NU/AC/26914/Res. Policy/ 14- 116
Date: 29.10.2014

NOTIFICATION

Read:
    1. **Resolution No. 9– Faculty of Doctoral Studies and Research Meeting – 26.09.2014**
    2. **Resolution No. 8(C) - Academic Council Meeting – 26.09.2014**

Sub: **Introduction of Research Policy**

It is hereby notified for information of all concerned that the Academic Council in its meeting held on 26.09.2014 under resolution No. 8(C);   taking into consideration the recommendations of the Faculty of Doctoral Studies and Research, has resolved to approve the **Research Policy for the Institutes under the Nirma University,** as per *Appendix*-A.

I/c Executive Registrar

Encl. - Appendix - A (Pages - 1 to7)

To,
1.   All HoIs
2.   All HoDs / Area Chairperson
3.   All Dy. Registrars
4.   Administrative Officer - IP / IS
5.   I/c. Accounts Officer

Copy to: Assistant Registrar - IL / Est., Programme Officer – IM, PA to E.R.

c.f.w.cs. for information to: 1. Vice President, NU
    2. Director General, NU
    3. Chief Operating Officer, NU
    4. Director (A&GA), NU

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Nirma University
Research Policy (Draft)

1. PREAMBLE

Reputation of any educational institution depends on scholarship, research productivity and innovation. The success of a University in attaining its objectives is greatly contingent upon the alignment of the faculty with all the aspects of research initiatives, being undertaken at the university. Therefore, the present research policy aims to help Nirma University and faculty achieve excellence and contribute to organisations and society.

2. OBJECTIVES

This policy provides a broad framework to guide research and integrity of scholarly inquiry at the University. The objectives of policy are as follows:

I.   To promote research, innovation and intellectual capital,
II. To ensure integrity, quality and ethics in research,
III. To integrate teaching and research through translational and instructional research, and;
IV. To incentivise the generation of intellectual capital.

3. PROMOTION OF RESEARCH

The University believes that researchers are free to choose the subject of their research, to seek support from any funding source for their research work, and to report their findings and conclusions. However, research shall be available for scrutiny to the University and constructive criticism of peers. Research techniques used by the researchers shall not violate established professional ethics, pertaining to the health, safety, privacy, and other personal rights of human beings or to the infliction of injury or pain on animals.

The University shall create conducive environment for research. Due to limited resources, the University may not support fully all research likely to be undertaken, but it shall allocate the space, facilities, partial funding, and other resources for research programmes based on the scholarly and educational merits of the proposed research. It shall also provide development opportunities to researchers for writing research proposals and reports, publications, patent filing, etc.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF THRUST AREAS

Although the researchers have the freedom to choose their own topics of research, it is highly desirable to make research socially relevant. The University expects the different institutes and departments to prepare a list of research topics, with a view to be focussed in their efforts. Under each discipline and department, there shall be an exhaustive list of such topics or areas, which can be called a bank of thrust areas. It shall be utilised for the following research activities and 80% of the topics shall be chosen from this Bank:

Research Policy

i)   The Bank can be made available to the research scholars who may use it for their doctoral thesis.

ii)   Similarly, the faculty shall also avail the Bank for identifying the subject for their minor research projects and even for major research projects.

iii)   Even for industry sponsored projects or for collaboration with other institutions, the Bank shall be utilised.

5. RESEARCH AT UG AND PG LEVEL

Teaching and research are equally important in a university. On the establishment of the University, it was thought that to promote creativity among the undergraduate and post-graduate students, some research component in the curricula, especially in the final or pre-final year of the bachelors programme and final year in the master's programme, is necessary. Accordingly, in the pre-final final year of the bachelors programme the Minor Research Project and Major Research Project are inducted where the students under the guidance of the faculty work on the decided topic of the dissertation and submit the findings periodically. The final project is submitted to the institution and also the viva is conducted. Similarly, in the postgraduate programme, research was emphasised emphatically and students were trained for robust research skills. The University shall further reinforce research training in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the future.

Idea Lab: Students have many ideas on which they want to work, but in the absence of the infrastructure, including the place and space, they are unable to work on them. Therefore, the University would encourage an Idea Lab in each institution and in due course of time at the University level, where the students can research on an idea. The Idea Lab also provides the opportunity to the students to ask questions in different areas of knowledge. It shall equip them with an ability to think, concretise the idea, design research study, work on it and report the findings. It shall also encourage research scholars to publish and patent their research work.

6. Ph.D. PROGRAMME

The first step towards doctoral programmes were commenced in 2004 both for full-time scholars and external scholars. The University also thought that being a self-financed University it had limited resources for conducting research and also in the development of the rich infrastructure for conducting research in different fields; therefore, it was decided to have collaboration with different prominent National institutions where they have requisite research infrastructures and also have expertise to guide the scholars in different areas. In pursuance to this need, the University started recognising institutions, like Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Indian Institute of Plasma Research (IPR), and B V Patel Pharmaceutical Education & Research Development Centre.

Subsequently, on the basis of the experience gained from these institutions, the University decided to recognise R&D institutions, such as Cadila Pharma, Intas

Pharmaceuticals, and Piramal Pharmaceutical for Ph.D. research.

The University shall further boost doctoral research and earmark appropriate budget for scholarship and research facilities in different institutions. It shall also recognise the worthy R&D organisations for doctoral research and build bridges with them. The University shall continue to encourage faculty and research scholars to get funding for attending International conferences from external agencies as a matching share so that the quality in research paper can be maintained. It shall urge research scholars to publish and patent their research work.

7.   MINOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

From the very beginning, the University encouraged young faculty to conduct research. Thus, it has developed a scheme for providing financial assistance to Minor Research Project. According to this scheme, a faculty member prepares Minor Research Project, which is submitted to a committee at Department/University level and on the recommendations of this committee the University gives financial assistance up to Rs. 1.00 Lakh to the faculty concerned. To have the periodical assessment for all such research projects and with an aim to guide the researcher, the departmental or institutions level committee is constituted. It is also mandatory to send a quarterly progress report of such Minor Research Project to the University. For this purpose, every year the University earmarks financial budget under each institution.

The Minor Research Project Scheme helps young faculty think about research, prepare the proposal, conduct research and write a research report. It also assists them in preparing proposals for major research projects. The University shall continue to encourage young faculty to take up minor research projects and shall earmark appropriate budget for this purpose.

8.   MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

The University has identified a list of more than 150 funding agencies. Faculty can submit Major Research Project proposals to these agencies. These proposals are scrutinised before submitting the same to a funding agency. The University provides all kinds of infrastructure facilities available for conducting a Major Research Project.

The University plans to evolve a mechanism through which it shall monitor the progress of Major Research Projects funded by an external agency, maintain its accounts and submit the utilising certificate in time to the funding agency as per the requirement of the funding agency.

The University shall provide funding on its own to certain important Major Research Projects where the funding from the outside agency is not possible. It shall earmark appropriate budget for this purpose.

9. COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS

The University-Industry Interaction is the demand of the day. If we want to contribute to the society at large, the University has to closely work with industries and different organisations. Industries and business organisations are facing different kind of problems and many of them would like to have the help from the University with an aim to find the solutions to their problems. For that, the University has planned to have the following activities:

(i) **Industry Sponsored Research Project:** An organisation can sponsor a project and the experts of the institution concerned can conduct research on this project for which the financial support will come from the organisation. As a result, if any patent is registered, then there shall be a sharing of income coming out of the patent among the industry, researcher and University. This will lead to three kinds of benefit: a) the researcher will get exposures to the concerned area of research; b) the industry will get solutions to its problem; and, c) the researcher, University and Industry can earn money and at the end, the society ultimately will benefit.

(ii) **Interdisciplinary Research:** The interdisciplinary research is a must nowadays. No department, institution, researcher or a scholar can address a research problem in which more than one discipline is involved and unless they get together and conduct interdisciplinary research no fruitful findings can be arrived at. Therefore, the University has decided to have exercise in interdisciplinary research activities for which the following steps will be taken:
a) Identify the interdisciplinary area.
b) Identify the different experts from concerned disciplines who can work together.
c) Study the requirement of the infrastructure to conduct the concerned interdisciplinary research.
d) Explore possibilities to find resources for such interdisciplinary research.

(iii) **Studio Based - Case study Research:** For design based disciplines such as architecture and planning, main learning is through studio based design application, where theory courses supplement the design studio. The research required for a solution to live project and issues can become the basis of these studio exercises. The application of these the studio-based research will postulate a range of solutions in a given context. It is possible to create awareness about certain important issues to the relevant authorities through the studio based approach and some practical solution can see direct application in the field. Students learn much more from live situations and develop understanding of practical solutions. Further, this

studio-based research can have shared public, institution and industry interface. Thus, the identification of similar projects can be done as following:

a) Recognition of potential areas of development around the city, regions and   proposal of solutions for urban and local level interventions and advancement.
b) Focus in depth on its need, importance, validation and presentation to the concerned agencies and people.
c) Explore possibilities for execution and benefits for students, faculty and the University.

10.   COLLABORATIVE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

We live in a global village. Knowledge is being produced in the different parts of the world. Collaborative international research is essential to facilitate mutual learning and expertise sharing. The University plans to have the MoUs with prominent research institutions abroad, for conducting research jointly in the areas of common interest. For this purpose, a Task Force shall be constituted that will constantly explore the possibilities of having such collaborative or joint research in terms of thrust areas, decide the modus operandi of conducting such research and attend to other relevant aspects.

11.   TRAINING FOR RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Generally, faculty are eager to conduct research, but because of the lack of expertise to write a research proposal or having insufficient research skills, they are unable to channelize their efforts effectively. Hence, in many cases, a research proposal is rejected by a funding agency. Even for publication of papers because of the lack of knowledge about how to write a paper and under which format it should be submitted, sometimes the papers are not accepted. Therefore, the University shall organise rigorous training programmes for researchers in the identified areas.

12.   PUBLICATION OF PAPERS AND JOURNALS

Publication of papers is critical for the effectiveness of the University. Faculty must publish continuously in quality journals. Therefore, the University plans to encourage the publication of papers by the faculty with a targeted aim. A faculty member shall be expected to publish a certain number of research papers in refereed journals at national and international levels. These journals shall be identified by respective institutes.

Research papers to be published in identified journals and to be presented at national and international conferences shall be scrutinised and guided by a committee of senior professors.

Each institution shall be encouraged to publish a quality journal and organise

research conference, from time to time to boost research activities in the Institute and to contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

13. PATENT AND IPR

The University would like to strengthen the research, leading to filing of patents for which the guideline is already available. If any innovation is done, the University shall encourage the researchers and scholars to patent it. However, when a scholar files for a patent, a thorough scrutiny will be carried out and for that a mechanism is already evolved at three levels namely:

1. Department at the institution level
2. At the committee level, which has experts
3. At the University level committee where even a lawyer in the concerned field is associated

The University also bears all expenditure for filing application for patent. If the patent is commercialised the sharing of earning is to be done between researcher and the University as per the guideline developed from time to time.

The University shall create awareness about intellectual property rights among faculty, researchers and scholars from time to time.

14. CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

The University would like to create an environment for each department and an institution where they work in a specific research area and be known as a specialist organisation. This will conduce to focus on specific research activities in the specialised areas. Through these efforts, the University shall promote a particular department or an institution as the Centre of Excellence in due course for a specialised thrust area.

15. INCENTIVES FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH

The University would like to encourage quality research in different thrust areas. For this purpose, outstanding research contributions done by faculty, researcher, and research scholar shall be recognised. Therefore, the University shall prepare a scheme for providing incentive to researchers and scholars. The incentives are identified as under:

a) Incentive in terms of money
b) Incentive in terms of awards/prizes
c) Incentive in terms of more funding for the ongoing research
d) Incentive in terms of certificate or giving more weightage for the career advancement scheme, etc.

16. ESTABLISHMENT OF RESEARCH CHAIRS

The University shall create research chairs and a scheme for appointment of Professor Emeritus for a particular term, where very senior scientists or professors shall be appointed for chairs and they shall conduct research on an important topic.

The research chair professors shall take some teaching load in line with the principle of integrating the research and teaching.

17. ESTABLISHMENT OF DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH

To promote, monitor and incentivise research, the University shall have an exclusive and dedicated Directorate of Research, led by a senior academician. The Directorate shall take care of day-to-day monitoring of all above activities, generating ideas about the conduct of research in different areas, implementing the ideas, meeting the requirement of funding, monitoring the activities and assessing the outcomes constantly and periodically.

Therefore, the Directorate of Research shall be an essential component for any research endeavour. The Directorate shall have the functions to disseminate the findings of research to the society and also to integrate the research with teaching.

18. RESEARCH PARK

This idea a Research Park is a relatively recent one where collaborative research can be conducted. Under this scheme, the infrastructure and ambience are created in the concerned field for conducting research where the University and the industries invest money and the experts working in the industry and the University can work together and find solutions to the problems of industry or create new knowledge which ultimately will benefit the society. In the Park, the research can be conducted jointly by different institutions of the University.

19. RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

The University believes that the occurrence of misconduct is a threat to the basic principles of research. The University defines research misconduct, as any fabrication, falsification or plagiarism in proposing, performing or reviewing research or in the reporting of research results. Research misconduct does not include an honest error or differences of opinion, authorship disputes that do not involve plagiarism, and violations of other University policies (e.g., sexual harassment policy). Misconduct in research damages the integrity of the profession and undermines the credibility of scholars. It is also antithetical to the values the University strives to maintain and promote.

The University shall take seriously all allegations of misconduct, and shall ensure that the procedures for the inquiry, investigation and adjudication of any misconduct are well defined and just for all parties involved.

20. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The policy will be reviewed after a period of three years.