*Stellenbosch University*

*in cooperation with*

*South African National Defence Force*

*Military Academy*

**Faculty of Military Science**

**Research Committee**

**Research Plan**

1 November 2023

Ver 1.1

# Record of Revisions

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ser No | Revision Config No & Date | Reviewer | Changes |
|  | a | b | c |
| 1 | Ver 1.0 dd 17 Aug 2021 | Dr I. Henrico & Capt (SAN) Dr AP Putter | Original approved |
| 2 | Ver 1.0 dd 1 Nov 2023 | Capt (SAN) Dr AP Putter | Major review for content and process |

# PREAMBLE

This plan should be read in conjunction with the following Stellenbosch University policies (available at <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/research-innovation/Research-Development/policies-guidelines>):

* Research Policy.
* Policy for Responsible Research Conduct at Stellenbosch University.
* Policy on Plagiarism (in support of academic integrity).
* Postdoctoral Policy.
* Contract Research Policy.
* Research Data Management Regulations.
* Extraordinary appointments (Research Fellows).
* Policy for Costing and Pricing of Research and Research Related Contracts.
* Stellenbosch University’s (SU) procedure for the investigation of allegations of breach of research norms and standards.

The Research Policy of Stellenbosch University (SU), dated 15 August 2008, articulates the SU's unwavering commitment to a research-centric ethos and outlines its strategic objectives. This policy emanates from a comprehensive vision statement, consisting of five core principles, which delineate the institution's mission and aspirations. Underpinning this vision is the university's chosen motto, "your knowledge partner," a deliberate declaration of the paramount importance accorded to research within the academic realm.

Stellenbosch University is resolute in its dedication to making substantive capacity-building contributions, both domestically and on the global stage, by fostering expertise in research-intensive domains. To this end, the university is poised to meet the stringent international standards for research, cognizant of the unique opportunities and constraints presented by the South African context. Furthermore, a commitment to upholding universally recognized standards of good governance in research underpins every facet of the institution's research activities.

In pursuit of these objectives, SU has constructed a comprehensive framework designed to facilitate, synchronize, and oversee research endeavours. This framework extends its influence across the central administrative echelons as well as individual faculties, departments, centres, and affiliated institutions. A key facet of this framework and the organisational capacities that underpin it is an unwavering dedication to upholding the ethical principles that underpin research across diverse disciplines, with a commitment to adapt these principles to evolving circumstances while ensuring their consistent application.

Intrinsic to the university's research philosophy is an unswerving commitment to academic integrity and the relentless pursuit of excellence in all research undertakings. This ethos necessitates a focused approach to research themes, to be selected judiciously within faculties, departments, and institutions. These themes serve as critical points of convergence and emphasis, further underscoring the institution's dedication to advancing knowledge, scholarship, and societal impact.

Thus, the SU Research Policy embodies a structured and systematic commitment to research excellence, articulated through a coherent vision, ethical imperatives, and a meticulous governance framework. It underscores the institution's profound dedication to knowledge creation, dissemination, and the betterment of society.

Stellenbosch University, in alignment with its comprehensive research vision, formulates the following policy directives to guide the conduct and priorities of its academic staff. This policy seeks to articulate the institution’s expectations systematically and coherently regarding research engagement and productivity among its academic personnel.

* Priority to Research. Stellenbosch University expects all academic staff to accord research the highest priority within their academic responsibilities.
* Research Activities and Outputs. Academic staff are mandated to actively engage in research activities, consistently produce research outputs of exceptional quality, and contribute to the community relevant to their research endeavours.
* Integration of Research and Tuition. There is an imperative for continuous integration of research and teaching, fostering a symbiotic relationship between these academic pursuits.
* Continual Learning. Academic staff are encouraged to remain abreast of emerging research methodologies, stay informed about the current state of research findings, and remain engaged with research topics pertinent to their respective specialities or fields of study.
* Acknowledgment of Research Policies. Faculty members must be cognizant of and adhere to the research policies and initiatives outlined by statutory research boards, as well as other external research entities within South Africa and international institutions that bear relevance to South Africa or the University's focal areas.
* Utilization of Opportunities. Faculty members are expected to leverage the opportunities presented by research plans and programs at both national and international levels, including bilateral or multilateral initiatives.
* Collaborative Networks. Creating and participating in research networks, fostering connections, and nurturing collaboration with fellow researchers, both within South Africa and on an international scale, is an integral part of the academic staff's responsibilities.
* Resource Acquisition. Academic staff should actively seek and secure funding for research activities within the University to establish a sustainable financial foundation for research endeavours.
* Support for Postgraduate Study. The provision of effective study support in accordance with the University's rules and guidelines for postgraduate study is an essential obligation.
* Contract Research. Academic staff are expected to adhere to the University's policy on contract research and fulfil associated contractual obligations with diligence.
* Intellectual Property and Commercialization. Handling intellectual property and expertise in accordance with the University's policies and exploring opportunities for research commercialization is mandatory.
* Mentoring Programs. Active participation in mentoring programs aimed at enhancing the capabilities of fellow researchers is encouraged.
* Dissemination of Research. Academic staff should disseminate research findings through national and international subject conferences, as well as publications in reputable scientific journals or other appropriate media, such as book publications.
* Enhancing Reputation. Through the quality of their research work and publications, academic staff are instrumental in enhancing the reputation of Stellenbosch University.

Thus, the SU's research policy underscores the institution's commitment to promoting a culture of research excellence, knowledge dissemination, and community engagement among its academic staff. This comprehensive policy framework aligns with the university's overarching research objectives and aspirations. Top of Form

In accordance with the foregoing, Stellenbosch University mandates its Faculty to institute requisite organizational protocols. These measures are designed to streamline the planning, execution, and oversight of research activities. The overarching goal is to establish a robust and well-justified framework for the governance of such activities, which includes upholding performance standards.

* Simplifying Research Management. Faculties are tasked with implementing mechanisms aimed at simplifying the organization, execution, and management of research endeavours.
* Promoting Research Initiatives. Continuous encouragement of academic staff to initiate and cultivate individual and/or collaborative research undertakings is imperative.
* Embracing Interdisciplinary Research. Special attention must be devoted to recognizing and harnessing the potential inherent in multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary research pursuits.
* Research-Oriented Teaching. Faculties are expected to structure and deliver undergraduate and postgraduate courses in a manner that nurtures a genuine interest in research among students.
* Maintaining Research Records. It is mandatory to systematically record current and past research projects and newly acquired research qualifications. Collaboration with the Division of Research Development is essential to construct a comprehensive overview of the University's research profile.
* Coordination and Elimination of Duplication. Faculties must ensure optimal coordination of research activities. This includes the elimination of unnecessary redundancy and overlap in research efforts, both locally and in collaboration with other researchers within South Africa and internationally whenever feasible.
* Knowledge Transfer. Researchers should be provided with opportunities to impart their expertise to students through lectures and individualized guidance.
* Engaging External Organizations. Faculties are encouraged to proactively seek affiliations with external organizations that can facilitate the identification of pertinent research problems, offer potential financial support, facilitate the practical application of research findings, and explore avenues for commercial exploitation in accordance with the policies established by Stellenbosch University.

In summary, Stellenbosch University's policy underscores the necessity for proactive and strategic measures at the faculty-level to enhance the research ecosystem within the institution. These measures are intended to foster a conducive environment for scholarly pursuits, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the effective utilization of research outcomes, thereby aligning with the overarching research objectives of the University.

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# INTRODUCTION

This document represents the SU Faculty of Military Science (FMS) Research Plan. Developed in accordance with the SU's action plan for the promotion of research, to extend FMS's status as a research-orientated academic faculty. This document establishes a general framework for the conduct of research. It is developed with the purpose that researchers are individually responsible for the selection and conduct of research and scholarship, based on their knowledge and expertise. Researchers should always remain aware of the consequences of their research. The FMS Research Plan should be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the SU vision and mission statement. This document does not replace the SU policies and guidelines but should be read together with these.

# DEFINITION

For the purpose of the FMS Research Plan, the term “research” is described as those inquisitive activities that is based on clearly formulated problems and the methodical collection and systematic processing of data. Research is understood to be conducted in the pursuit of gaining insights that have the potential to extend the body of scientific knowledge; further the implementation of such knowledge; and that represent an active involvement in finding solutions based on scientific knowledge in both the broader natural-, human-, and social sciences.

# RESEARCH AT THE FACULTY OF MILITARY SCIENCE

The FMS wish to promote a research culture for its lecturing staff and postgraduate students, with the following research objectives in mind:

* To promote capacity-building through group projects and the role of mentorship to co-author publications within defined focus areas.
* To facilitate representativity in the participation rates of all population subgroups.
* To generate quality outputs that enjoy the positive regard of academic peers and have an impact on the academic debate.
* To achieve an average research output per FMS member annually of one conference paper/poster/presentation and one accredited peer-reviewed publications.
* To increase the output of research-based master’s and PhD degrees annually as well as the number of accredited, peer-reviewed publications from completed research assignments, thesis and/or dissertations.
* To facilitate a marked increase in the proportion of FMS academic staff members who hold doctorate degrees, against the backdrop of the SU target of 80% per faculty.
* To promote the NRF rating of FMS academic staff members.
* To obtain as much research funding from outside the FMS and SU as possible.

# MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH

The FMS Vice-Dean (Research) reports to the Dean of the FMS on all matters concerning research. The Dean, Vice-Dean (Research) and the various School Chairs and Heads of Departments play an active role in enabling research initiatives undertaken by FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students. All FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students are individually responsible for allocating high priority to research as part of their academic work, by undertaking research activities to deliver quality research outputs.

The FMS Research Committee (RC) provide active management support to the FMS Vice-Dean (Research). The role of FMS RC is to encourage and facilitate (where possible) continued, goal-directed research by means of bringing research opportunities and funding sources to the attention of the FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students. This is achieved by aligning research projects with the knowledge requirements of the defence environment as well as National Research Foundation research focus areas. The latter process will be enhanced by the proposed Defence Research Facilitation Forum and its facilitation of research through the sharing of material and human resources, and the setting of research priorities. The role of the FMS RC is described in the *Faculty of Military Science Research Committee Terms of Reference.*

# Promotion of a research culture

FMS research activities and output are promoted and driven by the collective involvement of the entire FMS. The development of an academic ecosystem is paramount for the establishment of an FMS research culture that is aligned with the SU vision. Concomitantly, the identification of growth areas and availability of adequate resources must be underscored. The onus is on the FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students to actively initiate and participate in research through the encouragement and motivation of all role players. The establishment and growth of an FMS research culture are dependent on (at least):

* Regular FMS RC feedback,
  + at the appropriate forums highlighting the activities and expertise of FMS researchers, and
  + to communicate research-related information (development, support and research opportunities; funding; partnerships and collaboration) to drive awareness and participation of Faculty members.
* Regular research feedback from Faculty members of their research and publication outputs to the FMS RC.
* Availability of funding to promote research within the FMS. Research funding is made available through various means, including the Dean’s office, DOD, private and public sector, awards and grants, Subcommittee-A funding, and international funding.
* Research outputs benefit faculty members by positively influencing their performance evaluations and promotion prospects. Additionally, they contribute to the accumulation of funds and guide the allocation of the FMS's financial resources, supporting the pursuit of academic opportunities both nationally and internationally.

# Capacity building

Various research capacity development programmes and opportunities exist within the SU academic eco-system which can be accessed to increase the research competence and expertise of FMS academic staff and post-graduate students. Development of Faculty members ensures capacity building, and are first and foremost encouraged to,

* increase their educational qualification to a PHD,
* increase the output of research-based master’s and PhD degrees annually as well as the number of accredited articles from completed theses and research projects, and
* to promote the NRF rating of FMS academic staff members.

FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students should exploit capacity-building opportunities presented by the SU academic eco-system. These include but are not limited to:

* The SAGUS workshops in scientific writing skills.
* Postdoctoral fellowships on offer.
* African Doctoral Academy offer high-impact research and methodology training.
* SU Research Develop workshops.
* SU Early Academic Career Development (ECAD) – mentor/mentee programme.

FMS academic staff members with proven research skills (publication records) are encouraged to provide mentorship to colleagues with less research and publication experience and assist them in developing their research skills and competencies.

The FMS RC is responsible for organising internal workshops (at least once per annum). Internal workshops should be both subject-specific and interdisciplinary workshops to create opportunities to develop the research and methodological skills of FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students. Where the opportunity presents itself, external facilitators could be invited to present such workshops.

# Promotion of quality of research

Quality and the volume of research outputs are promoted through (at least) the following initiatives:

* The FMS’s Appointment Policy – the FMS, within the constraints of its budget and the SU and DOD’s transformation policy, strives toward the appointment of academics with proven research records.
* Providing and facilitating networking opportunities between FMS academic staff members and distinguished researchers from further afield, through the creation of national and international research networks. The proposed Defence Research Facilitation Forum will facilitate this process through its quality assurance role and the sharing of material and human resources.
* FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students are actively encouraged to regularly submit research material for academic and scientific publication (journals, books, etc.).
* FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students are actively encouraged (inter alia through the merit and promotion systems) to submit to peer-group evaluation through participation at national and international academic conferences when opportune.

# Research collaboration

Partnerships are at the core of the functioning of the FMS and their establishment and nurturing should be an FMS academic staff priority to ensure continuous focussed and interdisciplinary knowledge creation as well as opportunities to gain access to funding for research projects. Thus, it is paramount for FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students to search for opportunities in support of collaborative research across the FMS (inter-departmental), institutionally, nationally and internationally.

The SU academic eco-system (inclusive of the FMS) presents numerous partnerships and networks with universities across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Eurasia, and North and South America. These are accessible to FMS academic staff members and post-graduate students (where applicable) to establish research collaboration across institutions – nationally and internationally.

Partnership lists are downloadable from the SU International website: [*https://www0.sun.ac.za/international/about/our-international-networks-and-affiliations.html*](https://www0.sun.ac.za/international/about/our-international-networks-and-affiliations.html)

# Management of postgraduate studies

The FMS need to ensure that appropriate funds are available to support postgraduate research. FMS academic staff members, specifically academic supervisors and co-supervisors, need to ensure that postgraduate students gain access to and effectively utilise the knowledge and skills of distinguished academics within the SU academic ecosystem (inclusive of FMS). Where applicable, supervisors support students to attend SU online workshops, seminars, and conferences to develop and enhance their research skills. Where deemed appropriate, academic supervisors are encouraged to involve postgraduate students with their research projects and support postgraduate students to refine their research results (assignments and projects) for presentation at national and international conferences and submission to relevant accredited peer-reviewed publications.

The FMS RC is the custodian of the Doctoral and Master’s Programmes in the FMS and oversee postgraduate student’s progress throughout their time at the FMS. Progress of postgraduate students is a combined responsibility between academic supervisors and students, with FMS Student Administration in support.

# RESEARCH PLANNING

The FMS is responsible to create an enabling environment for FMS academic staff members and their postgraduate students within their respective departments to develop and implement their own research plan that is aligned with the Stellenbosch University Research Strategy and Policy.

Respective FMS academic departments and subject groups should plan their own research through the drawing up of goal-directed and evolving research plans to keep pace with changing knowledge requirements and the impact of internal and external environmental factors. The aim is the delineation and establishment of research focus areas aligned with the various role players and stakeholders such as the NRF, SU and the DOD. This is aimed at reinforcing the symbiotic relationship that should exist between research, teaching, community service and practice. These focus areas are primarily directed to the requirements of the SA National Defence Force as "client", but also the requirements of the broader defence and security sector, the SA community, as well as the requirements of the respective schools/subject groups for study material (textbooks, journal articles, study guides, etc.).

The establishment and nurturing of internal and external research networks are a FMS priority. In the case of external (external to SU domestically but also internationally) research collaboration and networking - emphasis falls on the identification of research themes, access to research sources and facilities and other forms of logistic support but remains contingent on the availability and access to research funds, the willingness and academic fit for co-supervisorship, and co-authorship. Domestically, co-operation already exists between the FMS and the Centre for Military Studies (CEMIS), as well as Armscor's Defence Research Centre. Plans are already developed for the creation of a Defence Research Facilitation Forum, of which the FMS will form the secretariat. CEMIS manage this function.

Exchange programmes (academic staff and student mobility) forms an integral part of an academic institutions research plan, and the FMS is no different. This responsibility falls mostly within the domain of the Vice-Dean HR (and internationalisation) which also chairs the FMS Internationalisation Committee (IC). The FMS IC is mandated to establish and nurture academic exchange programmes (lecturers and students) with foreign academic institutions. This is, *inter alia*, directed at not only research collaboration but more broadly the establishment of knowledge networks for academic supervision, curriculum development, staff and student exchanges, etc.

As part of the FMS’s Guide to Research Planning, emphasis is placed on presenting annual, national and international, interdisciplinary academic conferences on military-related themes at the FMS. The goal is to establish the Military Academy as an international conference venue. FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students are encouraged to annually attend national and international conferences, congresses, symposia, and workshops to further promote research culture at the FMS and to ensure capacity building.

# ASSURANCE OF AN ADEQUATE FLOW OF RESEARCH FUNDS

The assurance of access to funds in support of promoting a research culture and ensuring capacity building within the FMS happens in the following ways:

* DOD Budget. The FMS endeavours annually to obtain research funding from within the DOD budget through a research programme that meets the requirements of the SANDF. The proposed Defence Research Facilitation Forum will also facilitate this process through the identification of Department of Defence research priorities, as managed by CEMIS. Under the current economic conditions and with the DOD budget under severe pressure such funding remains extremely limited to not available.
* SU Funding. Regularly, the FMS RC brings the available SU sources of funding (including study and merit bursaries) to the attention of FMS academic staff and postgraduate students to facilitate potential access to these funding opportunities.
* External Funds. The FMS encourages researchers to acquire research funding outside its official budget and the SU resources. The FMS RC therefore brings, on a regular basis, available research funding, particularly NRF funding, to the attention of researchers and encourages them to direct their research projects to the acquisition of such funding. The proposed Defence Research Facilitation Forum can make a large contribution to the acquisition of external funding and the allocation thereof.

# ADVERTISEMENT OF RESEARCH

The advertisement of research of the FMS is ensured in the following ways:

* Webpages. The FMS's current and completed research projects are published on its Webpages.
* Subject Journals. Researchers are encouraged to publish their results in the widest variety of subject journals, national and international. The FMS also publishes its own accredited, interdisciplinary journal, Scientia Militaria. Preference should be given to publishing in Department of Higher Education and Training accredited publications in order to assure subsequent research funding returns from these publications.
* Research Networks. National and international research networks well known vehicles with which to promote/advertisement research outputs. The proposed Defence Research Facilitation Forum will be a particularly valuable forum in disseminating research information and marketing research products. Such distribution will be managed via CEMIS.
* Online Academic Research Networks. Building sustainment of relevant connections using academic research networks/platforms (for example ResearchGate, Academia.edu, Google Scholar, ORCiD, WEB of Science, and other social networks) connect peers and colleagues across the globe currently and will continue to do so in future. FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students are strongly encouraged to create and update their academic profiles regularly on these networks.
* Conference Venue. The proposed establishment of the Military Academy as an (interdisciplinary) conference venue for national and international conferences will provide an excellent platform for the advertisement of research results.

# RECOGNITION OF FIRST-RATE RESEARCHERS

Recognition of FMS academic staff research excellence and the establishment of a research culture is supported in the following manner:

* Awards. First-rated researchers (FMS academic staff members and postgraduate students) are annually nominated for the following awards:
* *Rector's Award for Research Excellence*. FMS academic staff are encouraged to deliver research results that will position them for the attaining of the Rector's Award for Research Excellence.
* *Faculty of Military Science Emerging Researcher Award*. The Faculty Council is instituting its own Award for Research, which will be awarded annually at the Awards Evening to the most promising researcher.
* *Pro Scientia Floating Trophy*. The Pro-Scientia Floating Trophy is awarded annually at the Military Academy Awards Evening to the member of the FMS who earned the most SOS-funds in the preceding year.
* *CEMIS-trophy*. The CEMIS Trophy is awarded annually at the Military Academy Awards Evening to the postgraduate student who, in that particular year, delivered the best research essay.
* Allocation of Funds. FMS funds for research activities (including working visits abroad and international conference participation) are allocated in terms of the research profile of the applicants.
* Performance Assessment and Promotion. The performance evaluation and promotion systems (in terms of both salary scales and academic rank) are designed to emphasise/reward the research output of FMS academic staff members at their different qualification levels.
* Improved Conditions of Service for Publication Achievers. Improved conditions of service will be pursued as compensation for achievement in research and publication, such as the preferential allocation of sabbatical leave and research opportunities (including post-doctoral fellowships).

# REVIEW OF THE FACULTY OF MILITARY SCIENCE RESEARCH PLAN

Any discrepancies regarding this plan or from implementing the guidelines obtained within this plan will be referred to the FMS RC for resolution and communicated to the FMS Executive Committee.

This FMS Guideline to Research Planning shall be reviewed every two years bi-annually by the FMS RC. Changes to this plan will be communicated to the FMS Executive Committee for recommendation and presented at the Faculty Board for approval.