



Policy Document for the Promotion of Research

1. Preamble

The Odisha State Open University (OSOU) established by an act of Government of Odisha is dedicated to increasing access to quality higher education through appropriate use of open and distance learning methods.

Research is original, independent investigation undertaken to contribute to knowledge and understanding and, in the case of some disciplines, cultural innovation or aesthetic refinement. Research typically involves inquiry of an experimental or critical nature driven by hypothesis or intellectual positions capable of rigorous assessment by experts. Research findings must be open to scrutiny or formal evaluation by experts within the field. This may be achieved through various forms of dissemination including, but not limited to, publication, manufacture, construction, public presentation, or preparation of confidential reports.

Research is an academic institution's most lasting contribution to society. Research activities are normally composed of two main aspects – the production of theoretical knowledge and an integral experiential encounter with subjects constituting the society.

Indeed, the body of published material built up by hundreds of researcher-writers and creation of a massive data base, corrected and revised is a natural corollary of research activities. This body of published material and the data base constitutes the research canon that is central to the functioning of a reputed academic institution.

It may be worthwhile to mention here that till OSOU formulates an Ordinance on research, it shall follow the Research Guidelines of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

2. Vision of OSOU

- a. To play a positive role in the development of the State through education, research, training and capacity building.
- b. To give emphasis on skill based vocational courses for promoting employment opportunities.
- c. To introduce courses those are need-based.
- d. To ensure access and equity in higher education particularly for disadvantaged groups.

3. Mission of OSOU

- a. To make positive contribution to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education in the State.
- b. To create a state-wide network of Skill Development Centres and Study Centres to reach out to all parts of the state and all segments of the society.
- c. To create University-Industry interface in Skill-based education.

d. To promote inclusiveness in higher education by targeting women, SC/ST, Physically challenged and other disadvantaged social groups

4 Objectives of the Research Policy

The present policy establishes the research environment within which the academic staff and postgraduate students as well as research scholars carry out their Research. It also provides an overarching framework for the successful implementation of all types of research at Odisha State Open University. It mainly intends:

4.1 To strengthen the institutional capacity for strategic, technical and operational planning, budgeting and control of all research activities of the University

4.2 To create and administer a research fund for supporting and facilitating research initiatives and projects of faculty members and students

4.3 To develop rules, procedures and guidelines for granting research support, instituting awards, and supporting all other related activities

4.4 To develop rules, procedures and guidelines for granting study leave, sabbatical leave, duty leave, reduction in workload, etc. for faculty members undertaking research activities

4.5 To provide a modality for proper coordination of all research activities of the University and aligning these to the vision and missions of the University and national development goals.

4.6 To prepare and regularly update the research agenda of the University outlining the preferred focus areas and priorities of research activities to be supported

4.7 To guide faculty members in the effective integration of research projects with the regular curriculum implementation and curriculum enrichment activities

4.8 To identify and inform researchers about the appropriate research opportunities announced by different academic, research, industry or government organisations

4.9 To promote interdisciplinary research and establish modalities for preparing and undertaking joint research projects covering more than one knowledge domain as well as policies for involving external agencies/experts in such projects

4.10 To identify and establish linkages including MOU s for long term relationships with national and international research organisations for widening the scope of research opportunities and funding options available to the teachers and students of the University.

4.11 To identify and establish linkages including MOU s for long term relationships with industry bodies and individual companies for creating opportunities for teachers and students of the University to involve themselves in real life research projects and obtaining sponsorships

4.12 To encourage and facilitate the publication of the research work/projects in reputed academic journals

4.13 To encourage and facilitate the presentation/communication of the research work/projects as well as their findings and recommendations through academic events such as workshops/seminars/guest lectures or the media

4.14 To provide a mechanism for ensure that academic staff attain the desired mix of teaching, research and consultancy outputs so as to achieve the level stated in the University mission;

5. University research

Research includes work of direct relevance to the specific needs of communities, government, industry and commerce. In some disciplines, Research may be embodied in the form of artistic works, performances or designs that lead to new or substantially improved insights. Research may include: contributions to the intellectual underpinning of subjects and disciplines (for example, dictionaries and scholarly editions) the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved, materials, devices, products, communications or processes, the synthesis and analysis of previous Research to the extent that it is new and creative.

The present policy shall deal with three types of research: Discipline specific research, Action Research and Systems Research.

6 Discipline Specific Research

6.1 Postgraduate student research should be given paramount importance. A Common Dissertation Guideline for concerned disciplines offering master's level programmes should be at place and strictly adhered to.

6.2 Students should be encouraged to publish research papers in peer reviewed journals right from their Postgraduate level.

6.3 The University should launch Research Degree Programmes such as M.Phil and Ph.D for the promotion of research. The same should be in consonance with the essential clauses of UGC Regulations 2016, pertaining to eligibility criteria for admission to M.Phil / Ph.D Programme, duration of Programme, Procedure for admission, and allocation of supervisor, Course Work and evaluation and assessment methods.

6.4 A research allowance, as per University rules, should be provided to supervisors who guide scholars. Research work should be taken seriously and not merely as a cosmetic attachment, or worst, as a liability to the University.

6.5 Suitable placement assistance should be provided to scholars who are awarded their degrees.

6.6 Ability to successfully guide scholars should be seen as an important criteria during promotions and career enhancements of faculty members.

6.7 There should be clear cut guidelines governing the number of scholars allotted to a Supervisor. The background knowledge and prior research credibility of the supervisors should be thoroughly scrutinized before allotment of scholars.

6.8 University should provide incentives to faculty members for publications in reputed and refereed journals as well as organising of seminars and conferences. Due recognition should be provided to faculty and academic staff on assuming editorial responsibilities in indexed academic journals.

6.9 There should be clear-cut procedures on hiring of projects staff, project closures and other administrative and accounting matters related to research projects. Every project investigator must adhere to the same.

6.10 Getting Chair-Professorship sponsored by different sources, as well as visiting faculty / scientists to work in OSOU will also help promote R&D.

6.11 There should be schemes for seed grants support to help organize workshops and conferences.

6.12 The University should work towards the formation of a Research Council aimed at overseeing all aspects of research in the University. The preparation of a Research Agenda and its regular updating shall constitute a primary responsibility of the Research Council.

7 Action Research

Action research is an approach of investigation with the dual purpose of action and research. Doing and research go hand in hand for an action researcher. The primary focus of action research is to bring about change in community, organization and programme. The research is of practical significance.

Also, action research aims at bridging the gap between higher education and public good. It provides a way to promote knowledge generation that is intrinsically capable to producing public goods through concrete and practical problem-solving and of shaping deeper reflection processes through broad disciplinary and stakeholder participation in research-based discourses.

Action research at OSOU shall include the following:

7.1 Collaboration with practitioners to understand the challenges they face. To answer questions that are most pressing to them.

7.2 Partnership with organizations and supporting them to harness the knowledge and confidence they need to adapt.

7.3 Gaining a richer, deeper understanding of the issues and implications for practice.

7.4 Drawing on one's insights to deal with strategic and operational challenges, embrace opportunities and navigate a clear path forward.

7.5 Bringing people together in order to create opportunities to share experience, exchange knowledge and build ideas.

7.6 Creating an ever growing resource that can help support and strengthen everyday practice.

7.7 Sponsored Research Grants should be sought from central (UGC, ICSSR, DST) and state governmental departments under the various ongoing funding schemes. There should be a provision for applying for R&D grants from International funding sources and agencies.

7.8 Schemes to work with sources of CSR and NGOs for R&D and Community related programs that need R&D.

7.9 The University should encourage joint projects with sister academic institutions.

7.10 A clear-cut revenue sharing model between the University and faculty member (Principal Investigator) should be in place in case of Industrial Research and Consultancy.

8. Systems Research

As has been clearly specified in the NAAC Institutional Accreditation Manual, in an Open University, the learners, teachers and other academic staff engage with systemic research to contribute to the development of ODL system. Consequently, a large part of the research focus on distance education

and its methodologies and practices. Researchers engaged in this form of research should try to answer a few pertinent questions:

- a) Are courses under distance mode at par in imparting knowledge and skills like regular mode education?
- b) What challenges do the students face in obtaining the study materials and understanding their contents without personal contact support?
- c) Are the study materials developed by the University up-to-date and student friendly?
- d) Are degrees and certificates obtained through distance mode given equal weightage during recruitment drives, even after the Government circular ascertaining that degrees obtained through distance mode are at par with those obtained through regular mode?
- e) Are students from rural backgrounds benefitted by the distance mode of education?
- f) How to motivate the students under distance mode in taking their studies seriously?
- g) Do examination and evaluation of answer scripts of courses under distance mode carried out with equal seriousness like regular mode education?
- h) What are ways and means to integrate technology to impart curricula through distance education?

9. Allocation of Grants and Funds

9.1 Clear cut rules governing the administration of research grants in externally funded research.

9.2 Clear cut rules governing the administration of research grants in internally funded research.

10. Research Ethics

10.1 The University has to adopt a zero-tolerance policy to plagiarism and other unethical practices in research.