



**UniMAC**  
UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

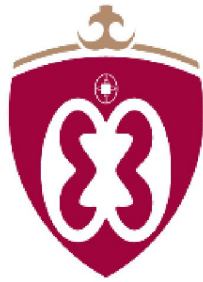
# BULLETIN

## RESEARCH POLICY

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## **RESEARCH POLICY**

**SEPTEMBER, 2025**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

High-quality research is critical to the University of Media, Arts and Communication's mission to advance knowledge, address societal challenges, and contribute to Ghana's national development and global scholarship. The Research Policy provides a comprehensive framework to guide all research activities undertaken by staff, students, and collaborators of UniMAC. The Research Policy is grounded in global practices and aligned with national development priorities. It also articulates the commitment of the university to foster an innovative, ethical, and digitally enabled research environment. It further addresses traditional research priorities while embracing emerging trends such as artificial intelligence, open science, big data, and digital research tools to enhance research impact and visibility.

### **Objectives**

The research policy seeks to:

- i. Promote a vibrant, inclusive, and innovative research culture aligned with national and global standards.
- ii. Uphold the highest ethical and professional standards in all research activities.
- iii. Encourage interdisciplinary and collaborative research that influences policy, drives social transformation, and responds to industry needs
- iv. Integrate digital technologies, AI, and open science practices across the research lifecycle.
- v. Build sustainable institutional research capacity through infrastructure, funding, and professional development.
- vi. Strengthen research dissemination, knowledge translation, and intellectual property protection.

### **Scope**

The policy applies to all members of the university community engaged in research, including faculty, staff, students, visiting researchers, and collaborators, across all institutes, and affiliated research entities.

### **Key provisions**

- i. **Research Agenda:** Alignment with national development plans, international frameworks, and the strategic vision of the university.
- ii. **Research Ethics:** Establishment of a Research Ethics Review Board (RERB) to ensure ethical compliance
- iii. **Digital Transformation:** Adoption of AI, digital tools, and open science practices to improve research quality and competitiveness.

- iv. **Capacity Building:** Professional development, mentorship, and infrastructure investment to improve research productivity.
- v. **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):** Commitment to inclusive participation and accessibility in research
- vi. **Monitoring and Review:** A strategic, participatory approach to implementation, supported by measurable indicators and regular policy reviews.

Through structured governance, dedicated resources, and a culture of innovation, UniMAC will strengthen its position as a leading institution for research in media, arts, and communication.

## **PREAMBLE**

The University of Media, Arts and Communication recognizes research as a cornerstone of academic excellence, societal transformation, and sustainable development. In a rapidly evolving global knowledge economy, characterized by digital innovation, emerging technologies, and complex socio-economic challenges, research must be ethical, inclusive, and impactful. This research policy provides the guiding framework for all research-related activities within UniMAC. It reflects the vision of the university to become a leading hub for world-class, ethically sound, and digitally empowered research in media, arts, and communication, and allied disciplines.

Anchored in the core values of integrity, innovation, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, and social relevance, the policy outlines the principles, structures, and procedures that will:

- i. Ensure research excellence and ethical compliance.
- ii. Encourage interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches.
- iii. Integrate digital tools and emerging technologies into the research process.
- iv. Support the dissemination and translation of research for public benefit.

By institutionalising these standards, UniMAC commits to fostering a research culture that not only meets national needs but also contributes to global scholarship and innovation.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AI	-	Artificial Intelligence
AU	-	African Union
DMP	-	Data Management Plan
DRID	-	Directorate of Research, Innovation and Development
EDI	-	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
IP	-	Intellectual Property
IT	-	Information Technology
MoU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
ORCID	-	Open Researcher and Contributor ID
RERB	-	Research Ethics Review Board
SDGs	-	Sustainable Development Goals
UniMAC	-	University of Media, Arts and Communication

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The development of the Research Policy for the university was made possible through collaborative efforts of stakeholders across the university. We extend appreciation to the members of the Research and Ethics Draft Committee, University Management, and all who provided valuable insights during consultations. Their collective contributions have been instrumental in shaping a policy that reflects both global best practices and the research context of the university.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Globally, universities are mandated to vigorously engage in research, teaching, knowledge production, scholarship, and innovation. Universities increasingly face external and internal pressure due to changing social needs. Indeed, the transition towards a knowledge-based economy, classification of higher education, and integration and adoption of Information Technology (IT) into the academic environment have placed much greater responsibility on universities than ever before. Like any other developing nation, Ghana urgently requires universities to lead high-quality research to generate evidence-based data required to effectively inform the development of various programmes, policies, and projects for various sectors of the economy. There are concerns regarding the current research environment in Ghana. Underfunding, donor-driven research, fragmentation, and duplications appear to characterise the current research environment, in addition to the haphazard use of research findings to inform national programming and policy. The current situation is mainly attributable to the lack of a national research agenda.

In addition, the emergence of the digital economy, the rise of artificial intelligence, open science, big data, and synthetic media have significantly transformed the research landscape. This Research Policy, therefore, seeks not only to address traditional research priorities but also to position UniMAC as a digitally empowered, globally recognised research-intensive university that contributes to solving complex development and media-related challenges.

## **2.0 Goal**

To establish the University of Media, Arts and Communication as a leading institution for conducting world-class, ethically sound, and digitally empowered research that addresses national development needs and contributes to global scholarship.

## **3.0 Objectives**

The specific objectives of this Research Policy are to:

- i. Promote a vibrant, innovative, and inclusive research culture that aligns with national development plans, international priorities, and the University's strategic goals.
- ii. Ensure adherence to ethical and professional standards in all research activities conducted by staff, students, and collaborators of the University.
- iii. Foster interdisciplinary, collaborative, and impactful research that translates into evidence-based programming, policy influence, and social transformation.

- iv. Support the integration of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and open science practices across the research lifecycle to enhance quality, visibility, and global competitiveness.
- v. Build and sustain institutional research capacity through investments in infrastructure, digital tools, faculty development, and funding support.
- vi. Strengthen systems for research dissemination, knowledge translation, intellectual property protection, and institutional visibility through strategic communication, publications and public engagement

#### **4.0 Scope**

This policy applies to all University community members involved in research, including faculty, staff, students, and visiting researchers, as well as collaborators, partners and affiliated institutions engaged in joint research with UniMAC.

#### **5.0 Definitions**

- i. **Research:** This relates to any form of disciplined investigation or inquiry conducted by employees and students that is intended to contribute to a body of knowledge or theory. All activities and knowledge exchanges such as public engagement may also be classified as research, provided they involve conducting inquiries and other research activities.
- ii. **Researcher:** An individual who engages in research activities on their own and/or on behalf of the University as an employee, or as a registered student of the University. It also includes honorary employees, part-time employees, visiting staff from other institutions and organisations, and all those conducting or supervising research at or for the University.
- iii. **Research ethics:** This relates to the application of ethical guidelines and principles to the conduct of research. Ethical principles and guidelines must be observed by staff and students at the University at every stage of their research (e.g., idea conception and design, identification and use of literature, data collection and analysis, to dissemination, archiving of research materials, etc.).
- iv. **Research budget:** This involves a written document which contains all costs (both direct and indirect costs) associated with a proposed research project. The research budget also spells out the project tasks, timelines and milestones and the actual resources and costs (including contingencies) required to complete these. The budget is prepared considering the requirements by funding agencies and the University policy.

- v. **Research ethics review:** This consists of a review of the ethics and trust issues associated with the conduct of research activities and how the researchers will address those ethical issues. All researchers are responsible for self-evaluating the ethical implications of all their research activities. Again, the University has a duty to review research plans and proposals and approve same before commencing research activities.
- vi. **Research Ethics Review Board:** This refers to a committee set up by the University to review all ethical issues associated with research projects before they start. The review aims to offer opinions on the ethical aptness of the proposed research and, where appropriate, to provide suggestions to improve its ethical status.
- vii. **Research integrity:** This relates to fulfilling the ethical, legal and professional standards and obligations required by stakeholders, including statutory and regulatory authorities, employers and funders. To promote research integrity, all researchers are expected to involve research ethics boards and legal professionals throughout the stages of their research activities.
- viii. **Collaborative research:** This refers to research activities planned and executed by a team or group of researchers at the University, an individual(s), or groups from the University working with other researchers who are outside the University.
- ix. **Policy priority:** This relates to the most critical idea or issue that the University will consider as a basis for research decision-making. It describes the core areas that will inform the University's foundation for developing research strategies within a clearly defined period.
- x. **Digital research tools:** Any software or platform (e.g., NVivo, R, SPSS, Turnitin, Grammarly, ChatGPT, etc.) used to facilitate the conduct of research, including data analysis, referencing, writing assistance, simulation, and visualisation.
- xi. **Artificial Intelligence (AI) in research:** The use of machine learning tools or large language models (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard, Claude) in idea generation, hypothesis formulation, text generation, data analysis, coding, or review processes. Such use must be disclosed and comply with ethical standards.
- xii. **Digital Repository:** A platform or system for storing, preserving, and disseminating the scholarly outputs of the University in electronic format.
- xiii. **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):** A commitment to ensure equal access and opportunities for all individuals, and the fair treatment of underrepresented

groups in research regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or academic background.

## 6.0 Policy statement

- i. The University of Media, Arts and Communication is committed to creating an effective environment for staff, students and collaborators to engage in knowledge generation and dissemination, translation and utilisation of research findings that inform national programming and policy and also address international priority areas.
- ii. The university strives to create and support the highest standards of research integrity in all aspects of its research. Research integrity relates to both the scientific integrity of the conducted research and the professional integrity of researchers. Integral to this commitment to research integrity is the implementation of a culture that promotes robust and transparent research ethical standards.
- iii. The University further recognises the transformative role of digital technologies in the research initiative and is committed to embedding digital competencies, tools, and infrastructure into its research environment. This includes the ethical adoption of AI, open access repositories, research data management systems, and support for digital humanities and computational research.
- iv. The purpose of this policy is to spell out the research expectations, ethical standards, processes and procedures that govern the conduct of research activities by staff and students of the University. This policy document seeks to standardise processes with respect to the conduct of research in the University.

## 7.0 Guiding Principles for Research Policy

The following principles guide the implementation of the policy:

- i. **Alignment with national priorities:** All research conducted by UniMAC staff and students shall be aligned with national research priorities detailed in the Long-term National Development Plan of Ghana (2018-2057), Ghana National Spatial Development Framework (2015-2035), Ghana's Digital Transformation Agenda and other national policies and strategies.
- ii. **Alignment with international priorities:** All research conducted by staff and students shall also consider international development priorities such as the Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030), the African Union's Agenda 2063, and ECOWAS Vision 2050.

- iii. **Alignment with the University's research agenda:** All research conducted by staff and students shall be aligned with the research agenda of the University.
- iv. **Ethical considerations:** All research conducted by staff and students shall be guided by the university's ethical guidelines and in line with international standards.
- v. **Collaboration and coordination:** The University will promote collaborative research conducted by researchers from different disciplines, across various sectors, and by both local and external collaborators. The policy also ensures proper coordination among researchers to prevent fragmentation and reduce the duplication of research efforts.
- vi. **Translation to policy and programming:** All research outputs of the University should be extensively disseminated, and all efforts should be made to ensure that relevant stakeholders can access all research findings to inform national policy and programming.
- vii. **Equity:** The University will advocate commitment to addressing the problems of vulnerable and marginalised populations and ensure that research outcomes benefit all categories of persons regardless of sex, age, education, ethnicity, religion and disability.
- viii. **Research group:** Staff members will be encouraged to form research working groups to undertake research projects in response to critical national interest issues.
- ix. **Digital innovation and transformation:** All research activities should embrace and leverage digital tools, platforms, and innovations to enhance research design, execution, collaboration, dissemination, and impact. The University will promote the responsible adoption of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, digital libraries, virtual research environments, and computational tools.
- x. **Commitment to transparency, accountability, and open access:** The University upholds the principle of transparency and accountability in all research processes. Researchers are encouraged to make their research data, methods, and findings openly accessible where possible, and to comply with open science practices that foster reproducibility, credibility, and public trust.
- xi. **Responsible use of artificial intelligence and data technologies:** The University recognises the growing role of AI and data-driven technologies in research. Researchers are required to use such tools ethically and responsibly, ensuring that outputs generated by AI are correctly attributed, biases are mitigated, and data privacy standards are upheld.

## **8.0 Policy Priority Areas**

### **8.1 Priority Area 1: Research agenda**

The University shall have a research agenda to promote research, teaching, knowledge production, scholarship and innovation in line with national programmes, policies, international priorities and the vision of the University. Faculties, schools and departments/centres should develop their own research agendas in line with the University's research agenda. Research agendas at all levels should be time-bound, specific, and consistent with changing needs in society. The research agenda shall also highlight cross-cutting themes such as digital communication, climate change, artificial intelligence and culture, misinformation and media ethics, gender and inclusivity, and the creative economy. The University shall institute measures to build capacity to pursue its research agenda.

### **8.2 Priority Area 2: Research ethics principles**

The University shall ensure that all research conducted by staff, students and their collaborators is conducted in line with the highest ethical standards and in accordance with the legal and regulatory requirements of Ghana and/or the country where the research is being conducted. The University shall have a policy on research ethics which shall be observed by the staff, students, and their collaborators when conducting research. There shall also be a Research Ethics Review Board to oversee the implementation of the policy on research ethics. The RERB shall approve all research conducted by staff and graduate students before proceeding.

### **8.3 Priority Area 3: Research collaboration**

- i. The University shall provide the necessary support to facilitate collaborative research across disciplines, institutions, and sectors. Collaborative research describes the research activities planned and executed by a team or group of researchers from within the University, and/or in partnership with external stakeholders including academia, government, industry, media and civil society organisations.
- ii. Collaboration shall be central to UniMAC's research culture, enabling the co-creation of knowledge, interdisciplinary innovation, and translation of research into policy, practice, and commercial products.
- iii. Collaborators must define roles and responsibilities at the start of any project. All parties are encouraged to clearly outline expectations, contributions, authorship, timelines, intellectual property, data ownership, and dispute resolution mechanisms before project initiation.
- iv. Collaborative research may take the following forms:

### **8.3.1 Mentorship and Supervision**

Mentorship is an essential aspect of collaborative research. Senior researchers, including academic supervisors, are expected to guide junior researchers through the entire research process.

Mentors must:

- i. Establish a supportive and ethical research environment.
- ii. Clarify roles and expectations at the start of the research collaboration.
- iii. Promote the academic and professional development of mentees.
- iv. Encourage sound research practices and critical thinking.

Mentees (students or early-career researchers) must:

- i. Complete assigned tasks diligently.
- ii. Respect research protocols and guidance.
- iii. Honour authorship agreements and academic integrity.

### **8.3.2 Authorship and Attribution**

Authorship in collaborative research must reflect actual intellectual and practical contributions.

- i. Authorship must be based on substantial input in the conception, design, execution, analysis, and/or drafting of the research.
- ii. General supervision or provision of funding does not qualify for authorship.
- iii. The order of authorship must be agreed upon early in the collaboration, based on contribution, responsibility, and accountability.
- iv. Misassignment of authorship or exclusion of rightful contributors is a breach of academic integrity and shall be sanctioned.
- v. Contributors who do not meet authorship criteria must be acknowledged appropriately.
- vi. All co-authors must review and approve manuscripts prior to submission.

### **8.3.3 Industry Partnerships**

UniMAC recognises the strategic importance of industry collaboration in enhancing the relevance, applicability and impact of its research.

The University shall:

- i. Foster partnerships with media houses, technology companies, communication agencies, arts collectives, government bodies, and creative industries to co-design research projects.

- ii. Encourage research internships, field projects, and consultancy work that respond to industry challenges.
- iii. Develop formal agreements (e.g., MoUs) with industry partners that outline expectations, IP arrangements, and funding responsibilities.
- iv. Facilitate joint research centres or innovation hubs that align with national development and digital transformation agendas.
- v. Support co-publication and co-supervision arrangements with industry professionals and practitioners, where appropriate.

All industry collaboration shall be governed by clear ethics, data use, and IP clauses in compliance with University policies.

#### **8.3.4 Conflict Resolution**

Disputes among research collaborators should be handled:

- i. First, through internal dialogue and collegial negotiation.
- ii. Second, by seeking the guidance of senior colleagues or faculty research coordinators.
- iii. If unresolved, a formal complaint may be lodged with the DRID or the University's Research Ethics Review Board, which shall establish a mediation panel.
- iv. Where internal resolution fails, parties may seek external arbitration or legal recourse in accordance with the laws of the country.

#### **8.3.5 Digital Collaboration Platforms**

To facilitate collaboration, the University encourages the use of digital platforms such as:

- i. Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Workspace (for communication and document sharing).
- ii. ResearchGate, Academia.edu, Mendeley (for scholarly engagement).
- iii. Collaborative coding and data platforms (e.g., GitHub, Overleaf, REDCap).

Training will be provided for staff and students to ensure effective use of these tools in both local and international research projects.

#### **8.4 Priority area 4: Research and publication**

- i. The University shall create and support an environment that promotes a culture of research and publication. Faculty members shall be supported to publish in high-impact, peer-reviewed journals.

- ii. Staff are encouraged to publish open access when feasible and to utilise preprint repositories, such as ArXiv or SSRN, where applicable.
- iii. Publications must avoid predatory journals. The DRID will periodically update the list of credible journals and provide resources (e.g., ThinkCheckSubmit) for verifying outlets.
- iv. Researchers are encouraged to maximise visibility by:
  - a. Using institutional affiliation and UniMAC email address in all publications.
  - b. Registering ORCID IDs.
  - c. Ensuring research outputs are deposited in UniMAC's institutional digital repository.
  - d. Tracking research impact using bibliometric tools (e.g., Scopus, Google Scholar, Altmetrics).
- v. The use of AI tools in writing, data analysis or editorial assistance must be disclosed in a statement within the publication or submission. The University shall issue guidance on such disclosures.

#### **8.5 Priority area 5: Research seminar series**

- i. As part of efforts to create a vibrant research culture, the University will conduct a research seminar series. The exercise aims to promote open and dynamic discourse among faculty members. This exercise will also provide the necessary avenues for faculty members to share their final findings for peer review. It will again enable faculty members to share their research work (in progress or completed) for suggestions and comments from colleagues to improve the final research outputs.
- ii. The Directorate of Research, Innovation and Development (DRID) shall set the modalities for organising research seminars on behalf of the University. The DRID shall have the right to invite other experts from outside the University to present papers on relevant areas in line with the research agenda and vision of the University. Nonetheless, various faculties and schools are encouraged to be part of the organisation of the research seminars actively. To aid this, there shall be Research Seminar and Publications Officers at the various faculties/schools/centres who will, among others, work with the head of departments (HoDs) to identify presenters for the Research Seminar Series; moderate the Research Seminar Presentations at the Faculty; monitor the research activities of faculty members; and collate new and recent publications of faculty members on behalf of the faculties/schools.

- iii. The position of Research Seminar and Publications shall be undertaken on a voluntary basis but shall count for community service. Seminars shall form an essential part of the postgraduate programmes.

## **8.6 Priority area 6: Partnership and Intellectual Property Management**

### **8.6.1. Partnership**

- i. The University will enter into partnerships with any legally acceptable agencies for research. Partnership here refers to any form of collaboration in which the University partners another institution that is offering funding for research, data for the research, personnel for the research, and necessary facilities, such as studios, arts centres and laboratories for the research.

### **8.6.2 Intellectual Property Management**

- i. The University will establish partnerships for research with legally acceptable agencies, offering funding, facilities, and personnel.
- ii. Digital agreements shall include clauses on data protection, cybersecurity, and digital copyright where relevant.
- iii. Intellectual property shall be managed by a designated UniMAC Intellectual Property Office.
- iv. UniMAC's IP Policy shall cover digital content such as podcasts, video lectures, e-learning platforms, AI-generated creative works, digital tools, media scripts, and synthetic content developed during funded research.
- v. All research-related IP must be declared and evaluated for commercialisation or protection.

## **8.7 Priority area 7: Research and consultancy services and community outreach**

- i. The University shall implement measures to promote research and consultancy culture and community outreach. This is intended to enable staff to obtain practical experience in conducting research and consultancy services that address development challenges and society's general well-being.
- ii. Similarly, the university encourages other professional activities undertaken by academic or academic-related staff members with other organisations consistent with the established policies of the University. A Research and Consultancy Services and Community Outreach Advisory Committee shall be established.

- iii. The University encourages any member of staff involved in any form of consultancy to declare the contract. Individual and group consultancy services outside staff activities shall be supported in line with the policies of the University.
- iv. The University shall also support departmental consultancy services and community outreach activities that occur using University facilities. It shall encourage staff members to develop and implement practical annual outreach activities. Staff members are encouraged to create a yearly calendar for outreach activities. Staff members will be allowed to use university facilities to promote the dissemination of research findings to various stakeholders as part of their community outreach activities.
- v. As much as possible, staff members shall be allowed to engage various organisations through the cooperating social responsibility window to undertake outreach activities and try to expose students to outreach services.
- vi. Consultancy projects using digital methods (e.g., surveys, virtual focus groups, data visualisation) are encouraged.

### **8.8 Priority area 8: Staff professional development**

- i. The University shall ensure that there is sustainable research capacity and knowledge to conduct research in line with the national development agenda, global development goals, and the university's research agenda.
- ii. The university shall support capacity building in research and consultancy development and research/project management.
- iii. There shall be conscious efforts on the part of the university to improve research infrastructure.
- iv. The university shall also support faculty members and researchers who attend conferences (both local and international) in line with clearly defined modalities established by the University.
- v. A key priority shall be equipping staff with digital research skills, including data analysis software, AI tools, digital storytelling, coding, and content creation.
- vi. Staff shall be supported to attend training on open science, research impact measurement, digital publishing, and ethics in AI.
- vii. DRID will organise annual capacity-building workshops and partner with international bodies for training exchanges.

### **8.9 Priority area 9: Acquisition and management of data**

- i. The University thrives on ethically sound collection and management of data. All researchers are expected to collect research data in a way devoid of harm or injure to participants. All research data should be collected in an honest and

truth way to guarantee its reliability. Data collected in a truthful way means that after the data is collected there is no attempt to manipulate, alter or falsify it in any way which might adversely influence the findings.

- ii. All data collected by researchers shall be owned, retained and stored by them. However, all data collected by researchers on behalf of the University, or any other entity shall be owned, retained and stored by the University or the entity involved. Access to such data shall not be shared with any third party including the public without an explicit authorization from the University or the entity involved.
- iii. For collaborative research, researchers must decide the person to take custody of collected data; methodology for data collection; ways to store collected data; how to safeguard accuracy of collected data and ensure accuracy of the findings; and time frame for data storage after completing the research project.
- iv. The University shall adopt a Research Data Management Policy that guides staff and students in data storage, metadata tagging, digital backups, and access control.
- v. Researchers shall be required to submit Data Management Plans (DMPs) for funded projects.
- vi. Open data principles are encouraged where applicable, provided privacy and consent protocols are upheld.

The University shall allow the use of its data for various reasons including reinforcing open scientific investigation; promoting new research; developing and/or testing new or alternative hypotheses and methods; fostering diversity of analysis and opinion; supporting research on refining data collection methods and measurement; facilitating training of new researchers; and in the interest of national security. In all cases, the source of such data should be the University.

### **8.10 Priority areas 10: Digital research transformation**

The University acknowledges that the digital revolution has transformed the research ecosystem. Accordingly, it shall:

- i. Develop and maintain institutional repositories and research dashboards.
- ii. Encourage the use of digital libraries, open-access platforms, and indexing services.
- iii. Provide researchers with access to licensed digital research tools and AI assistants.
- iv. Establish a Digital Research Hub under DRID for experimentation with new technologies such as machine learning, digital ethnography, and multimedia research methods.
- v. Promote computational research in media, communication, journalism, arts, and related fields.

- vi. Integrate digital ethics, data privacy, and cybersecurity awareness into research planning and execution.

All AI use in research at UniMAC shall be governed by the Plagiarism and Artificial Intelligence policy of the university. Researchers must comply with the disclosure requirements, citation, ethical use, and prohibited-use provisions outlined in that policy. This requirement applies to all members of the university community engaged in research.

### **8.11 Priority area 11: Student research supervision**

All research conducted by students at the University shall be carried out under the supervision of faculty members. In all cases, no student shall conduct research as an academic requirement without supervision by a faculty member. The allocation of students to supervisors shall be carried out as described in the appropriate policies and guidelines established by the University. Supervisor allocation shall be determined based on the expertise and experience of faculty members. Less experienced faculty members should be allowed to gain supervisory experience, and their contributions to supervision should be formally acknowledged. Appropriate compensation shall be awarded to all faculty members participating in student research supervision. The University shall provide guidelines for postgraduate and undergraduate student research. The guidelines shall describe the requirements for conducting and supervising student research. Issues on the management of supervisor-student relationships for smooth supervision shall be captured in the guidelines. The following issues are critical to student research supervision:

- i. Supervisors of student research shall play their supervisory role at all stages of the research process, including problem identification and definition of research objectives, data collection, data analysis, report drafting, report finalisation, submission of final work, and generation of manuscripts for publication.
- ii. Supervisors and their students should agree on the communication mode to use throughout the supervision period. Supervisors can guide supervisees in selecting research topics, but all students must choose their own research topics.
- iii. Where there is a conflict of interest between a supervisor and his/her student, the supervisor or student shall formally declare such conflict of interest, and a different supervisor shall be assigned.
- iv. Supervisors of student research are to be provided with training appropriate to their role.
- v. Records of supervision shall be available from the start of supervision to the submission of the final research work.

- vi. Supervisors are to regularly meet with their students to discuss matters related to research work. Each student has the right to considerable supervision from their supervisors. Where a supervisor's record of supervision is poor or where his or her students have regularly failed to submit or complete their project work, dissertation, or thesis, the University shall bar that individual from further supervision for two academic years. This decision shall only be taken upon the recommendation of an appropriate investigative committee established by the University.
- vii. Supervisors have the right to request their students to provide them with raw data obtained from the field prior to submission of the final project work, dissertation, or thesis.
- viii. Supervisors must ensure that students under their supervision conduct research in an ethically sound manner. Supervisors are required to advise and vet all activities of their students at every stage of the research process to ensure sanity and protect the integrity of the University.
- ix. Undergraduate project work and MA dissertation supervision shall be performed by only one supervisor in each case, in line with the policies and procedures set forth by the School of Graduate Studies and Research.
- x. PhD and MPhil thesis supervision shall be performed by two supervisors (a principal supervisor and a co-supervisor) in each case, in line with the policies and procedures set forth by the School of Graduate Studies. Whenever the need arises, the School of Graduate Studies shall constitute a three-member thesis committee to oversee the supervision of a PhD thesis, depending on the availability of experts and the uniqueness of the research study.
- xi. Supervisors shall assess undergraduate project work and MA dissertations in line with existing policies and procedures.
- xii. For PhD and MPhil dissertations and theses, assessment shall be conducted by internal and external examiners in line with the policies and procedures set forth by the School of Graduate Studies and Research. PhD and MPhil candidates shall be required to orally defend their research work before a panel set up by the University as stipulated in the policies and procedures of the School of Graduate Studies and Research. The School of Graduate Studies and Research shall establish the guidelines for PhD and MPhil examinations.
- xiii. All final undergraduate and postgraduate research together with the records of supervision shall be signed by the students and their supervisors before submission to the appropriate office.
- xiv. All final undergraduate and postgraduate theses shall be submitted electronically via a designated research submission portal and checked with plagiarism software.
- xv. Students must disclose any use of AI in their research process, whether for language support, literature search, data cleaning, or summarisation.

## **8.12 Revised Priority Area 12: Research Funding and Sustainability**

UniMAC recognises that sustainable funding is essential for fostering a vibrant research culture, attracting and retaining high-calibre researchers, and producing outputs that contribute to global scholarship and national development. The University will adopt a dual approach to research funding that provides *upfront* support for research activities, *post-completion* incentives for high-quality outputs, and *long-term strategies* to ensure continuity and growth in research investment.

### **8.12.1 Faculty Research Funding Support**

To stimulate high-quality, impactful research, UniMAC shall provide funding support to faculty members through competitive internal grant schemes. Funding will be available for activities such as:

- i. Pilot or seed research projects with potential to attract external funding.
- ii. Fieldwork, data collection, and research assistantship costs.
- iii. Participation in academic conferences and workshops to present research findings.
- iv. Publication fees, particularly for open-access and high-impact journals.
- v. Acquisition of specialised research equipment, software, or datasets.

Calls for proposals will be issued annually by the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Development (DRID). Applications will be assessed on merit, alignment with UniMAC's strategic research priorities, potential for publication and societal impact, and adherence to the University's research ethics requirements. Priority will be given to early-career researchers, interdisciplinary teams, and projects that demonstrate strong potential to contribute to Ghana's national development goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **8.12.2 Research Output Incentive Scheme**

UniMAC shall establish a Research Output Incentive Scheme to reward faculty members for producing high-quality, original research outputs that advance the University's strategic priorities. Qualifying outputs may include peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, book chapters, and refereed conference proceedings. All claims must be supported by a written justification detailing the originality, methodology, contribution to scholarship, and target audience of the work, along with an unequivocal declaration that no part of the work was plagiarised or published elsewhere. Claims will be assessed by DRID in accordance with the University's Research Incentive Guidelines.

The incentive scheme shall be reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with national and institutional research priorities, budgetary provisions, and quality assurance requirements.

### **8.12.3 Sustainable Funding Framework**

To ensure long-term viability of research funding, UniMAC will:

- i. Actively pursue external funding from national and international agencies, development partners, industry, and philanthropic sources.
- ii. Establish strategic partnerships with government, private sector, and civil society for co-funded research initiatives.
- iii. Explore endowment funds, alumni contributions, and income-generating activities to support research priorities.
- iv. Promote transparent financial management and regular audits to ensure funds are used effectively.
- v. Develop multi-year funding plans to guarantee continuity for large-scale and long-term research projects.

### **9.0 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)**

The University is committed to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion in research. This involves:

- i. Ensuring balanced research participation across gender, age, ability, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- ii. Incorporating inclusive research topics and marginalised voices in scholarship.
- iii. Ensuring all research spaces are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- iv. Addressing digital divides in research access and participation.
- v. Supporting female-led and minority-led research groups.

### **10.0 Policy Implementation, Monitoring, and Review**

To ensure that this Research Policy translates from intent into practice, the University shall adopt a strategic, accountable, and participatory implementation approach supervised by the DRID, in collaboration with relevant University units.

### **11.0 Implementation Strategy**

The following actions shall guide the implementation of this policy:

1. Establishment of a Research Policy Implementation Committee (RPIC) under the DRID, comprising representatives from faculties, schools, centres, and administrative units. The RPIC shall coordinate rollout and oversee progress.
2. Development of an Operational Plan that outlines:
  - i. Specific deliverables and timelines for each policy priority area
  - ii. Assigned responsibilities to units and officers
  - iii. Budget requirements and resource mobilisation strategies

- iv. Partnerships and collaboration needs
- 3. Institutional Orientation and Sensitisation:
  - University-wide awareness sessions for faculty, students, and partners
  - Departmental research briefings
  - Online access to the policy, templates, and guidelines
- 4. Integration into Performance Management:
  - Research expectations embedded in annual work plans
  - Performance reviews to include research output, collaboration, and mentoring
- 5. Digitisation of Research Processes:
  - Online ethics review system
  - Digital repository and research dashboard
  - Research grant application and tracking platform
- 6. Faculty/ Department-level Research Action Plans:
  - Faculties and departments shall develop their own annual research plans aligned with the University's agenda and policy priorities.

## 12.0 Monitoring Strategy

The RPIC and DRID shall monitor implementation using the following indicators:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Key Indicators</b>
Research Output	Number of peer-reviewed publications, creative works, policy briefs, and patents
Capacity Building	Number of staff trained, seminars held, mentorships conducted
Ethics Compliance	Number of RERB approvals, reported breaches, and audits conducted.
Funding	Number and value of internal/external grants secured
Collaboration	Number of partnerships (local and international), joint projects
Digital Integration	Use of digital tools, repository deposits, and open-access publications
EDI	Gender balance in research, inclusion of underrepresented groups
Industry Engagement	Number of industry-funded projects, co-authored outputs

Each Faculty/Department will submit annual implementation reports to DRID using standard templates. These reports shall be compiled into a university-wide Annual Research Report, which shall be shared with Management.

### **13.0 Policy Review Strategy**

To ensure relevance and responsiveness:

- i. Annual Review: DRID shall conduct a light annual review based on monitoring data and stakeholder feedback to make minor updates or adjustments.
- ii. Mid-Term Evaluation: A comprehensive internal assessment of the policy's implementation, outcomes, and challenges shall be undertaken at the midpoint of the policy cycle. This will inform necessary modifications and capacity improvements.
- iii. Full Policy Review: The policy shall be comprehensively reviewed and updated at the end of five years. The review will include:
  - a. External peer review or benchmarking with similar institutions
  - b. Stakeholder consultation (faculty, students, partners)
  - c. Integration of new global research trends (e.g., AI, open science, climate research)

### **14.0 Conclusion**

The University of Media, Arts, and Communication remains committed to building a vibrant, ethical, inclusive, and digitally responsive research environment that contributes meaningfully to national development and global scholarship. This Research Policy provides a comprehensive framework to guide research priorities, practices, partnerships, and professional development across the University over the next five years. It aligns with national goals, international commitments, and the dynamic changes in the global research and technological landscape. Effective implementation of this policy depends on the collective commitment of all stakeholders, including academic staff, researchers, students, administrators, and external partners.

The Directorate of Research, Innovation and Development (DRID), in collaboration with faculties, schools, and centres, shall ensure that the strategic priorities outlined in this policy are actively pursued, monitored, and reviewed. By upholding the principles of integrity, collaboration, digital transformation and inclusivity, the University will not only enhance its institutional reputation but also generate research that shapes public discourse, informs policy, drives innovation, and transforms communities. This policy is both a roadmap and a call to action toward a future where research is not only produced but also valued, applied, and impactful.



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