

Research Directorate Strategy

2024-2028

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1. Introduction

The Research Directorate's Strategic Plan for 2024-2028 aligns with the University's strategic goals, aiming to enhance research output, quality, and impact. This plan outlines practical, structured initiatives to support the University's mission and vision and foster a dynamic research environment.

2. Vision, Mission and Core values

2.1 **Vision:** To be a leading institution in research excellence, innovation, and societal impact.

2.2 **Mission:** To promote and support a research culture that advances knowledge, integrates research into teaching and learning, and contributes to community development.

2.3 **Core Values:**

2.3.1 **Integrity:** Ensuring honesty and ethical conduct in all research practices.

2.3.2 **Rigor:** Commitment to thoroughness, precision, and meticulousness in research methodologies and analysis.

2.3.3 **Transparency:** Openness in sharing research processes, data, and findings.

2.3.4 **Innovation:** Encouraging creativity and the pursuit of novel ideas and approaches.

2.3.5 **Collaboration:** Fostering teamwork and partnerships across disciplines, institutions, and borders.

3 Thematic Research Clusters and Associated Focus Areas

The university will adopt thematic research clusters to promote collaborative and interdisciplinary research. These clusters are designed to enhance institutional responsiveness to emerging societal needs and establish a foundation for research partnerships and community engagement.

Thematic Research Clusters:

1. Governance, Social Justice, and Public Policy
2. Innovation, Technology, and Artificial Intelligence
3. Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship
4. Health, Well-being, and Biomedical Sciences
5. Cultural Heritage, Arts, and Humanities
6. Educational Transformation and Pedagogy

Each cluster is divided into specific focus areas, as outlined below.

Cluster A: Governance, Social Justice, and Public Policy

- **Leadership and Change Management:** Developing effective leaders and managing organizational and societal change.
- **Social Justice, Ethics, and Law:** Exploring fairness, ethical conduct, and the rule of law.
- **Peace, Tolerance, and Inclusiveness:** Promoting peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive societies.

- **Public Policy Analysis and Impact:** Evaluating and improving public policies for societal benefit.

Cluster B: Innovation, Technology, and Artificial Intelligence

- **Emerging Technologies:** Assessing the impact and potential of new technologies.
- **Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning:** Exploring AI applications and ethical considerations.
- **Entrepreneurial Environments:** Fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **Cybersecurity and Data Privacy:** Ensuring the safety and privacy of digital information.
- **Technology-Driven Education:** Implementing technological advancements in educational settings.

Cluster C: Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship

- **Renewable Energy Solutions:** Researching sustainable energy sources and technologies.
- **Environmental Conservation:** Promoting conservation practices and policies.
- **Sustainable Business Practices:** Encouraging environmentally responsible business practices.
- **Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:** Developing strategies to combat and adapt to climate change.
- **Circular Economy:** Exploring sustainable production and consumption models.

Cluster D: Health, Well-being, and Biomedical Sciences

- **Preventive Healthcare:** Promoting practices and policies that prevent illness.
- **Biomedical Innovations:** Researching new technologies and methods in healthcare.
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** Addressing mental health issues and promoting psychological well-being.
- **Health Informatics:** Leveraging information technology to improve healthcare delivery.
- **Public Health and Epidemiology:** Studying the distribution and determinants of health and diseases.

Cluster E: Cultural Heritage, Arts, and Humanities

- **Historical and National Heritage:** Preserving and studying historical and cultural heritage.
- **Art, Culture, and Media:** Exploring the role of art, culture, and media in society.
- **Creative Industries:** Supporting and studying the creative industries, including media and the arts.
- **Socio-Cultural Dynamics:** Understanding the interactions within and between cultures.
- **Values and Traditions:** Examining the values and traditions that shape societies.

Cluster F: Educational Transformation and Pedagogy

- **Innovative Pedagogies:** Developing and implementing innovative teaching methods.
- **Educational Technologies:** Integrating technology into educational practices.
- **Inclusive Education:** Ensuring educational opportunities for all.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Promoting continuous education and skill development.
- **Educational Policy and Leadership:** Shaping and leading educational policies and practices.

4 SWOT:

This SWOT analysis was developed based on comprehensive insights gathered from the research committee members and meetings with faculty members, heads of departments, and deans. It aims to provide a detailed understanding of the university's research strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to guide strategic planning and enhance research productivity and impact.

Strengths:

1. **Efficient and Ambitious Faculty Members:**
The university boasts capable and highly motivated faculty members.
2. **Well-Equipped Library:**
The library is furnished with research databases and references spanning multiple disciplines.
3. **Research and Development Portal:**
A portal exists for reporting, monitoring, verifying, and analyzing faculty research outputs.
4. **Research Time Allocation Policy:**
Faculty members are allocated time specifically for conducting research.
5. **Course Release Policy for Research:**
Faculty members can be released from teaching duties to focus research projects.
6. **Research Encouraging Environment:**
The university fosters a research-friendly environment through competitive processes that reward outstanding research by faculty and students.
7. **Research Budget:**
There is a dedicated budget to fund and support research activities.

Weaknesses:

1. **Limited External Funds for Research:**
There is a scarcity of external funding for research initiatives.

2. Limited Faculty Efforts to Seek External Grants:

Faculty members show limited initiative in seeking external grants for their research.

3. Limited Research Facilities:

The university lacks advanced research facilities, particularly in vivo/in vitro scientific and clinical projects and AI.

Opportunities:

1. Collaborative Research Agreements:

Initiating agreements with national and international organizations will enable the university to enhance collaborative research efforts and foster stronger partnerships.

2. Enhanced Visibility and Collaboration:

Enhancing the university's website can significantly boost the visibility of its research output, attracting greater collaboration and funding opportunities.

Threats:

1. Competitive Research Environment:

The highly competitive research environment, both nationally and internationally, could influence the university's ranking and overall standing.

2. Low Research Productivity:

The threat of low research productivity poses a risk to the university's reputation and ranking, potentially impacting its standing and prestige.

5 PESTLE analysis

This PESTLE analysis of CUA offers a comprehensive evaluation of the external factors influencing the university's research activities. The insights were derived from discussions with research committee members, faculty members, heads of departments, and deans. The analysis highlights the political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors affecting CUA's research environment.

Political Factors:

1. Governmental and Non-Governmental Funds for Research:

- Receiving research grants from the governmental sector is challenging for private universities.
- Research funding is a competitive process that requires strong proposals addressing the development of new ideas or technologies.

2. Competition and University Ranking:

- Higher quality expectations from the CAA and the MOE have increased the time faculty members must dedicate to research.
- Criteria considered in ranking higher education institutions can affect the University's ranking.

Economic Factors:

1. Financial Factors:

- The competitiveness and challenging procedures for inquiring about research funds lead some faculty members to self-fund their research, which imposes a financial burden on them.

2. Research and Funded Training Courses by External Organizations:

- The current global economic status has negatively impacted available grants for research and training.
- Stricter eligibility criteria mean that research proposals are only accepted for funding if they directly benefit the funding organization.

Social Factors:

1. Academic Duties and Responsibilities:

- The heavy teaching load and administrative responsibilities of faculty members have reduced the time available for research, negatively impacting their research productivity.

2. • Recognition:

- The recognition and appraisal of researchers, along with financial stability, significantly affect research productivity and quality.

Technological Factors:

1. Available Research Databases and Specialized Software:

- Research productivity is directly proportional to research databases and software availability in respective research areas.

2. New Technology in Respective Research Areas:

- Research quality will be enhanced by updating and training faculty members on new technologies in their fields of research.

Legal Factors:

1. Employment Law and Contracts:

- Faculty members in their probation period and part-timers are not eligible for any research grants, funds, or awards from the university, which affect research productivity.

2. Research Policies and Procedures:

- The eligibility criteria for some policies deter faculty members from applying for research support funds.

Environmental Factors:

1. Internal Environment:

- Allocating more time for research for faculty members and limiting administrative duties, especially in the summer semesters, will increase research output.
- Encouraging faculty members to conduct research by increasing internal financial support and awards.

2. External Competitive Environment:

- University ranking criteria have been challenging, especially for new private institutes, due to increased competitiveness in research productivity among local and international universities.

6 Institutional Research Priorities

In light of comprehensive SWOT and PESTLE analyses, it is clear that the university's research strategy must evolve to address both internal and external challenges while capitalizing on existing strengths and opportunities. Our goal is to create a dynamic and supportive research environment that fosters innovation, encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, and enhances research productivity. By strategically focusing our efforts, we can significantly elevate the quality and impact of our research outputs, ensuring that the university remains at the forefront of academic and technological advancements.

Institutional Research Priorities:

1. Enhance External Funding Acquisition.
2. Invest in Advanced Research Facilities.
3. Promote Collaborative Research Initiatives.
4. Focus on Innovation and Technology Integration.
5. Increase Research Productivity and Quality.

7 Strategic Goals and Objectives

The Research Directorate aims to align with the university's strategic plan by enhancing research culture, governance, and productivity. Our goals include fostering interdisciplinary collaboration,

advancing innovative research initiatives, and ensuring robust governance structures to support high-quality research outputs. By prioritizing these objectives, we strive to create an environment that encourages academic excellence, attracts external funding, and elevates the university's reputation.

Table 7.1: Strategic research goals and objectives linked to CUA’s strategic goals and objectives

Institutional Goals	Institutional Objective	Research Goal	Research Objective	Action	KPI
Goal 2: Research Quality and Output: Increase research quality and output with a focus on integration into teaching, capacity building, innovation, and societal impact	Objective2.1: Conduct one session per semester for faculty to demonstrate at least one research-integrated teaching activity to institutionalize the best practice by 2026-27	Goal 1: Increase Research Output and Quality	Objective 1.1: Coordinate two faculty-led research seminars, scheduled twice per academic year, specifically emphasizing effectively integrating faculty research into teaching and contributing to curriculum development.	Collaborate with the research committee to coordinate two research seminars, emphasizing the integration of research into teaching and contributing to curriculum development.	Tool: Successful execution of research seminars showcasing two instances of effectively integrating research into teaching methodologies Target: Two seminars per academic year
			Objective 1.2: Enhance faculty involvement in high-impact research initiatives.	Implement research awards and recognition programs	Tool: Number of awards and recognitions given Target: At least 3 faculty members recognized annually
				Conduct annual workshops and research seminars	Tool: Number of workshops and seminars held Target:

					At least 3 workshops/seminars annually
				Provide funds for publication fees in high-impact journals	Tool: Number of funded Scopus publications Target: 5% increase in funded publications annually
Goal 2: Research Quality and Output: Increase research quality and output with a focus on integration into teaching, capacity building, innovation, and societal impact	Objective 2.3: Initiate, implement, and evaluate five capacity-building measures relevant to CUA by 2027-28.	Goal 2: Promote Research Culture and Capacity Building	Objective 2.1: Implement and assess one research-focused capacity-building initiative every academic year	Organize training sessions on research methodologies and grant writing	Tool: Number of training sessions held Target: At least one training session per academic year
				Host a networking event at City University Ajman to facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing among researchers, academics, and industry professionals.	Tool: The number of new collaborative arrangements for research projects, partnerships, and knowledge exchange. Target: At least one collaborative arrangement per academic year
				Provide funds for Students' research activities	Tool: Number of fund applications Target: Annual increase in the students' research expenditure.
				Organize training sessions on research	Tool:

				methodologies and academic writing	Number of training sessions held. Target: At least one training session per academic year.
Goal 2: Research Quality and Output: Increase research quality and output with a focus on integration into teaching, capacity building, innovation, and societal impact	Objective 2.4: Evaluate the effectiveness of five key elements of the research infrastructure at CUA that facilitate innovative research by 2027-28.	Goal 3: Enhance Research Infrastructure	Objective 3.1: Assess one research infrastructure element at City University Campus to improve user satisfaction within twelve months.	Evaluate the utilization of a specific research infrastructure element on campus.	Tool: To assess the utilization of available research infrastructure by faculty members and students through frequency measurements and feedback surveys. Target: Conclude the evaluation cycle by the end of the academic year.
				Allocate a budget for new equipment and facility upgrades	Tool: Annual expenditure report Target: 5% increase annually
Goal 2: Research Quality and Output: Increase research quality and output with a focus on integration into teaching, capacity building, innovation, and societal impact		Goal 4: Strengthen Research Governance and Administration	Objective 4.1: Develop the research activity plan through the Research Internal Review Board (RIRB)	Implement policies for research ethics and governance	Tool: Policy compliance Target: Annual increase in the percentage of approved Ethical clearance forms.
				Train faculty and staff on new research ethics policies	Tool: Number of training sessions conducted Target: At least one training/orientation

					session per academic year
			Objective 4.2: Ensure compliance with national and international research standards	Regularly update research policies to align with regulatory requirements	Tool: Policy review record Target: Annual policy updates
			Objective 4.3: Increase visibility and dissemination of research findings	Present research findings at national and international conferences	Tool: Number of conference presentations Target: 5% annual increase in conference presentations
				Publish research outcomes in high-impact journals	Tool: Number of publications in Scopus-indexed journals Target: 5% annual increase in Scopus-indexed journals
Goal 7: Internationalization: Implement a comprehensive internationalization strategy including but not limited to international program accreditation, faculty exchange, student exchange, study abroad, dual degree programs, and collaborative research.	Objective 7.5: Establish five international research partnerships per College, leading to an observable increase in research output and contributing to the university's academic	Goal 5: External Collaborations and Partnerships	Objective 5.1: Establish international research partnerships	Formalize agreements with leading universities and research institutions	Tool: Number of formalized agreements Target: 5 new partnerships by 2028
				Develop joint research initiatives with international partners	Tool: Number of joint research projects Target:

	reputation by 2028				At least 2 joint initiatives annually
Goal 2: Research Quality and Output: Increase research quality and output with a focus on integration into teaching, capacity building, innovation, and societal impact	Objectives 2.2 : Increase external funding by 5% each year for the next five years starting AY 2023-24	Goal 6: Enhance the university's competitiveness in securing research grants and funding from external sources.	Objective 6.1: Enable and support faculty members in identifying, applying for, and securing external funding for their research projects and related activities	Promote opportunities for external grants through workshops and communications	Tools: Workshop attendance and feedback Target: At least one workshop per academic year
				Disseminate information to faculty members about external funding opportunities for research from various entities.	Tool: Maintain a record of the number of faculty members who applied for external funding and the success rate following the information dissemination. Target: 5% Annual increase number of applications submitted.

8 Budget

CUA has allocated a five-year research budget following its 2024-28 strategic plan. This budget reflects a comprehensive analysis that incorporates upcoming program launches, faculty recruitment, future enrollment expectations, proposed fee adjustments, and operational costs.

9 Monitoring and Evaluation

The initial phase involves establishing precise and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each strategic goal and objective. These KPIs encompass clear actions, measurement tools, and targets that undergo regular monitoring. The outcomes are integrated into the Tactical Operational Plans (TOPs) overseen by the Research Directorate.

Furthermore, an annual progress report is shared with the management, detailing advancements toward goals and highlighting areas requiring attention. This report is complemented by a critical self-evaluation, which comprehensively analyzes research outcomes across all university colleges, facilitating continuous improvement and strategic alignment.

10 Conclusion

This strategic plan for 2024-2028 provides a clear and actionable roadmap for enhancing the University's research capabilities. By focusing on infrastructure, output, governance, culture, and collaborations, the University will achieve its vision of research excellence and societal impact.