTI's CFO, who may not disapprove the expenditure unless it is deemed wasteful and/or fruitless; and

- c) In the event of an internet transfer, the Committee chairperson and CFO shall be responsible for effecting the transfer within a reasonable timeframe.
- 3.5.4. Annually, the Institute shall set aside funds for the research, which shall be administered together with external funds as stipulated above.
- 3.5.5. Funding of research using internal funds shall be regulated as follows:
 - a) First priority may be given to already prescribed research niche areas; and
 - b) In the event that Section 3.5.5 (a) has been fulfilled or does not apply, the Research Committee shall decide and set funding priorities based on the committee's annual performance plans.
- 3.5.6. The research budget and expenditure plan and report for the approved research projects shall be made available on quarterly bases to the extended management meeting.
- 3.5.7. The Research Committee shall ensure equitable and competitive research funding opportunities, and the procedure for assessment and evaluation shall be published periodically.
- 3.5.8. Research projects outside the control of the institute may not be funded from the Research Committee; however, the Research Committee shall remain responsible for managing research performance.
- 3.5.9. The research funding (from the institute or external funders) shall be comprehensive and shall include funding for publications.
- 3.5.10. The researcher may appeal the denial of funding through the academic board which shall provide the final decision.

3.6. DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH OUTPUT

3.6.1. NON-ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

- a) Non-scholarly publications include periodicals such as newspapers, newsletters, magazines among other platforms.
- b) Non-scholarly publications shall be published with reduced data and statistical analysis for the understanding of practitioners (farmers, agricultural and forestry general community).
- c) Non-scholarly publications shall represent general opinions which may not necessarily be factual but should remain professional and credible.
- d) Non-scientific publications may be used for community awareness (refer - Community engagement policy) and or respond to topical issues of provincial, national and international concerns.

3.6.2. CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

- a) Staff members who wish to attend national and international conferences to present papers shall be assisted through the Research Funds provided that sufficient budget is allocated.
- b) One national and one international conference may be funded per researcher as budgeted for in the research budget and, should there be need for attending more conferences, extra motivation for further funding should be made to the Research Committee. When satisfied with the application submissions, the Research Committee shall recommend to the Principal for funding.
- c) Conference funding shall cover travelling, conference registration and accommodation expenses.
- d) Notwithstanding Sections 3.6.2 a-c, researchers shall be funded only if they are participating in conferences as presenters or otherwise after submission of a proof of acceptance of the abstract, invitation letter or conference presentation programme.
- e) Researchers attending conferences shall submit the report for the conference attended accompanied by the conference proceedings materials within two weeks after the conference date.
- f) The Research Committee shall make available submitted conference materials as resources materials for access within the Library.

3.6.3. INTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION

- a) The Research Committee shall have the responsibility to publish a local journal at least twice per year.
- b) The Research Committee shall set the minimum requirements for approval for publications in the journal.

- c) Internal research work that might not satisfy an external high level research journal shall be published in the internal journal, which will have its minimum standards of acceptability of articles.
- d) The journal shall have sections designed for students and the Committee shall promote articles for such sections.
- e) The committee shall appoint an editorial team based on set publication protocols, and the editorial team might not necessarily be people employed at FCAFTI.

3.6.4. JOURNAL ARTICLES, BOOKS AND/OR MONOGRAPHS

- a) Research work shall be published in impact rated peer reviewed and/or nated journals.
- b) Internal protocols for publication processes to ensure credibility of the publications shall be used in line with letters to authors for the selected journals.
- c) Declarations of ethical procedures and conflict of interest shall be made prior to publication and be recorded in the research catalogue of the FCAFTI.
- d) Where books and/or monographs are published, the institution should be acknowledged fully as the publishing institution and should have copies of such publications for display in specified areas within the library.

3.6.5. PROPERTY RIGHTS

- a) In all the research work done by the staff and/or students of the FCAFTI, the institute should be indicated as the publishing institution with its full address as guided by the publishing journal.
- b) Unless specified otherwise in the publishing policy of the selected journal, the institution shall hold all the property rights to the published work.
- c) Where the patents are to be enjoyed, the institution shall remain the holder of such rights.

3.6.6. INCENTIVES AND BENEFITS FOR RESEARCH

- a) At the end of the academic year, the performance of researchers shall be assessed based on established criteria, and high research performance shall be awarded.
- b) The impact factor of the journals shall be used, amongst other criteria, to award the recognition of publication.
- c) Other factors to be considered in research shall be included in the selection for awards.
- d) The Research Committee shall remain responsible for the assessment, selection and administration of the awards to the winners.
- e) The research awards shall be delivered during the institutional graduation and/or during any selected annual performance award ceremony.
- f) Research excellence awards may be presented for either one or more of the following categories:
 - (i) Highest research output;
 - (ii) Highest number of graduating post graduate students (where applicable); and
 - (iii) Excelling novice researcher.
- g) The Research Committee may recommend any other research category not mentioned above to the Principal for approval where it is seen fit.
- h) Research output shall be used as part of performance management and promotion process for the academic staff members (Refer – Academic promotion policy).

4. MONITORING AND OPERATION OF THE RESEARCH

- 4.1. The Research Committee shall ensure that all ethical and compliance issues are adhered to.
- 4.2. The researcher shall be responsible for reporting of the implementation progress to the Research Committee.
- 4.3. The Research Committee shall be responsible for reporting the implementation progress to the executive management and other stakeholders.
- 4.4. The committee shall have powers to recommend changes and terminate the project if the progress is compromised.
- 4.5. The committee shall periodically review research institutional research programmes for submission to the Principal and academic board.

5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1. The institution shall provide academic staff and students with resources, control of their use and means that enable the optimum circumstances for the implementation of this policy.
- 5.2. Accountability for the implementation of this policy shall rest with the assessor, HOD and HOA.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 6.1. The responsibility of implementation of this policy shall rest with the Research Committee.
- 6.2. Successful implementation of this policy shall be reported in the periodic reports by the Research Committee.
- 6.3. The RC, AC, TQAC and BOA shall be responsible for monitoring and evaluation of compliance and implementation of this policy.
- 6.4. Feedback for monitoring and evaluation shall be provided to the Research Committee and researchers annually, and such shall be reported implicitly in the institutional annual report.

7. REVIEW PROCEDURE

- 7.1. The policy shall be reviewed five years following its implementation in line with the curriculum review programme.
- 7.2. Proposals for review shall be submitted in writing by individual researchers and Research Committee to the TQA office.
- 7.3. Review workshops will be convened, and proposed reviews will be presented and considered.
- 7.4. AETC shall present reviews to the TQAC and then to the BOA, which will finally present these to the Council.