

Development Strategy of the University as an Institute of Fundamental and / or Applied Research / Creative Activities

Article 1. Research development strategy

1. Goals and objectives of the research development strategy

1. This strategy aims to form the main benchmark so that the University, as a research institution, becomes one of the leading institutions in Georgia, which creates a high-quality research product in a fundamental and applicable research in the humanities and social sciences.

2. The purpose of the strategy is to create the basis for the development of decentralized research activities in faculties, institutes and research groups, which will be aggregated at the university level and ultimately ensure the achievement of the current research goal of the university.

3. To achieve this goal, seven benchmarks of the strategy were identified, the first three of which are the basic benchmark, and the remaining four are for support: 1) highest quality research; 2) support and development of the best researchers and 3) influence. Supportive orientations are a set of activities that provide: 4) using interdisciplinary research opportunities 5) providing thoughtful human and financial resources to ensure continuity of research; 6) honest research; and 7) mutually agreed research strategy.

2. Strategy Directions

1. Quality benchmark - University takes responsibility to conduct high-quality research, and constantly improve the level of quality, gradually increasing requirements for the activities carried out and bringing it up to modern European quality standards (based on the European quality assurance system).

- Description: High quality of research implies high performance in all evaluation criteria of the research, including high international ratings, publications in leading scientific editions, high citation index, high demand for most created research products, and more.

Activities to be implemented

1.1. Research product and citation

- Create institutional mechanisms for faculties and research centers to ensure peer review of colleagues work in order to continuously improve the quality of research during the reporting

period, both in terms of content and research results, and this should be the norm for the university, as part of its culture, and recording and tracking of completed research should be an integral part of this process.

- Use external evaluation data and the "eScholar" system in order to monitor the university citation index and distribute on the internal network so that realistic target benchmarks of citation indexes can be identified for research products for which citation measurement is a commonly accepted practice. Other evaluation indicators (such as textbook review) may be used where appropriate.
- Provide academic personnel with active advice on the steps they should take to optimize the citation of their research results (e.g. a brief description of the research outcomes).
- Raise awareness about target benchmarks of other indicators of citation and evaluation for individuals and groups reviewing documents
- Invite editors of leading scientific journals and publishers of prestigious monographs and hold targeted meetings to increase knowledge about assessment processes and performance criteria
- All employees must have access to the "eScholar" system.

1.2. Partnership

- Develop targeted partnerships with local and international organizations, recognizing that such cooperation will be mutually beneficial for all parties.
- Strengthen European cooperation to gain access to EU research programs
- Actively collaborate with businesses to bring highly used studies into action
- Develop joint masters and doctoral programs
- Actively participate in EU research projects
- Active collaboration with neighbors on issues where regional problems and interests are on the agenda

1.3 Management of "laggards"

- Identify researchers whose productivity is far lower than expected. Provide support to remedy the situation (for example, training, giving time), and if the situation ultimately does not improve, they should not maintain the status of researcher.

2. Attracting researchers –The University should attract the best researchers and give them the opportunity for career development, and the university itself should become a creative arena for such researchers at any stage of their career development.

- Description: The university begins to realize its stated ambitions through developing master and doctoral programs. Doctoral studies will become an important component of university research. The university must make sure that a good foundation is created at the very first stage of career development. The University assigns professional mentors to prospective young researchers and doctoral students, who will provide young researchers with a qualified service that will help them build a high and independent reputation for the next step in their

career advancement. The university will identify potential leaders and help them obtain relevant research awards. The University takes responsibility to create an enabling environment that will attract and retain researchers at the peak of their career development.

Activities to be implemented

2.1. Doctoral Studies

- Development of high quality doctoral programs
- Conduct active marketing campaign to attract the best and most promising candidates
- Stimulate high quality publications for doctoral students
- Develop joint doctoral programs in cooperation with international institutions
- Assess the effectiveness of doctoral research management and constant monitoring
- Develop an effective method to evaluate and defend doctoral theses
- Active involvement of international experts in research components (thesis review, membership of dissertation board, program co-management, etc.)
- Full integration of doctoral candidates in the research activities of the University
- Formation of effective mechanisms for evaluating the quality of research activities
- Development of effective support mechanisms for research activities

2.2 Career Support

- Development of scholarship programs taking into account resource opportunities
- Carry out marketing research to determine what factors are driving the attraction of doctoral candidates
- Improve the recruitment process to determine the best candidates
- Develop an effective career structure
- Active use of international funds to finance young researchers.
- Ensure high-quality collaboration of young researchers with senior researchers
- Identify and support of researchers every year who achieve high individualized results
- Develop multi-level programs focused on sharing research skills and experience
- Continuous monitoring of accomplished researchers and creation of the best research environment to ensure that they remain motivated and continue to collaborate with the University

3. Sphere of influence - should go beyond the university and cover society. The research product should provide social, economic and cultural benefits.

- Description: The University will establish and maintain key relationships with businesses, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other higher educational institutions, both within and outside the country, thus ensuring the establishment of a university research agenda. The university should create intellectual property and enable the public to use it. The sphere of influence and impact is directly proportional to the investments that the university will attract in order to carry out more research. The

university must respond to the challenges of the community, which is one of the social responsibilities of the university.

Activities to be implemented

- Identify businesses, government agencies, NGOs with which the university will have long-term, results-oriented strategic partnerships and ensure high involvement of faculties and institutions in this process
- Each faculty member and research group, along with faculty and institutes, should develop a plan annually reflecting the scale of the research impact and take responsibility for its implementation.
- Encourage intersectoral mobility between academic staff and partner institutions
- Ensure high involvement of academic staff in discussing public projects
- Active collaboration with the media in order to demonstrate research image and reputation of the University
- Commercialization of research

4. Interdisciplinary benchmark - The critical mass and interdisciplinary field of research is the mechanism that should provide the university, as a research institution, with leadership in the target disciplines.

- Description: Based on existing achievements, the university will identify key areas in which it will be able to create a wide range of best practices by attracting resources and investments. The university will work with international research centers. At the same time, it will use full potential to create a new interdisciplinary combination in a wide range of disciplines with a guarantee of freedom of the researcher and the development of creative thinking.

Activities to be implemented

- Attracting investments that are best suited to the scale of the university, the field of research and the quality of research work performed.
- Expand collaboration with high reputable research centers
- Development of interdisciplinary research, identification of key areas and offering the user a differentiated research product.
- Focus strategic resources on those disciplines or interdisciplinary activities in the faculties and institutes that make the university as a prestigious research institution
- Promotion of research teams consisting of staff from different faculties

5. Resources - To meet research ambitions, the university will use a wide range of human, information and financial resources. The university will develop and gradually increase basic research funding.

- Description: In parallel with the fact that it starts financing research, the university will seek for financial resources in business and international organizations, which will help the university to effectively connect research with the interests of investors.

Activities to be implemented

- Research funding and provision of public, fair and transparent financing procedures.
- With capacity building, gradually improve infrastructure based on the latest technology and create the best research environment
- Rational use of researchers' limited time for research and teaching purposes
- Continuous improvement of administrative support mechanisms for research development.

6. Research honesty- A high standard of research honesty is one of the components of qualitative research

- Description: Based on recent advances, the university will develop and implement mechanisms and procedures that should ensure research honesty as one of the key values of a university employee.

Activities to be implemented

- An irreconcilable uncompromising fight with plagiarism
- Raising awareness of young researchers on University's ethics through workshops

7. Mutually agreed strategy- The research strategy must be agreed at the faculties and institutions level.

Article 2. Research Support Mechanisms

1. Description of Research Support Mechanisms

1. The university research support system includes institutional structures that support the development of research, the university grant system, public, transparent and fair research funding procedures, mechanisms for information support of university research, and anti-plagiarism policy.

2. Institutional structures supporting research activity

1. In accordance with the strategic goals and plans for the development of research, the vice-chancellor of the university directs research activities and coordinates the work. The projector provides:

- a) Formation of the necessary conditions and material-technical basis for carrying out scientific-research activities,

- b) Coordination of research centers, coordination of planning, implementation and evaluation processes of scientific research component
 - c) Organizational support for staff scientific activities
 - d) Informational support for academic staff, in the field of scientific research,
 - e) Adherence to public, transparent and fair procedures for research funding
 - f) Controlling academic honesty in the frames of the research
 - g) Collaboration with international partners along with the International Relations Division
 - h) Establishment of relationships with businesses, government agencies, NGOs, and other higher education institutions
 - i) Managing University resources and raising grants at the institutional level for research activity
 - j) Assessing the scientific productivity of staff
2. Public needs-oriented, applied and fundamental research activities in individual disciplines is carried out by scientific-research groups aimed at achieving the university's mission and purpose.
 3. The university department seeks to attract the best researchers and provide them with career opportunities. Provides planning, implementation and evaluation of the research component. Strives to develop result-oriented Master and Doctoral programs
 4. The University's Quality Management Service on the basis of coordinated work with a research institute ensures the quality of scientific work at the university and its compliance with European standards.
 5. The university publishes scientific journals. The journals are divided into sectoral and interdisciplinary directions. Scientific journals are administered by the university's research institutes and editorial board, the composition of which is approved by the vice-chancellor of the University. The editorial board invites field specialists, if necessary. The scientific work is subject to peer review that is carried out by means of inviting the blind review specialists of the corresponding field of the desk review. Placement of articles in the university research journal free, and all expenses associated with the publication of research paper are funded by the university. The copyright for the published work is shared between its authors / co-authors and the university.

3. University Research Information Support

1. In order to increase the university's involvement in international and local research projects, the University and its structural units seek to increase the awareness of academic / invited staff and university researchers, as well as research projects and opportunities for participation.
2. University staff and students will constantly receive information on local and international research grants, and consultations will be held for interested persons on the search for grants.
3. Each year all employees and students of the University receive trainings within the framework of continuous programs on the following topics:
 - a) Writing a research project
 - b) Obtaining a research grant
 - c) Research methods
 - d) Application of modern information technologies for research activities

4. Information about people involved in the University's research is public and should be posted on the University's website

4. Research Funding

1. To develop and encourage research activities, the University during the financial planning provides a budget set for the financing of research projects.

2. Sources of funding for research at the university are as follows:

a) The planned funding allocated for the university budget - which implies that the academic staff, fulfills the obligations within the framework of an individual workload scheme and a contract with the university, in the field of research

b) Funding received within the frames of University grant, the goal of which is to support young scientists, integrate them into their research and educational programs, as well as funding of University design groups. University grants are funded only through open contest.

c) Financing from external sources

3. This funding can be used to fully and co-finance a research project.

4. The amount of research budget should be maintained or increased every following year.

5. To support internationally recognized research, the University finances fundamental and applied research in the areas that are consistent with the mission of the University.

6. The purpose of funding fundamental research is theoretical and experimental study and analysis of new ideas and concepts, events and facts, theories and models, which in the long term perspective will promote socio-political, economic, social, cultural and information-technology progress in the country. The fundamental research grant contest helps to create a competitive research environment, bring research closer to international standards and their internationalization, integrate research into higher education, and engage young scientists in research in order to increase their scientific potential.

7. The purpose of applied research is to identify the university's potential in applied sciences and to finance innovative research projects. Particular importance is given to the identification of innovative research due to which the high-tech products are demanded at the local and / or international level and responds for solving problems in the field of new technology development. The reality and sustainability of the application of research results, as well as the potential for their commercialization in the future, are taken into account.

8. The university grant is funded under three programs, for which a competition is announced. These programs are: a) Fundamental research contest involving design groups; b) Applied research contest involving design groups; c) Contest of young academic staff and doctoral candidates. An open competition is announced in each direction.

9. The competition is announced by the legal act of the rector. The legal act defines the conditions of the tender, the criteria, the list of documents to be submitted, and the terms of the tender.

10. The information about competition is published on the official website of the university; the legal act of the rector determines the composition of the tender committee.

11. For fundamental and applied research programs, members of the Competition Commission are field experts, including professors from international partner universities.
12. The contest is conducted by the Competition Commission. Conducting a competition implies reviewing the contest documentation and evaluating the competitor according to pre-established criteria.
13. The chairman of the contest committee applies for the rector with a request to finance the winner. The decision of the contest committee will be communicated to all competitors.

5. Anti-plagiarism policy

1. The policy covers anti-plagiarism measures, and in case of plagiarism - response procedures, according to the rules of the University on "Identification of plagiarism and response measures"
2. In order to purchase the effective electronic programs for detecting plagiarism, the university allocates financial resources during the planning of annual budget.
3. The university informs students and teachers about plagiarism. The vice-chancellor of the University with the help of structural units will carry out various types of permanent educational activities / trainings for the prevention of plagiarism.