

Komar University of Science and Technology

Komar Research Center

Research Policy



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Komar Research Centre (KRC)

Research policy

BACKGROUND:

Research is an essential component of modern higher education institutes. It is one of the major parameters that distinguish between different universities and their rankings. Outstanding research and scholarship programs are required for any institution of higher education. Komar University is committed to excellence in higher education at all levels, including future postgraduate programs. The aim of this policy is to enhance the research aspects within KUST.

Considering KUST small size and limited resources and the desire to maintain a university-wide programmatic balance, it is not practical to commit large numbers of new faculty positions to conduct research under KRC umbrella. Thus faculty are encouraged conducting research in their free time, and KRC is committed to help faculty in their research to gain access to resources and facilities of our partners in higher education and industry.

To meet KRC goals, faculty members are encouraged to contribute to postgraduate studies and research programs in several ways including:

- 1- Seek external research funding and direct graduate thesis research projects
- 2- Collaborate in research and engage in mutually beneficial interactions with other research centers and government agencies
- 3- Enhance KUST's reputation and stature as a leading research institution in the region.

OBJECIVES OF KOMAR RESEARCH CENTER (KRC)

1. To conduct research in areas that meet Kurdistan current and future challenges
2. To publish scholarly papers in international journals and to attend national and international conferences
3. To advocate research policies in Kurdistan
4. To attract external funds for research projects
5. To collaborate with other academic-based research centers and private industry.
6. To assign research fund for eligible KUST faculty members.

KRC STRUCTURE

Komar Research Centre organizes research matters within KUST. The center is managed by a director who is nominated by the University Council. The center is steered by a committee of faculty members who represent different departments or colleges, and hold a minimum of doctoral degree in major research interests of KUST. KRC reports to the Vice VPAA for Academic Affairs - VPAA.

RESEARCH AREA OF INTEREST

In many areas of the world the interdisciplinary research program is developed to encompass the skills and knowledge of multiple research teams to address and provide better solutions e.g. Kurdistan Institution for Strategic Studies and Research - KISSR. Here at KUST, the KRC is initiated with the hope to help the faculty members from different areas to conduct research and produce innovative ideas that can promote KUST's status locally and internationally. Research areas of interest will be specified by KRC committee and reviewed annually.

Guidelines-research conduct:

As an institution of higher education, KUST expects all faculty members to maintain the highest standards of conduct in pursuing their research endeavors. Any type of research fraud or misconduct is against KUST's principles and believes. Such wrongdoings will adversely affect the reputation of the university and its stakeholders. Thus, a disciplinary action to dismiss from the job will be taken after a case of research misconduct is proved.

Since KUST revenues rely on the tuition fees, it expected that external funds are necessary to support its research program. Accordingly, KUST has certain regulatory responsibilities to inform the faculty members about this policy and follow its guidelines in conducting research.

Some important points with respect to the research guidelines, including scientific methodology, science based analytical attribution and reasoning, using appropriate method and prescriptive instrumentation for the objective of the research should be clearly provided when filling in the Research Proposal Form.

COPYRIGHT POLICY

KUST encourages the creative efforts of faculty, staff and students to produce original works that grants them exclusive rights to its use and distribution, usually for a limited time, with the intention of enabling the author to receive compensation for their intellectual effort.

Under KUST's copyright policy, KUST retains the non-transferable, non-exclusive right to use such works produced by its employees in the course and scope of their employment. The University under this policy tent to foster the freedoms of faculty members, staff researchers, and graduate and undergraduate students in matters of publication and distribution of scholarly, educational and creative works, and to facilitate the academic interests of the University in the continuity of research and educational programs.

To achieve this purpose, this policy provides the faculty members, staff researchers, and graduate and undergraduate students own the copyrights of their works during their academic careers at the University, subject to limited contractual exceptions and, in certain circumstances, limited use rights.

1. A faculty member (an academic appointment) in the professorial ranks and research ranks owns the copyrights to scholarly works, literary works, art works, architectural works, musical works, syllabi and textbooks. The University retains the non-transferable, non-exclusive right to use such works on a royalty-free basis solely for the University's education, teaching and research activities, except as follows:

- a.** If the faculty member work is subject to a contractual obligation of the University, such as a sponsored research agreement, then the ownership of the copyrights will be governed by the terms of the contractual obligation of the University.
- b.** In case a faculty member has agreed with KUST to produce a specific work for the University, then the ownership of the copyrights with respect to such work will be governed by the terms of the agreement with the University.

2. A staff researcher (a postdoctoral appointment, visiting scholar appointment, or research scientist) owns the copyrights to scholarly works, literary works, art works, syllabi and textbooks that the staff researcher produces during his/her employment with KUST. The University retains the non-transferable, non-exclusive right to use such works on a royalty-

free basis exclusively for the University's education such as teaching and research activities, except as follows:

- a.** If a staff researcher's work is subject to a contractual obligation of the University, such as a sponsored research agreement, then the ownership of the copyrights will be governed by the terms of the contractual obligation of the University.
- b.** In case a researcher has agreed with KUST to produce a specific work for the University, then the ownership of the copyrights with respect to such work will be governed by the terms of the agreement with the University.

3. A graduate or undergraduate student owns the copyrights to dissertations, theses, papers, literary works, architectural works, etc during which the student produces his/her study with KUST. The University retains the non-transferable, non-exclusive right to use such works on a royalty-free basis only for the University's education such as teaching and research activities, except as follows:

- a.** If a student (graduate or undergraduate) work is subject to a contractual obligation of the University, such as a sponsored research agreement, then the ownership of the copyrights will be governed by the terms of the contractual obligation of the University.
- b.** In case a student has agreed with KUST to produce a specific work for the University, then the ownership of the copyrights with respect to such work will be governed by the terms of the agreement with the University.
- c.** When a student's work is produced in the course and scope of his/her study program and the student was an employee at the University, then the ownership of the copyrights with respect to such work is KUST.

In brief, KUST retains the non-transferable, non-exclusive copyrights to all works produced by its employees (other than faculty members and staff researchers as mentioned in points 1 and 2 in the course and scope of their employment at the University).

FUNDING REQUESTS TO EXTERNAL SOURCES

Attracting external funding sources, particularly private, to KUST will emphasize the importance of a coordinated approach. Under this policy all applications for external funds must be signed by the VPAA and coordinated through KUST public affair.

This policy serves to assure that any request for external funding receives the full support of KUST, and increases its chances of success by avoiding multiple applications to the same funding source.

All requests for funding shall be processed through KRC. Requests for funding that may affect the academic programs of the University shall also be coordinated with VPAA Office. The required project funding request forms can be obtained from KRC office.

The KRC office is responsible for processing proposals and for the post-award administration of grants or contracts that are determined by the purpose of the request/award.

The following proposal types will be handled by KRC office:

- Research Projects
- Presenting and attending technical paper at recognized conferences and workshops
- Graduate fellowships and traineeships
- Postdoctoral fellowships
- Equipment for designated research
- Undergraduate scholarships and merit-based student aid
- Facilities and plant equipment.

Proposals related to modification, or construction of facilities, utilities, and plant equipment must be first approved by the V office before it is processed by KRC. In all cases, a complete copy of proposal/grant/fellowship must be forwarded to KRC office for archiving.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Awards and bonuses, including incremental payments, will be allocated for the faculty members or KUST's staff for their support of research related activities (including graduate student support, equipment, supplies, travel, salaries, etc.) This normally managed by KRC office and HR for official acknowledgment and acceptance by the related department chair.

The Director of the KRC will forward all accepted funds to the designated and appropriate operating accounts that will be available to authorized users.

INTERNAL FUNDING FOR RESEARCH PROGRAM

KRC provides research funds to the most innovative ideas and research programs proposed by full-time faculty in all disciplines. The purpose of these grants is to provide funding support for pilot projects and research programs that cannot be funded through other sources. Recipients of these funds shall work closely with KRC office to identify and pursue continuation of funding for their research projects. Under this policy all applications for internal funds must be approved by the VPAA and then coordinated through KRC office.

Sound proposals will be accepted throughout the academic year. The decision will be made by the KRC committee and letters of acceptance will be sent out to the winning faculty members within a month to advise them of how to proceed with the grant.

The allotted funding amount will be based on the research outcomes and project cost. This needs to be approved by University Council.

The following items are not funded under this policy

1. Student research projects.
2. Student assistants fulfilling academic requirements (e.g. thesis research).
3. Expenses for Journal Publication.
4. Teaching/Curriculum Development.

Information in relation to application and submission of the proposal can be found in KRC office. Applicants are encouraged to visit the KRC office to collect the required information in regard submitting an application for internal grant.

REVIEW CRITERIA

- Merit of the proposal and relationship to the discipline's body of knowledge
- Potential for publication or presentation
- Potential of the project for external funding
- Previous internal and external grant history
- Evidence of scholarly productivity, and research impact.

RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

This reaffirms the commitment of KUST to the highest principles of integrity in all areas of research and scholarly activities. It also helps KUST to determine the general types of research misconduct and establish procedures to deal with alleged research misconduct and to comply with the university policies and procedures.

I. Intellectual Integrity:

Maintaining high ethical standards is central to successful research undertaken in the pursuit of knowledge. Research integrity demands the valid collection and accurate reporting of data. To uphold with this integrity, KUST respects the ideas and rights of others and refutes the unauthorized use of others' research data. Hence, KUST and its faculty, staff and students must adhere to the KUST principles and intellectual integrity whether or not the research's fund is granted externally.

II. Research misconduct:

Research misconduct means falsification, fabrication, plagiarism in proposing or performing a research and reporting these data. Falsification is changing research materials equipment or processes or omitting data or results in order to the research results are not represented accurately in the research record. Fabrication is making up data or results and publishes them. Plagiarism is the copy or mimic another persons' intellectual property such results, processes or even words without reference to them.

III. Proceedings and reports:

The essential responsibility for maintaining high standards of conducts lies on the researchers. However, the research misconduct is a very serious offense; the university should also take appropriate steps to avoid these incidents to happen. This policy outlines the procedures to be followed in case the inquiry and investigation of potential misconduct reported.

Enforcement of research standards includes some or all the steps below:

Allegations:

Whichever report of alleged misconduct must be handed to the KRC research committee for investigation. After receiving an allegation about the research misconduct, the committee will review the report and determine if the definition of research misconduct apply or there are sufficient evidence can be used to support the misconduct. If these criteria are met, the director of KRC will determine whether the complaint should progress to the inquiry phase or not.

If the misconduct allegation was against a postgrad or research student then the Director of KRC will refer the issue to the degree program or dean in which the student was enrolled. The Dean of postgrad studies will decide on the disciplinary action to be taken as per this policy.

Inquiry:

As mentioned the director of KRC will review the allegation of misconduct cases and determine whether the allegations should progress under this policy? The director will initiate a discreet, confidential inquiry (an initial review) of the evidence. This process should be completed within 30 calendar days after initiating the Inquiry, unless circumstances warrant a longer period and approval is obtained from the VPAA of KUST. After reviewing the evidences, the KRC committee will report their findings and recommendations to the director of KRC or to the university VPAA.

The report should include the following information:

1. The name and position of the respondents;
2. A description of research misconduct allegations;
3. The basis for recommending that the alleged actions warrant or do not warrant a more detailed investigation
4. Sources of the research involved; and
5. Comments about the inquiry by the respondent.

The respondent should be given sufficient time 30 days to respond to review the draft report and provide comments. When the director KRC review the report and finds the evidence is solid then an investigation case will be opened, if not the case will be closed.

Investigations:

If sufficient evidence is determined, the director and KRC committee will start a detailed investigation about the allegation as per KUST research misconduct investigation. The investigation should begin within 30 calendar days of the director's determination.

The committee will use its best efforts to complete the investigation within 3 months from the date on which it began, including conducting the investigation, preparing a draft report of findings, providing the draft report to the respondents for comment, submitting the final report to the director or the VPAA for approval. In case KRC committee cannot complete the investigation within 30 days, the committee will request an extension in writing from the vice VPAA or VPAA.

The VPAA will assign an unbiased panel of experts to evaluate the potential research misconduct findings by the mentioned committee; the assigned panel should not have any conflict of interest in this matter. The KRC will, in most cases, provide staff to help investigation process.

Panel duties:

6. Must ensure that the investigation is thorough and document their examination of all research records and evidence in relation to reaching a decision on the merits of the allegations;
7. Interview each respondent, complainant and any other available individual who has been reasonably identified as having information regarding any relevant aspects of the investigation, including witnesses suggested by the respondent.
8. The interviews should be recorded and provided to the interviewees in case want to make any correction.
9. Pursue diligently all significant issues and any leads to the investigation, including any extra evidences of possible research misconduct confirming the case.

The final report from the panel will contain the following sections:

1. Allegations: description of the nature of the allegations of research misconduct and the institutional charge should be mentioned
2. Research support: description of the research support and any documentation between KUST and the sponsors.

3. Policies and procedures: Reference to and inclusion of the KUST policies and procedure under which the investigation was conducted.
4. Research records and evidence: identification and summary of the research records and evidence reviewed
5. Statement of findings: For any allegation of research misconduct the findings must be highlighted during the investigation, whether the findings of research misconduct did or didn't occur. If it did occur types of misconduct should be specified such as falsification, fabrication, plagiarism etc.
6. Comments: Inclusion and consideration of any comments made by the respondents and complaints on the draft copy.
7. Recommendations: If the findings support the case of research misconduct, the panel may recommend appropriate action based on its understanding of the case. However, if the panel concludes that the research misconduct didn't happened, so appropriate recommendations will be made.

When the panel provided its final report, the VPAA at its discretion may ask any of the respondents for their final written comments, seek clarification on various matters from the panel, or refer the matter back to the panel for additional clarification and investigation if he/she deems it necessary or appropriate.

At this point, the VPAA render his/her decision in a letter or memorandum that notes agree or disagree with the panel's findings and recommendations and determines whether further administrative or disciplinary action on the part of KUST is appropriate, the decision here is final. The VPAA will send a copy of the decision to the KRC director, the respondents, and the panel members. If he/she sees further administrative or disciplinary action is appropriate, the VPAA will send a copy of the final report and his/her decision to the relevant deans and VPAA.

Disciplinary Action:

When the conclusion made on an investigation in which a case of research misconduct is determined, the KUST will take the following disciplinary actions.

Findings against a faculty member:

In case of a proven research misconduct determined, the KRC director agrees with the findings of investigation report and the respondent is a faculty member, the director may

recommend to the VPAA the initiation of proceedings under KUST policy. In a situation like that all recommendations will be forwarded and the entire investigation report to the VPAA. The VPAA will determine whether consider dismissal or a sanction against the accused faculty member. If the VPAA sees it is a minor case of misconduct the VPAA will review the case with the director of KRC to refer the case to the dean of the faculty for appropriate action.

Findings against KUST staff:

In case of a proven research misconduct determined, the KRC director agrees with the findings of investigation report and the respondent is a staff member. The director of KRC will notify the vice VPAA for admin. Both vice VPAA and director of KRC will cooperate in undertaking appropriate action.

Findings against KUST students:

In case of a proven research misconduct determined, the committee agrees with the findings of investigation report and the respondent is a student of KUST. The KRC director will notify the relevant dean or director of his/her department. Both dean and director will cooperate in undertaking appropriate action under the applicable procedures within dean's purview.

IV. Additional procedural consideration

• Ensuring a fair research misconduct proceeding:

KUST will take every reasonable steps and measures to ensure an impartial and unbiased research misconduct proceeding to the maximum extent of practice. Any members involve in the inquiry or investigation should be selected on the basis of expertise which is pertinent to the matter. Before choosing any members the director of KRC will screen individual for any identifiable bias and personal, professional, or financial conflicts of interest with the respondent, complainant, and witness. To achieve a high standard of fairness in conducting the investigation if any members found to have a conflict of interest these members will be disqualify in the proceeding. If the director couldn't serve, the VPAA shall designate an appointee who is free of bias or conflict of interest to fulfill the role of KRC director as the head of the investigation.

- Confidentiality:

KUST will try its best to respect the confidentiality of respondents and complainants and will not disclose any of these identities, except: 1-to those who carry out a thorough, competent, objective and fair research misconduct proceeding; 2- if the research has a sponsor and want to know the respondents and complaints; 3- to whom the disclosure is deemed necessary to remedy any findings of research misconduct. The materials, findings, reports and investigations should be securely and confidentially maintained and will not be disclosed except as mentioned above.

- Custody and maintenance of research misconduct report:

The following steps should be taken to maintain the research records and evidence pertinent to research misconduct proceeding:

- a. When KRC director notify the respondent of the allegations, KUST will take all necessary and reasonable steps to obtain and keep of all research records and evidence needed to conduct the research misconduct proceeding. Inventory to those materials, and sequester them in a secure manner.
- b. Where appropriate, provide the respondent copies, or reasonable supervised access to, of the research records
- c. Try all reasonable and practical efforts to take custody of additional research records and evidence discovered during the course of the research misconduct proceeding. These records should be kept for 5 years.

- Notice to Respondents:

During the research misconduct proceeding, KUST will give the following notifications to all identified respondents:

- 1- Initiating of Inquiry
- 2- Comment on draft inquiry report
- 3-Results of the inquiry
- 4-Initiation of investigation
- 5-Scheduling for interview and comments on the draft of the investigation report
- 6-Result of investigation

- Restoring reputation:

- 1-Respondents:*

- KUST will do its best and appropriate efforts to protect and restore the reputation of any person alleged to have engaged in research misconduct. This step will be taken against whom no finding of research misconduct was concluded.

- 1-Complainants and committee members:*

- KUST will do its best and appropriate efforts to protect and restore the reputation of any complainant, witness or committee members and to counter potential or actual retaliation against them because of their participating in a research misconduct case.

V. Distribution

The faculty, students and staff involved in research activities should be notified of this policy.