Policy for Standardization of Research Output Expectations

Document name	**POLICY FOR STANDARDIZATION OF RESEARCH OUTPUT EXPECTATIONS**
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1. Preamble

Whereas, the Durban University of Technology (DUT), an institution of higher learning with a rich history and a steadfast commitment to academic excellence, research, innovation, and community development, stands at the cusp of transformative growth and societal impact.

Whereas, DUT has embarked on a visionary journey encapsulated in its strategic plan, which articulates a compelling vision for the future of the institution, one deeply rooted in the principles of academic excellence, research prowess, and innovation-driven progress.

Whereas, research constitutes the intellectual heartbeat of any thriving academic institution, propelling discovery, knowledge dissemination, and problem-solving, thus aligning seamlessly with DUT's mission to create meaningful change through learning and research.

Whereas, DUT recognizes that the pursuit of research excellence is not an isolated endeavor but a collective and multifaceted commitment that demands clear direction, standardized expectations, and a dynamic framework that adapts to the evolving landscape of academia.

Whereas, fostering a vibrant research culture at DUT necessitates the establishment of an equitable and comprehensive policy framework that guides and empowers academic staff, at all levels, to contribute significantly to the institution's research goals while fostering their individual growth and fulfillment.

Now, Therefore, in the pursuit of academic and research excellence and the realization of the university strategic plan, DUT hereby enacts the Research Output Expectation Policy, as a testament to our unwavering commitment to research, innovation, and academic distinction. This policy represents a dedication to cultivating a research environment where faculty, researchers, and scholars alike can thrive, learn, and innovate, thereby propelling DUT to the forefront of global academic leadership.

This policy is rooted in the belief that research is the driving force behind progress, and it serves as a beacon guiding us toward a future where knowledge knows no bounds and where we, as a university community, unite in our pursuit of transformative discoveries and the betterment of society. Through this policy, DUT reaffirms its position as a torchbearer of research excellence, poised to illuminate the path toward a brighter, more enlightened future for all.

2. Introduction

2.1 The DUT is committed to fostering a culture of research excellence and innovation in alignment with its university strategic plan. As part of this commitment, DUT recognizes the importance of setting clear and standardized research output expectations for academic staff at all levels, including lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors, and full professors.

2.2 This Research Output Expectation Policy is designed to provide a framework for defining, measuring, and evaluating research output across academic levels, with the overarching goal of advancing the quality, quantity, and impact of research at DUT.

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3. Principles Guiding the Research Output Expectation Policy

3.1 **Commitment to Innovation and Research Excellence:** DUT upholds an unwavering dedication to Innovation and Research excellence as the cornerstone of its mission. This principle underscores our belief that research output should consistently meet the highest standards of quality, originality, and impact.

3.2 **Equity and Fairness:** This policy embraces the principles of fairness and equity, ensuring that research expectations are transparent, consistent, and achievable for academic staff at all levels. Equity in research opportunities, recognition, and rewards is a cornerstone of this policy.

3.3 **Alignment with university strategic plan:** The Research Output Expectation Policy is intrinsically aligned with the university strategic plan. It serves as a strategic tool to guide our research and innovation endeavors towards fulfilling the plan's objectives, thus ensuring that research and innovation contributes to the broader vision of the institution.

3.4 **Nurturing a Research and Innovation Culture:** DUT is dedicated to fostering a culture of research and innovation that transcends disciplinary boundaries. This principle emphasizes the importance of cultivating an environment where curiosity, inquiry, and creativity flourish.

3.5 **Diversity and Inclusivity:** DUT recognizes the strength derived from diversity in research perspectives and methodologies. The policy encourages inclusivity by acknowledging and valuing the contributions of all academic staff, regardless of background or specialization.

3.6 **Research and Innovation as a Catalyst for Change:** DUT views research and innovation as a catalyst for positive societal change. DUT is committed to research and innovation that addresses pressing global challenges and contributes to the advancement of knowledge that benefits communities locally and globally.

3.7 **Quality Over Quantity:** While DUT values the volume of research output, this principle underscores our belief that quality should never be compromised for quantity. Excellence in research, as evidenced by the impact of our work, remains paramount.

3.8 **Continuous Improvement:** DUT is committed to continuous improvement in research and innovation. DUT recognizes that research output expectations must evolve over time to reflect changes in academic standards, research methodologies, and societal needs.

3.9 **Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity:** DUT promotes collaboration and interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research as vehicles for innovation and addressing complex challenges. This principle encourages academic staff to engage in collaborative endeavours, both within and beyond the university.

3.10 **Accountability and Recognition:** DUT maintains a strong commitment to accountability. Academics and researchers are encouraged to take ownership of their research and innovation endeavours, and their contributions are recognized, celebrated, and rewarded accordingly.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Define and standardize research output expectations for academic staff at different levels, thus providing clarity and consistency.

4.2 Foster a research culture that encourages continuous improvement and achievement of research excellence.

4.3 Align individual research performance with the university's broader objectives and strategic priorities.

4.4 Recognize and reward academic staff for their contributions to innovation and research.

4.5 Ensure that research outputs contribute meaningfully to local and global knowledge and address societal challenges.

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5. Abbreviations

NRF: the National Research Foundation.
Senex: the Executive Committee of Senate.
DUT: the Durban University of Technology
DVC: Deputy Vice Chancellor
IRIC: the Senate Institutional Research, Innovation Committee.
DHET: the Department of Higher Education and Training.
ROUs: Research Output Units

6. Definition

As per the DHET Research Outputs Policy (2015):

6.1 **Accredited Journal Article:** An accredited journal article refers to a scholarly work published in a reputable and recognized academic journal that has undergone a rigorous peer-review process. Accredited journals are typically associated with academic institutions, professional organizations, or publishers known for maintaining high editorial and scholarly standards. These articles contribute to the body of knowledge in a specific field and are considered reliable sources of information for research and academic purposes.

6.2 **Journals:** Journals refer to peer reviewed periodical publications devoted to the dissemination of original research and new developments within specific disciplines, sub-disciplines, or fields of study. These include original articles, research letters, research papers and review articles.

6.3 **Books and Chapter in Books:** Books refer to peer reviewed, non-periodical scholarly or research publications disseminating original research and developments within specific disciplines, subdisciplines or fields of study.

6.4 **Published Conference Proceedings:** Proceedings refer to a published record of a conference, congress, symposium, or other meeting where the purpose was to discuss and disseminate original research and new developments within specific disciplines, sub-disciplines, or fields of study.

6.5 **Creative Output:** Creative output encompasses artistic, innovative, or expressive works that result from the creative endeavors of individuals or groups. These outputs may include a wide range of forms such as visual arts, literature, music, film, design, performances, and other creative expressions. Creative output is not limited to traditional academic research but represents original and imaginative contributions to culture, society, and the arts.

6.6 **Research Output Units:** refer to the number of units allocated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to a research output for the purposes for calculating subsidy based on the Policy and Procedures for Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions (GN 1467 Government Gazette 25583 of 14 October 2003) until 1 December 2015, and on the Research Output Policy, 2015 (Government Gazette 38552 of 11 March 2015) from 1 January 2016;

6.7 **Researcher:** refers to all permanently appointed DUT employees and current academic associates and collectively to developing researchers, emerging researchers and proven researchers.

6.8 **Senate:** As per the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 as amended in 2016: Senate is the body of public higher education institution accountable to the council for the

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academic and research functions of the public higher education institution and must perform such other functions as may be delegated or assigned to it by the council.

6.9 **Research Publications**: refers to all accredited publications as per DHET Research Output policy (2015) including journal articles, conference papers, book chapters or equivalent creative research outputs and excludes Masters and Doctoral research outputs.

7. Research Output Expectations

7.1 The academic staff may have an option to generate required research output units over the period of three years.

7.2 The Research output produced by the student maybe allocated to the Supervisor or Co-supervisor.

7.3 In the event of the student been supervised by more than one supervisor the ROUs generated by the student maybe split proportionally.

7.4 The following research output expectations are established for each academic level, annually:

7.4.1 Lecturer (with Doctoral Degree)

7.4.1.1 **Annual Outputs (**academic members in departments**):** Annually, at least 0.5 ROUs peer reviewed research publications.

7.4.1.2 **Annual Outputs** (academic members in the research institutes/centres)**:** Annually, at least 0.7 ROUs peer-reviewed research publication.

7.4.1.3 **Research Engagement:** Actively engage in research projects, collaborations, o**r** interdisciplinary research initiatives.

7.4.2 Lecturer (without Doctoral Degree)

7.4.2.1 **Annual Outputs (**academic members in departments**):** Expected to register and make progress towards doctoral studies.

7.4.2.2 **Annual Outputs (in the research institute/centre):** Annually, at least 0.7 ROUs peer reviewed research publications and expected to register and make progress towards doctoral studies. Expected to complete doctoral degree.

7.4.2.3 **Research Engagement:** Actively engage in research projects, collaborations, or interdisciplinary research initiatives.

7.4.3 Senior Lecturer

7.4.3.1 **Annual Outputs (**academic members in departments**):** Annually, a minimum of 1,0 ROUs peer-reviewed research publications.

7.4.3.2 **Annual Outputs (in the research institute/centre):** Annually, a minimum of 1.2 ROUs peer-reviewed research publications

7.4.3.3 **Research Engagement:** Actively participate in research teams and seek external research funding or grants.

7.4.3.4 **Postgraduate Supervision:** Supervise and mentor postgraduate students.

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7.4.4 Associate Professor

7.4.4.1 **Annual Outputs (**academic members in departments**):** Annually, a minimum of 1.3 ROUs peer-reviewed research publications

7.4.4.2 **Annual Outputs (in the research institute/centre):** Annually, a minimum of 1.6 ROUs peer-reviewed research publications

7.4.4.3 **Research Leadership:** Lead research projects, contribute to research strategy development, and collaborate nationally and internationally.

7.4.4.4 **Postgraduate Supervision:** Supervise and mentor postgraduate students, demonstrating research leadership.

7.4.4.5 **External Recognition:** Serve as a reviewer for reputable journals, conferences, or funding bodies.

7.4.4.6 **Research grant:** Successful grant applications or leadership in research projects.

7.4.4.7 **Academic citizenship:** Presentation and organization of sessions at national and international conferences. - Active involvement in research centres or groups or research institute.

7.4.5 Full Professor

7.4.5.1 **Annual Outputs (**academic members in departments**):** Annually, a minimum of 1.6 ROUs peer-reviewed research publications.

7.4.5.2 **Annual Outputs (in the research Institute/centre):** Annually, a minimum of 2.2 ROUs peer-reviewed research publications.

7.4.5.3 **Research Vision:** Provide visionary leadership in research, set research strategy for the department or school, and lead substantial research projects.

7.4.5.4 **External Collaboration:** Foster national and international collaborations, securing external research funding.

7.4.5.5 **Postgraduate Supervision:** Play a significant role in postgraduate supervision, producing successful graduates who contribute to their fields.

7.4.5.6 **External Recognition:** Hold editorial roles, serve on national/international research boards, and demonstrate a sustained impact on the field.

7.4.5.7 **Research grant:** Distinguished record of grant acquisition.

7.4.5.8 **Academic citizenship:** Keynote presentations at international conferences.

7.4.5.9 **University service:** Contribution to the development of the university's research strategy.

7.4.6 Research Professor/Research Chair/NRF SARChi Chair

7.4.6.1 **Annual Outputs (**academic members in departments**):** Annually, a minimum of 2.6 ROUs peer-reviewed research publications.

7.4.6.2 **Annual Outputs (in the research Institute/centre):** Annually, a minimum of 2.7 ROUs peer-reviewed research publications.

7.4.6.3 **Research Vision:** Provide visionary leadership in research, set research strategy for the department or school, and lead substantial research projects.

7.4.6.4 **External Collaboration:** Foster national and international collaborations, securing external research funding.

7.4.6.5 **Postgraduate Supervision:** Play a significant role in postgraduate supervision, producing successful graduates who contribute to their fields.

7.4.6.6 **External Recognition:** Hold editorial roles, serve on national/international research boards, and demonstrate a sustained impact on the field.

7.4.6.7 **Research grant:** Distinguished record of grant acquisition.

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7.4.6.8 **Academic citizenship:** Keynote presentations at international conferences.

7.4.6.9 **University service:** Contribution to the development of the university's research strategy.

7.4.7 Postdoctoral fellows

7.4.7.1 **Annual Outputs:** Annually, at least 2.0 ROUs peer-reviewed research publication.

7.4.7.2 **Research Engagement:** Actively engage in research projects, collaborations, or interdisciplinary research initiatives.

7.4.7.3 **Postgraduate Supervision:** Play a co-supervisory role significant role in postgraduate supervision, producing successful graduates who contribute to their fields.

7.4.7.4 **Research engagement:** Active involvement in research projects or grants.

7.4.7.5 **External engagement:** Attendance and participation in at least one national or international conference or seminar annually.

7.4.7.6 **Relevant and applicable policy:** Comply with all minimum performance requirements as sets out in the postdoctoral fellowship policy.

7.4.8 Associate Researchers

7.4.8.1 **Annual Outputs:** Annually, a minimum of 2.0 ROUs peer-reviewed research publications.

7.4.8.2 **Research Engagement:** Active involvement in research projects or grants.

7.4.8.3 **External engagement:** Attendance and participation in at least one national or international conference or seminar annually.

7.4.8.4 **Relevant and applicable policy:** Comply with all minimum performance requirements as sets out in the Associate researcher's policy.

8. Measurement and benchmarking

8.1 Typically, research assessment adheres to the guidelines outlined in the Policy and Procedures for Measuring Research Outputs of Public Higher Education Institutions, as stipulated in Government Notice R1467, published in the Government Gazette 25583 on October 14, 2003, until December 1, 2015. Subsequently, starting from January 1, 2016, it aligns with the Research Output Policy 2015, as detailed in Government Gazette 38552 on March 11, 2015."

8.2 Time Period for Assessment is essential for evaluating the performance of academic staff within the Durban University of Technology

8.3 Thresholds for Success should establish the minimum performance thresholds that research outputs must meet to be considered successful.

8.4 Peer review stands as the singularly pragmatic and objective criterion available for assessing research excellence.

8.5 Each academic staff, researcher, and research associate is anticipated to generate the minimum quantity of accredited research outputs as shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

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Table 1: Minimum expected research output generation by the academic staff

	Academic Level	Research output per three-year cycle	Annual requirement
1	Lecturer (with a Doctoral degree)	A minimum of 0.5 ROUs from DHET accredited publications/creative output	0.5 research output units (ROUs)
2	Lecturer (without a doctoral degree)	Expected to register and make progress towards doctoral studies and produce at least 1 ROUs per three-year cycle	Set period in attainment of doctoral degree. Annual good progress towards doctoral studies
3	Senior Lecturer (without doctorate) (faculty)	Expected to register and make progress towards doctoral studies and Produce at least 1.3 ROUs per three-year cycle	Set period in attainment of doctoral degree. Annual good progress towards doctoral studies
4	Senior Lecturer (with doctorate) (faculty)	A minimum of 3.0 ROUs from DHET accredited publications/creative output per three-year cycle	1.0 research output units (ROUs)
4	Senior Lecturer (institute/ centre)	A minimum of 3.6 ROUs from DHET accredited publications/creative output per three-year cycle	1.2 research output units (ROUs)
5	Associate Professor (faculty)	A minimum of 3.9 ROUs from DHET accredited publications/creative output per three-year cycle	1.3 research output units (ROUs)
6	Associate Professor (institute/ centre)	A minimum of 4.8 ROUs from DHET accredited publications/creative output per three-year cycle	1.6 research output units (ROUs)
7	Full Professor (faculty)	A minimum of 4.8 ROUs from DHET accredited publications/creative output per three-year cycle	1.6 research output units (ROUs)
8	Full Professor (institute/ centre)	A minimum of 6.6 ROUs from DHET accredited publications/creative output per three-year cycle	2.2 research output units (ROUs)
9	Research Professor/ NRF SARChi Chair	A minimum of 7.8 ROUs from DHET accredited publications/creative output per three-year cycle	2.6 research output units (ROUs)
10	Research Professor/Research Chair/NRF SARChi Chair (institute/ centre)	A minimum of 8.1 ROUs from DHET accredited publications/creative output per three-year cycle	2.7 research output units (ROUs)

Table 2: Minimum research output expectation for Associate Researcher and Postdoctoral fellow.

	Academic level	Research output per annum
1	Postdoctoral fellow	Produce annually, a minimum of 2.0 ROUs DHET accredited publications/creative outputs
2	Associate Researcher (as per appointments as per the Adjunct Appointment and Procedure Policy)	Produce annually, a minimum of 2.0 ROUs DHET accredited publications/creative outputs
3	All other relevant appointments as per the Adjunct Appointment and Procedure Policy	Produce annually, a minimum of 0.5 ROUs DHET accredited publications/creative outputs

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

9.1 Research output performance of all academic categories under this policy will be evaluated annually as part of the university's performance appraisal processes.

9.2 Performance evaluations will consider both quantitative and qualitative aspects of research output, including the impact and contribution to the university's strategic goals.

9.3 Remedial measures and professional development opportunities may be provided to support academic staff in meeting their research output expectations.

10. Implementation and Review

10.1 This Research Output Expectation Policy shall be implemented university-wide from date approved by the university council.

10.2 Periodic reviews and adjustments will be conducted to ensure alignment with university strategic plan and evolving research standards.

11. Previous or Related Policies

This is a new policy but can be read in conjunction with the following policies:

11.1 Academic Staff Promotions Policy

11.2 Postdoctoral policy

11.3 Adjunct appointment policy and procedure

11.4 Policy on Joint - degrees with international universities

11.5 DUT Research and Innovation Blueprint 2021-2030

12. Conclusion

12.1 DUT is dedicated to nurturing a research-centric environment that empowers its academic staff to excel in their research endeavors.

12.2 By standardizing research output expectations across academic levels, DUT aims to contribute significantly to the achievement of its university strategic plan goals and enhance its position as a leader in research and innovation.

13. Next review date

13.1 The policy will review as per the DUT guidelines on the development of policies.

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