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THE STATE OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GOVERNANCE IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

University of Ghana Report

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAU   Association of African Universities

CSO   Civil Society organisations

CV   Curriculum Vitae

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

GET Fund   Ghana Education Trust Fund

GPRS   Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy

IDRC   International Development Research Centre

ISIS   Import Substitution Industries Strategy

MA   Master of Arts

MDA   Ministries, Departments and Agencies

MPhil   Master of Philosophy

PhD   Doctor of Philosophy

PI   Principal Investigator

RCC   Research and Conferences Committee

RCF   Research and Conferences Fund

SAP   Structural Adjustment Programmes

TOR   Terms of Reference

UG   University of Ghana

UGBS   University of Ghana Business School

UNESCO   United Nations educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Incorporating the outcomes of higher education research into development agenda is one of the most important in current development considerations and practice. Any serious development programme therefore needs to look at research as an essential component. In recent times, the interest of the international donor community and other technical partners in African higher education and university research has increased tremendously. As a result of the renewed interest, more funders are expressing the desire to invest in higher education and research in Africa. Considering the significance of research governance in sustaining this interest and the inadequacy of information available on research governance, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) commissioned this study on the state of research governance in six (6) selected Universities in five (5) countries within Central and West Africa. This report is on the study conducted on the University of Ghana (UG).

The methodology used for this study combined three different tools: i) a literature review; ii) administration of a survey to collect factual data and statistics; and iii) use of interview guides to document the perceptions and opinions of key actors on research governance in the university of Ghana.

This study utilised the following three areas of application of research governance established by UNESCO: i) Organization of the system ii) Governance of the system and iii) Management of the system.

With respect to the organization of research, the study identified the following:

- The system Research in the UG can be put into two (2) main categories; a) research by students and b) research by faculty.

- At the faculty level, the structure of research organised is mainly determined by the source of funding for that research. In some cases, the size and scope of the research may be a determining factor.

- There are three (3) main structuring types for the organisation of faculty level research in UG; these could be described as formal, semi-formal and informal research structures.

- Research is mainstreamed into the entire academic structure of the university; research is conducted at all levels of the academic structure. Therefore the academic units i.e. the Colleges, Faculties, Institutes, Schools, and Departments could be considered as research units

- Other research units that formally exist in the University of Ghana are mainly research laboratories, research institutes and Centres of Research/Learning.

- There are no permanent or existing research teams in the University of Ghana. Research teams are formed for particular research projects.

- The organisation and functioning of all the Colleges, Faculties, Institutes, Schools and Departments are governed by the statute of the University of Ghana but there are no established certification criteria for research units in the UG.

- Various research units have no formal structural links with government agencies but they collaborate with their respective sector ministries, Civil Society organisations (CSO) and private companies whenever necessary.

The study noted the following concerning Institutional Steering of Research:

- With the exception of the independent research institutes, the institutions that steer academic work in the university are also responsible for steering research.

- The Research and Conferences Committee (RCC) assesses and approves research proposals for funding by the University Research and Conferences Fund (RCF).

- The RCF is managed by the School of Research and Graduate Studies (SRGS).

- UG has no policy document on research neither does the university have a strategic plan for research

- UG has no internal Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms for research

The following observations were made with respect to the management of research:

- All types of research exist in the UG, basic research, applied research, discipline research and multi-disciplinary/pluri-disciplinary/cross-disciplinary research.

- The operational management of research in the University depends on the research structuring type.

- Research teams are formed to undertake various researches. The composition of the team is determined by the type of research.

- The University has a well functioning administrative and financial manual.

The management of the formal and semi-formal research structured types is based on the administrative and Financial Manual of UG.

- The administrative support required for any piece of research depends on the size of the project.

- The funding organisation of a research monitors and evaluates the project to ensure quality.

- The environment for research is generally conducive in Ghana

- UG produces five (5) Research Journals

- The University has no incentive scheme to motivate research personnel, however all research and teaching faculty members are given $333.3 (i.e. GH¢500) annually as book and research allowance.

- Qualified researchers are engaged from within and outside the various university units to conduct research.

- The collaboration on research is not limited to units within the UG only;

- UG publishes all researches and publications from the University annually.

The following major issues, needs and promising approaches that could be supported were identified:

- Faculty members are giving more attention to teaching to the detriment of research

- Faculty members tend to undertake more of other consultancy assignments than the research

- Faculty members undertake consultancy assignments (that are not research) for their clients, come out with technical reports and sometimes present them as research outcomes.

- Sometimes researches initiated are abandoned midway.

- There are neither formal/structural linkages between researchers and industry nor are there formal/structural linkages between researchers and policy makers so most research findings neither feed into policies nor industry.

- All researchers and research institutions compete for research funds both at the local and international fronts. Ghanaian researchers are often in a disadvantaged position.

Capacity building requirements by the study include training in:

- Research management

- Fund raising and proposal writing

- Methodology of research

- Research data analysis, including introduction to SPSS and other available software

- Strategic planning for research units

- Research administration for Research Administrators, Professors and Research Fellows

The following recommendations were made for the nation Ghana, University of Ghana and technical and financial partners:

- The government of Ghana should put in place a National Research Policy

- UG should establish a finalised and robust Research and Ethics Policy document

- The Government of Ghana should improve upon the provision of basic infrastructure that will make research work easier and smoother in the Universities.

- UG should consider increasing the funds available for research and the ceiling for the funding where necessary.

- UG should consider allocating a percentage of the University's total annual revenue to research.

- UG should establish a monitoring and evaluation system that will track the performance of faculty members in terms of research and also assess the authenticity of research outcomes

- A quota of the Research and Conferences Fund (RCF) should be allocated for junior researchers and another quota for students' research

- Funders of research activities should provide flexible funding for research, the researcher should be given a say in the area of research to be conducted

- UG should decentralise the management of the RCF

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Incorporating the outcomes of higher education research into development agenda is one of the most important in current development considerations and practice. Any serious development programme therefore needs to look at research as an essential component

For many years education in Africa has concentrated on basic education as one of the means of reducing poverty, which has been the main burden of the continent. This led to the neglect of higher education which is equally important for the development of the continent. However, in recent times, there has been the realisation of the potential of higher education and university research to develop human capital with the capacity to address the issues facing the sub-region.   The interest of the international donor community and other technical partners in African higher education and university research has increased tremendously.

As a result of the renewed interest, more funders are expressing the desire to invest in higher education and research in Africa. In order to sustain this interest and to make the best out of it, it is imperative to improve the research environment and research conditions in the universities in the sub-region. There is therefore the need for a better understanding of the current issues surrounding research in institutions of higher education. University research is faced with major challenges in its governance which have resulted in deficiencies in the organization and management of research. Evidently, the research sector can only develop if the higher learning centres are endowed with effective organisational and managerial structures.

For these and other reasons, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), as an institution specializing in development research, has found it necessary to define the challenges encountered by university research managers and to identify spaces of cooperation with the technical and financial partner community in West and Central Africa. IDRC therefore commissioned consultants to conduct this study on the state of research governance in six (6) selected Universities in five (5) countries within Central and West Africa. These are: 1) University of Ghana in Ghana, 2)University of Abobo Adjamé in Ivory Coast, 3) University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso; 4)University of Buea in Cameroon; 5) Cheikh Anta Diop University and Gaston Berger University in Senegal;

The study was conducted to assess the state of research governance in the selected universities with respect to:

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1. Organization of the academic research system (architecture)
2. Institutional steering of the academic research system (strategic dimension)
3. Management of the academic research system (management structures)

In Ghana, the study commenced in September 2009 with the review of relevant literature. Questionnaires were administered to the Dean of the School of Research and Graduate Studies and the Research Administrator of the University of Ghana. In addition, the following groups of people were interviewed: Faculty members - research fellows and lecturers, Research assistants, Research Administrative Assistants as well as PhD, MPhil and MA Students. The data collected was analysed and compiled into a report.

This report has a brief introduction and covers the contextualization of university research governance, which looks at Ghana and UG's history as well as the economic and social context and how they impact on university governance. This section also situates university governance in relation to national research policy and research governance in Ghana.

The third chapter of this report presents an assessment of organisation of research in the university. This covers the Research structuring types, Research unit types, respondents' perceptions and opinions on the functioning of the research structures; the strengths and weaknesses of existing research structures as well as proposals towards improving the research mechanism.

Institutional steering of research is the main theme for the fourth chapter. This looks at the Existing steering instruments, perceptions and opinions on the functioning of the steering instruments; their strengths and weaknesses as well as proposals towards improving the steering instruments and their functioning.

In the fifth chapter, the consultant reports on the University research management tools, including people's perceptions and opinions on the functioning and efficiency of such tools; good practices and problems in research management and proposals towards improving management tools and their functioning.

In Chapter six the major issues, needs and promising approaches to be supported are identified and discussed in terms of major issues and challenges facing the University research governance; approaches that would be worth supporting and Capacity-building Prospects. In the last two chapters, recommendations are presented and conclusions drawn

2.0 CONTEXTUALISATION OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GOVERNANCE

2.1 Political, Economic and Social Context

After obtaining independence in March 1957 from the British Colonial master, Ghana went through a series of military rules with associated social and economic crises. The country has enjoyed stable democratic governance for the past 17 years with 5 conservative peaceful elections. Ghana has gone through turbulent economic and political moments to reach this far.

Economic development theories and practice during the decade immediately following Ghana's independence were highly influenced by the developments in the industrialised countries following the Second World War. The newly independent countries, including Ghana resorted to massive borrowing and excessive reliance on external resources which produced debt crisis, but did not lead to any appreciable improvement in the lives of the people, particularly those in the rural areas.

The first generation of African leaders adopted economic strategies that echoed the ideas of prominent economists of the day (e.g. Arthur Lewis). Industrialisation was believed to be the engine of economic growth and the key to transforming traditional economies; Agriculture was relegated to a secondary role of supplying raw materials and providing tax revenues to finance other development sectors. Ghanaian leaders, implementing Import Substitution Industries Strategy (ISIS), believed that government had to play the dominant role as a result, and generally with full donor support, governments invested in large state –run cooperatives and industries, enacted pervasive regulations to control prices; restricted trade and allocated credit and foreign exchange.

Economic growth was modest, around 3% in the early 1960s. By mid-70s, Ghana's economic performance had fallen below that of other developing countries and by 1980 output was actually declining. Pre-occupation with short-term crisis issues such as economic slow-down, debt and structural adjustment led to attention being focused on investment in physical capital to the detriment of human capital development. These also resulted in weak institutional capacities, declined living standards and political instability. The country even surrendered some of the gains made earlier in human resource development, i.e. in school enrolment, brain-drain and open urban

unemployment. In the 1980s and 1990s, Ghana slipped from middle- income to low-income group (World development report classification)

After the obvious failure of the Structural Adjustment programmes (SAP), Ghanaian leaders shifted their development strategy from government dominating and began to see the private sector as the engine for growth. Ghana developed a five year Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS 1). The policy thrust of the macroeconomic framework under GPRS I was towards promoting macroeconomic stability for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. In the implementation of the GPRS1, substantial progress was made towards the realisation of macroeconomic stability. Indicators point to a reduction of inflation from 40.5 percent in December 2000 to 11.8 percent by December 2004. Interest rates fell and the prime rate was reduced from 24 percent in 2003 to 15.5 percent by the third quarter of 2005. GDP grew at an average rate of 5 percent during the five-year period (2001-2005).

The second phase of the poverty reduction strategy (GPRS II) aimed at accelerating growth through wealth creation and poverty reduction. The policy acknowledged that, accelerated growth of the economy will result from continued macroeconomic stability, a vibrant private sector, vigorous human resource development underpinned by deepening good governance and civic responsibility. GPRS II is targeted at empowering the private sector to effectively play its role as the engine of wealth creation and poverty reduction.

Over the years, education in general and higher education in particular have been affected in diverse ways by the various economic and political policies pursued in the country. In the early days of independence, universities in Ghana saw great expansions in their physical infrastructure as the first Ghanaian leader believed that education is the key to development. During the economic turbulent era (1970 – 1990s), much attention was given to basic education as a means to reducing poverty and higher education in Ghana received little or no attention at all. At this time universities were all state owned and there was no private involvement at all in higher education.

The 2000s, during the implementation of the GPRS, universities in Ghana saw a radical change with the private sector investing heavily in higher education. There are currently over fourteen privately owned universities accredited and operating in the country and private companies are now permitted to invest in various aspects of the public universities such as providing hostel accommodation for students and the like. In spite of the improved attention given to higher education over the last decade, research has

received very little attention from the government of Ghana. It is therefore not surprising that Ghana has no national policy on research.

2.2   The University of Ghana

The University of Ghana was founded by ordinance as the University College of the Gold Coast on August 11, 1948 for the purpose of providing for and promoting university education, learning and research. It was then set up by an Act of Parliament on October 1, 1961 (Act 79). Since its establishment, UG along with Ghana has survived and developed through periods of economic and political turbulence that would have challenged even the world's most established centres of learning. The current student population of the university is 35,000 (6,000 are distance learning students). UG has 41 Full Professors, 78 Associate professors, 509 Lecturers and165 Graduate Assistants. Structured into 2 Colleges, 16 Faculties and Schools, 15 Institutes and Centres of Research/Learning, the UG is governed by the university council, the chancellor, the Vice-chancellor, ProVice Chancellors, the Registrar and Boards and Committees. The various units of the university have their decentralized governance systems overseen by board of directors; e.g. colleges are headed by Provosts assisted by Vice Provosts while faculties and schools are headed by Deans who are assisted by Vice Deans also, the institutes and centres are headed by Directors and their deputies. Committees such as the Research and Conferences Committee are established to perform specific functions.

3.0   ORGANISATION OF RESEARCH

3.1   Research Structuring Types

Research in the UG can be put onto two main categories; (a) research by students and (b) research by faculty. Students undertake various forms of research at various stages of their learning experience. Ultimately, some first degree, second degree and PHD students are expected to conduct researches as a prerequisite for obtaining their degree certificates. In the case of the faculty level research, conducting research is part and parcel of the life of faculty members of the university. A faculty member is employed either as a lecturer or a research fellow. The research fellow is expected to use 75% and 25% of his or her working time on researching and lecturing respectively. The lecturer on the other hand is required to use 75% and 25% of his or her working time on

lecturing and researching respectively. Publishing enhances the CV of faculty members and provides them the opportunity to improve themselves.

Students identify relevant research topic of their interest and their respective university unit assigns faculty members (lecturers or research fellows) to supervise their thesis. The student writes a proposal on the research and conducts the research with guidance from the supervising lecturer or research fellow. The outcome of the research, the report, is assessed first by the supervising lecturer and then by external lecturers, often from other universities. Most students finance their own researches; a few who have scholarships may have funds from their scholarships for financing their research projects. The majority of the UG students finance their own research projects.

At the faculty level, the structure of a research organised is mainly determined by the source of funding for that research. In some cases, the size and scope of the research may be a determining factor. The study identified three (3) main structures for the organisation of faculty level research in UG; these could be described as formal, semi-formal and informal research structures.

The formal research structuring refers to the system established by the university for faculty members to access funding, from the University's research and conferences fund or the departmental budgets, for research. In a few instances, researches with low budgets are financed from departmental budgets. In this form of research structuring the university systems and procedures for accessing research funding and conducting research are fully complied with.

To conduct research in the UG through the formal structure, faculty members respond to call for proposals by the UG research and conferences fund. The faculty members write proposals for research projects of their choice. The proposals are first reviewed by research committees in their respective departments/schools/colleges; comments and inputs from committee members are incorporated and then submitted to the university's research and conferences committee for review and approval. The research and conferences committee assess all proposals and budgets using a set of criteria. Approved proposals receive funding for implementation. For a research that is funded by the research and conferences fund, the researcher is expected to submit six monthly progress reports and a final report to the research and conference committee through his/her Head of Department or Director of Institute or School.

It is important to mention that the formal research structure as described was established only two years ago, in 2007. The first butch of grantees received their

grants in the first quarter of this year, 2009. As at the time of this study, none of the grantees had submitted a progress report to the Research and Conferences Committee.

With the semi-formal research structuring, the research is funded by an external institution but it is organised in collaboration with the university. In this case, for instance, a faculty member or a department writes a proposal and gets funds from an external research institution and the funder signs a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the university/department (not with an individual faculty member) for the research to be conducted. The fund for the research is managed through the university's financial management system and the MOU spells out the roles and responsibilities of both parties. Usually the funder monitors and evaluates the work to ensure prudent use of funds and quality work.

The informal research structure is the most commonly used structure in the UG. Here the funds for the research are sourced from outside the university and contractual agreement for conducting the research is between the researcher and the funding institution; the university has no hand in it at all. In this case, the researcher receives and manages the research funds. He or she may form a research team or work single-handedly on the research. The reporting requirements as well as monitoring and evaluation are determined by the funding organisation. It is worth noting that though the university is not directly involved in this type of research, when the outcome is published, the university recognises it and credits the faculty member with it.

3.2   Research Unit Types

Research is mainstreamed into the entire academic structure of the university; it is conducted at all levels independently and interdependently. All faculty members are employed as lecturers or research fellows; the research fellows are expected to spend 75% of their working time conducting research and 25% teaching. The lecturers on the other hand spend 25% of their time researching and 75% teaching. It is thus obvious that, in addition to them being academic units, the Colleges, Faculties, Institutes, Schools, and Departments could be considered as research units

In addition to the academic units, the research units that formally exist in the University of Ghana are mainly research laboratories, research institutes and Centres of Research/Learning. Most of these units are attached to and managed by their respective colleges, departments, centres, schools or faculties but a number of the

research institutes operate as independent institutions within the university. Though most of the research units are located on the university campus, quite a number of them are located outside the university and sometimes out of the capital city.

There are no permanent or existing research teams in the University of Ghana. Research teams are formed for particular research projects. The research teams are often led by the Principal Investigator (PI), who is usually the originator of the research idea and the one who wrote the proposal for sourcing funding for that piece of research. For the „formal' and „semi-formal' structured research, the PI in collaboration of the school/faculty/college dean and administrator determines the establishment of the research team. In the case of an „informal' structured research, the PI may conduct the research alone or constitute a research team.

The organisation and functioning of all the Colleges, Faculties, Institutes, Schools, and Departments are governed by the statute of the University of Ghana but there are no established certification criteria for research units in the UG.

The study revealed that various units of the university and including the research units collaborate with their respective sector ministries whenever the need arises. For instance the various medical laboratories collaborate with the Ministry of Health and the agricultural research farms and laboratories work closely with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture on some projects. These not withstanding, there are no clear structural links between the university's research mechanism and the government body charged with higher education (i.e. the Ministry of Education). The study did not identify any structural links between the university research mechanism and other government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA) nor other entities outside of the university.

3.3   Perceptions and Opinions on the Functioning of such Structures

Many of the respondents view the formal system put in place for assessing research funding from the university as good. Others see the idea of a committee reviewing the proposals at the faculty/school/departmental level before submission to the research and conferences committee as a brilliant idea that is not functioning well. The review committees at that level do not make time to do critical review of the proposals; they quickly approve them and pass them over to the research and conferences committee. The lack of commitment to critically reviewing proposals at the unit levels is likely to be because these committees do not have the mandate to assess and approve proposals.

Perhaps the structure would function better if the research fund is decentralised and the sub-committees are mandated to assess and approve proposals at their levels.

3.4   STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES UG RESEARCH STRUCTURES

3.4.1 Strengths

Most of respondents commended UG's policy that requires that every faculty member (both research fellows and lecturers) uses a percentage of his or her time conducting research (75% for research fellows and 25% for lectures). This policy ensures that there is always a group of people conducting research and can lead to the university churning out research materials continuously.

Most faculty members interviewed admitted that UG is getting more funds for research now than ever before. They however think that the available funds for research are still not enough. Before the research and conferences fund was instituted, only about 2% of the total researches conducted in the university were funded from the University's budget. These were researches conducted through the „formal' structure. Research conducted through the „semi-formal' and „informal' structures constituted about 68% and 30% respectively. The institution of the research and conferences fund has increased the contribution of research conducted through the formal structure to about 20%, about 50% through the semi-formal structure and about 30% through the informal structure.

3.4.2 Weaknesses

Most of the faculty members interviewed alluded to the fact that staff assessment in the university is generally weak. They indicated that a system has been recently put in place to assess the performance of faculty members; they submit annual reports on their work to the Vice Chancellor, through their heads of departments, directors or deans. Faculty members do not receive any feedback on their reports; it is therefore difficult for them to know how they are performing and to learn from their mistakes. The lack of critical assessment of faculty members' performance also makes it difficult for the university to know who are really researching as expected of them and who are not.

It was striking to learn that the UG has no system in place to assess the quality and the authenticity of research outcomes. Under the „formal' structure of research, the

researcher is expected to submit six monthly progress reports as well as final reports to the research and conference committee through his or her dean, provost, director or departmental head. This study however uncovered that, so far the committee has not received any report yet. In fact the committee has not been mandated to assess the quality of any research. Many of the interviewees expressed the view that when a research is conducted using the „semi-formal' and „informal' structures, the funding organisations often take up the responsibility of ensuring quality work. Others were of the view that the publishers assess the quality of a research and that informs their decision to publish it or not.

The study revealed that though it is expected of all faculty members to undertake research, most of them do very little. Most of them tend to do pieces of work for outside institutions and end up writing technical reports instead of coming out with real research outcomes. Some of the respondents believe that those who are really doing research are the research institutions who receive external funding for research. In spite of this assertion, many of the respondents expressed the view that the situation has improved with the introduction of the research and conferencing fund and hoped that it will get better as the years go by.

In spite of the establishment of the research and conferences fund, many of the respondents are of the view that funding levels for research are low and the ceiling per grant is sometimes inadequate. Researchers are allowed to apply for funds up to GH¢30,000.

Most often when the university research units collaborate with international research institutions to conduct various researches, UG receive only a little fraction of the funds available for the research; though the UG researchers end up doing most of the work.

With researches sponsored by outside institutions, the funder often determines what investigations should be done regardless of what the research needs of the country or the research direction of the University.

3.5   Proposals towards Improving the Research Mechanism

The university should establish a finalised and robust research and ethics policy document. This will provide a framework for research work in the university.

More workshops on proposal writing and fundraising for research work should be organised for faculty members. This will help improve the funds available for research in the university.

The university should establish a system for assessing the quality and authenticity of research outcomes. This will serve as a check for researchers to do quality research and will improve people's trust and confidence in UG's research outcomes.

Decentralise the research and conferences fund. Various schools, faculties, colleges, institutions and departments should be allocated a portion of the research fund and sub-committees of the research and conferences committees mandated at that level to assess and approve research proposals. These sub-committees should also be responsible for monitoring and evaluating research projects in their units to ensure quality work.

External research funders should be flexible, not imposing research areas/topics but taking into consideration what the researcher finds relevant and wants to do.

4.0   INSTITUTIONAL STEERING OF RESEARCH

As mentioned earlier, research is mainstreamed into the academic work of the University of Ghana. As a result, (with the exception of the independent research institutes) the institutions that steer academic work in the university are also responsible for steering research. However, with the establishment of the research and conferences committee in 2007, the committee assesses and approves research proposals for funding by the university research and conferences fund. The School of Research and Graduate study is responsible for the management of the Research and Conferences Fund

The Research and Conferences Committee (RCC) is set up by the academic board of the university, members are drawn from various colleges, faculties, departments and institutes as well as the academic board. Members of the committee are appointed by the chairperson of the Faculty Board, usually Faculty Dean to represent their faculties on the committee for a two-year term. Committee members are replaced by their respective faculties when they retire or go on sabbatical leave.

Each faculty, school or college of the university has a committee that reviews proposals, shortlist them before they are forwarded to the School of Research and Graduate Studies to be reviewed by the RCC. The perceptions about the functioning for these committees were contradictory. While some indicated that they are not functioning well, others thought they are functioning quit well.

Research in the University of Ghana is funded through State funds, International funding and private funds (national and International). The government of Ghana through the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GET Fund) has given the UG $500,000 as funding for research and conferences. Various faculties and faculty members apply for research funding from international organisations and sometimes receive support to undertake various forms of researches. These international funding could be public or private funds. In addition some private companies in Ghana could support various research projects. This is not very common, it happens when the company is sure the research will be beneficial to them. These local private sector funding may come as consultancy fees to various faculty members or research units.

4.1   Existing Steering Instruments

For effective governance, there is the need for the institution and utilisation of some basic steering tools. The study revealed that the UG has no policy instrument on research neither does the university have a clear strategic plan or document on research. Information gathered from UG research and graduate school indicated that a process has been initiated to develop the policy document but many of the faculty members, research assistants and PHD students interviewed knew nothing about the development of such a policy document. A few faculty members indicated that they have one time or the other come across such a document but they were quick to admit that it might have outlived its usefulness. In any case, the researcher could not lay hands on any such instrument. Some of the respondents lamented on the negative effects of the absence of this policy. For instance, a foreign research institution visits Ghana, takes blood samples of a cross section of pregnant women in some public hospitals; various tests are conducted on these blood samples and the results sent away. Nobody gets to know what exactly the results were used for and there is no instrument in place to question this. Some of the Research Institutes claimed that they have strategic plans for research but none of them could show the consultant for this study a copy of their strategic plans

The university has no internal research evaluation mechanisms; there is neither instrument nor system in place for assessing the authenticity of research outcomes. The monitoring and evaluation of a research project is often taken care of by the funding organisations. The publishers determine the quality of a research outcome by accepting to publish it or rejecting it. For researches funded by the Research and Conferences

Fund, the researchers are expected to submit a six monthly progress report; the Committee has recently initiated a process of reviewing these progress reports.

4.2 Perceptions and Opinions on the Functioning of the Steering Instruments

4.2.1 Strengths

The UG has research grants available to faculty members to access for their research work. The RCC has a clear Terms of Reference (TOR) that guides their work and there is a Regulation on the Administration of the Research and Conferences Fund. This document is accessible to all since it is posted on the University's website.

The RCC is all inclusive; members are drawn from all faculties, schools and colleges to represent their respective faculties and functioning well. Almost all respondents who know about the operations of the RCC expressed appreciation for their work.

The establishment of faculty level research proposals review committees is a great idea; it gives faculty members the opportunity to make inputs into researches that their colleagues are proposing to conduct in their faculties. It also makes the work of their RCC easier since they do the initial short listing of the research proposals. Some respondents were however of the view that these committees are not functioning as they should.

The policy of compulsory researching and publishing for faculty members ensures that there is continuous Research in the University. It also provides faculty members the opportunity to improve upon their carrier and to enhance their CVs

4.2.2 Weaknesses

UG has neither a policy instrument nor a strategic plan for research. As a result of this weakness, there is coordination of research activities in the university (with the exception of researches funded by the UG's Research and Conferences Fund).

The study also noted that most of the research units are not focused on areas of research. They tend to work according to „where the money is'; the researches they conduct are only determined by research funders' request. Funders of various research projects specify their requirements and determine the quality of the research. This is ultimately because of the absence of strategic direction for research in the university and the faculties.

There is no system in place to enforce the policy on percentage lecturing and researching times for faculty members (lecturers and research fellows). This study revealed that most faculty members, including the research fellows, are doing more teaching at the detriment of research.

Research gets very little attention because its governance is mainstreamed into the university governance system. In fact, the formal governance of research in the university only relates to researches that are funded by the UG's Research and Conferences Fund. The other forms of research structuring (semi-formal and informal research structures) are left ungoverned.

The management and disbursement of the research grant is centralised, making it difficult for some faculty members (especially junior researchers) to access it. Some faculty members are of the view that the research fund will be easier to access if its management is decentralized.

The University has not established any mechanism for assessing the authenticity or quality of research; this is left for publishers and research funders to determine. Sometimes research reports are not reviewed within the units before they are sent out for publishing. Related to this is the fact that the university has no policy on the exploitation of research results.

It is striking that most of the student respondents do not know or have very limited knowledge about the RCF and the RCC. This is probably because the fund excludes student researchers completely.

4.4 Proposals towards Improving Steering Instruments and their Functioning

The UG should upscale award scheme to recognize faculty members and students who have distinguished themselves as outstanding researchers in each faculty. The University has a system of awarding outstanding researchers in the University annually. The study showed that many are not aware of this scheme and how it operates. The University should therefore upscale the scheme to cover each faculty as well as students. In addition to this, more awareness should be created on it so that more faculty members and student researchers will be motivated by it to do better.

The need for the university to establish a finalised and robust Research and Ethics Policy document as soon as possible cannot be overemphasised. This will serve as a guide for all research activities in the University. It will also provide a framework for the

various university units and research institutes to develop their own internal policies to govern research. A research policy for UG should not be limited to the formal structure of research only; it should cover the semi-formal and the informal structures of research also.

In spite of what research funders' requirements and monitoring and evaluation systems may be, it is extremely important that the UG establishes a system for assessing the quality and authenticity of research outcomes. This system should not be limited to assessing only the end product, the outcome of the research, it should include a system of monitoring to ensure that what researchers present as their findings were arrived at through the right processes. In this respect, the assessment of the quality of a research should include an assessment of the methodologies used to arrive at the outcomes.

The UG should consider decentralising the management of the Research and Conferences Fund. The various colleges, schools, faculties and research institutions should be given quotas of the fund to manage at that level. A clear guideline should be put in place for the assessment of proposals and selection of beneficiaries. This will enable the various units to focus on areas of research, they consider most relevant for the development of the country. In addition, decentralising the management of the fund will make it more accessible especially to junior faculty members.

5.0   OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH

All types of research are conducted in UG, basic research, applied research, discipline research and multi-disciplinary/pluri-disciplinary/cross-disciplinary research. The operational management of research in the University depends on the research structuring type. The management of researches that fall under the formal and semi-formal structures are managed differently from those that fall under the informal structuring type. The management of the formal and semi-formal structured researches form the standards of managing research in UG.

5.1   University Research Management Tools

Research teams are formed to undertake various researches. The composition of the team is determined by the type of research. These teams of investigators form the main implementing body for a particular research and are led by the Principal Investigator.

The person who wrote the proposal or led in the writing of the proposal for a particular research becomes the Principal Investigator

The management of the formal and semi-formal research structured types is based on the administrative and Financial Manual of UG. When a research grant is received, it is deposited in the research unit's bank account. Implementing the project, the principal investigator writes to request for amounts needed as and when necessary. The request is reviewed and approved by the head of the unit (Dean, Director or Provost, etc.) based on the budget for the project. The finance officer writes the cheque for the appropriate signatories to sign. At the department level, the principal investigator writes a request to his or her head of department who in turn writes to the dean for approval and release of funds based on the project budget.

The administrative support required for any piece of research depends on the size of the project. For large scaled, long term projects, an office may be set up for the project while smaller scaled research may require minimum administrative support. In all cases, the principal investigator determines what administrative support is required (often stated in the proposal) and he or she involves the unit's administrator in all administrative issues. For instance though the principal investigator and his team of investigators determine what recruitments are required, the administrator is very much involved in the recruitment processes whenever necessary. The university charges 10% of research funds as a contribution to its administrative cost.

The funding organisation of a research monitors and evaluates the project to ensure quality. The university has no monitoring and evaluation system in place for research. In addition, though the university recognises the outcomes of various research projects that faculty members undertake and credit them for their work, it is the research publishers who determine the authenticity/quality of research outcomes, not the university. Again, UG has no policy on the exploitation of research results

The environment for research is generally conducive in Ghana. This is as a result of the peaceful atmosphere that the country is enjoying. However, getting information is a difficult task in Ghana. The access to information bill is yet to be passed into law. On the contrary, some respondents described the environment for the researcher as not a very friendly one, in their view; this is because there are no too many people in a particular area of study so there is minimum support and ideas to tap from.

The University has a well functioning Financial and Administrative Manual that guides all financial management and administrative work in the University. Since research funds (under the formal and semi-formal structures) are managed through the university financial management system, accountability is assured. Among other things, the

manual spells out the procedures for recruiting staff of the university, faculty members and supporting staff. These procedures are also implemented when recruitments are done for research purposes.

UG produces five (5) Research Journals:
1. Legon Journal of Sociology
2. Research review of the institute of African Studies
3. Legon Journal of the Humanities
4. Ghana Social Science Journal
5. Management and Organisation, University of Ghana Business School (UGBS) Journal

The University has no incentive scheme to motivate research personnel, however all research and teaching faculty members are given GH¢500 annually as book and research allowance.

5.2 Perceptions and Opinions on the Functioning and Efficiency of such Tools

5.2.1 Strengths

With researches that are funded by the university, faculty members research on areas driven by their own interest and passion, research areas are not imposed on them. This promotes ownership and commitment from the researchers leading to best research results.

Though there is still more room for improvement, infrastructure in the UG has improved tremendously over the years, e.g. faculty members now have access to computers and broad band internet facilities. The human capacity available in the university for researching is also improving. The UG has more qualified researchers now than ever before in the history of the university.

The university is adopting various strategies to encourage young teaching and research fellows to improve upon their carriers. For instance, currently all faculty members at UG are required to be at least PhD holders. Some young faculty members who are recruited without the PhD are given scholarships to do their PhD and are also given less teaching hours to enable them to concentrate on their PhD programmes.

The establishment of research committees at the faculty, college and departmental levels helps to ensure relevance of researches that faculty members propose to do.

5.2.2 Weaknesses

In spite of the institution of the Research and Conferences Fund, there is a still insufficient fund for research work in the university. Over 70% of faculty members who apply for the fund are turned down just because the funds are insufficient.

Most of the research units are not very focused on areas of research. Sometimes, the researches they conduct are determined by where the money is coming from and not their own strategic focus. Though this can largely be attributed to the lack of strategic planning, insufficient funding for research in the university is a contributing factor.

Most often, research reports are not formally reviewed or assessed within the university units before they are sent out for publishing. In some cases, especially in the research institutes, ad hoc committees are set up to review various research reports. In such cases, sometimes the review of the reports in house takes too long a time and tends to delay publishing; this is often when the committee members are not available for the assessment.

There are too many bureaucratic bottlenecks in relation to the release of funds for the implementation of research. It takes too long a time to access funds that are placed in the custody of the university units to implement research projects.

There is weak staff assessment in UG. All teaching and research staff submit an annual report on all their work, both teaching and research, in the year to their heads of departments. Most often faculty members do not receive any feedback on their reports. Some of the departmental heads argued that the University has a policy of "no news is good news" meaning a faculty member will only be given feedback if there is a problem. Admittedly, feedback to faculty members on their performance would go a long way to help them improve upon their work.

5.3   Good Practices and Problems in Research Management

Engaging qualified researchers to conduct research in the research units is not restricted to members of that unit only. Qualified researchers are engaged from within and outside the various university units to conduct research. There is strong sense of

collaboration among the various units of the university so far as research is concerned. Conscious efforts are made to promote multidisciplinary research which in turn promotes collaboration among various units and sectors of the university.

The collaboration on research is not limited to units within the UG only; it extends to other universities, government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA), Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and all other relevant stakeholders

Conscious efforts are made to ensure Gender Balance in the recruitment of faculty members

The University produces five Research Journals which provide space for the publishing of research outcomes in the University.

Peer Review of Research reports – researchers send their research reports to a number of their peers to review and make inputs into them before the reports are sent to the publisher.

UG publishes all researches and publications that come out of the University annually. Printed copies are widely disseminated and also made available at relevant places in the university. This publication is also posted on the University website thus making it accessible to the general public

5.4   Proposals towards Improving Management Tools and their Functioning

The study gathered the following proposals towards improving management tools and their functioning:

- The university should organise more workshops and seminars on research management and proposal writing

- More attention to be paid to students' research ; UG should consider students' research beyond academic exercise

- Research administrators should recognise that research projects are different, depending on the discipline. They should therefore not have a stereotype approach to all types of researches. They should be flexible to adopt their administrative roles to respond the peculiarities of the types of researches.

- Young researchers should be attached to senior faculty members as their mentors. This will enable them to write good quality proposals and get funding to undertake research on their own.

- Small grants should be made available for students' research. This could be a quota of the RCF

- The annual awards UG gives to outstanding researchers should be extended to include Junior Faculty Members and Students.

- External research funders should be flexible, allowing the researcher to express what he or she wants to do within the funder's broader framework.

6.0 MAJOR ISSUES, NEEDS AND PROMISING APPROACHES TO BE SUPPORTED

6.1 Major Issues and Challenges Facing the University Research Governance

Faculty members are giving more attention to teaching at the detriment of research. This is because of the increasing student population in the University and the inability of UG to recruit more faculty members. There is a limitation on the number of faculty members UG can recruit due to budgetary constraints. There is therefore pressure on the limited faculty members to cover more lecture hours than expected. In addition, various new programmes are developed in the university by the day which requires faculty members teaching hours.

As a result of limited funding for research, many faculty members tend to undertake more consultancy assignments than the research. Some of these consultancy assignments could be research but most of them are studies that fall short of the critical analysis and conclusive outcomes that researches generate.

Faculty members undertake consultancy assignments for their clients, come out with technical reports and sometimes present them as research outcomes. Such reports often lack the critical analysis that needs to go into a research and should therefore not be classified as research materials.

Sometimes researches initiated are abandoned midway, e.g. data collected are left unprocessed. This is often as a result of insufficient funding, lack of self motivation and the absence of a monitoring and evaluation system for research projects.

There are no formal/structural linkages between researchers and neither industry nor policy makers so most research findings neither feed into policies nor industry. However, some informal collaboration goes on between the policy makers and various faculty members. E.g. a faculty member may be engaged by a company or a policy making body to conduct specific research that will be fed into a policy.

All researchers and research institutions compete for research funds both at the local and international fronts. The UG research institutions are often in a disadvantaged position since they have to compete with stronger and more experienced research centres. They are better placed when some international research centres find the need to partner with them to bid for the research funds. In addition, the competition for limited research funds requires that the researcher is abreast with the sources of funding, both locally and internationally. This requires a lot of time and hard work to identify the available sources of funds and write proposals to apply for them.

6.2   Approaches that is Worth Supporting

Some of the available research funds make partnership with local/international institutions compulsory/conditional thus creating the opportunity for such collaborations to happen.

Some higher learning focused organisations such as the Association of African Universities (AAU) sponsor inter-Universities exchange programmes on research. This promotes learning and sharing among university lecturers and research fellows.

Currently in Ghana, though one cannot find formal structural linkages between research and industry as well as between research and the society/policy making, various forms and levels of collaborations exist. It is worth identifying these loose collaborative linkages and strengthening them. Indeed, formalising some of such linkages would make research findings most useful. It is therefore important to support the establishment of linkages between University research and industry and national policy making.

The absence of a finalised Research and Ethics Policy in UG is a great challenge to research governance in the University. Supporting the establishment of a finalised

Research and Ethics Policy Document in UG will go a long way to promote research activities in the University.

Supporting the establishment of a Research and Ethics Policy in UG can be best done if there is a national policy on research in Ghana. The national research policy will provide a framework within which all other universities in Ghana as well as research institutions, outside the universities, would situate their research agenda.

6.3   Capacity-building Prospects

In addition to the above approaches that are worth supporting, the study identified a number of capacity building needs that could be supported through training programmes. These include training in research project management and administration; fund raising and research project proposal writing; disseminating and promoting research results and research strategic planning.

6.3.1 Research Project Management and Administration

Building the capacity of the faculty members in research management and administration could be done through organised training events, in-house mentoring or exchange visits to understudy practices in other universities. Beneficiaries of such capacity building activities could include: the Research and Conferences Committee members, research administrators at the various research units, Provosts, Deans and Directors and their deputies as well as all research fellows in the university. This is necessary because all of the above groups of people are involved, in one way or the other in the management of research and the training will enable them to better manage and administer research activities in the university.

The content of such trainings should include but not limited to research project structure, research team coordination/management, laboratory management, Research administration, planning, implementation of research Project, monitoring and evaluation, collaborating with outside researchers etc.The trainings should be designed as practical as possible to enable them to use the knowledge in their work.

Junior/young research fellows could be assigned to senior/experienced ones for mentoring within the university. Again some beneficiaries could be sponsored to understudy experienced research managers and administrators and observe good practices in other universities.

6.3.2 Fund Raising and Research Project Proposal writing

The challenge of having to raise funds for research activities in the University cannot be overemphasised. As indicated earlier, individual researchers and research units are constantly competing with other researchers and research units globally for the limited funds available for research. In addition to this, faculty members also write proposals as they compete with each other to access the limited Research and Conferences Fund available to them in the University of Ghana. It is therefore extremely important that faculty members receive regular training on research proposal writing and other forms of fund raising techniques.

This is even more important for members of the RCC who are constantly reviewing proposals for research funding. This will enable them to do better assessment of the proposals they receive and to support the applicants to improve upon them. A better understanding of proposal writing and fundraising will possibly lead to more funds available to support research and research governance in the university.

6.3.4 Disseminating/ promoting research results

A good understanding of the importance of disseminating and promoting research results will lead to the utilisation of the research finding by the appropriate stakeholders. It is therefore relevant for research managers, administrators and faculty members to be trained on how to effectively and efficiently disseminate and promote research results.

6.3.5 Research Strategic Planning

The absence of strategic plans for the entire UG research as well as for the various research units was found as a major weakness in the governance of research in the University. The RCC members, Provosts, Deans, Directors and research administrators should be trained on strategic planning and be supported to develop strategic plans for their units and the University. This will provide direction for research in the university as well as in the various research units.

7.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

The government of Ghana should put in place a national research policy. This will form a framework in which all research activities in Ghana will be situated. This will also provide legal guidance for research in the country

The UG should establish a finalised and robust research and ethics policy document.

The Government of Ghana should improve upon the provision of basic infrastructure that will make research work easier and smoother. E.g. research software and database.

There is the need to increase the funds available for research in UG and increase the ceiling for the funding where necessary. This could be done by the Government increasing the amount it currently gives to the University for Research ($500,000 annually). In addition to that, various faculties and research units should step up their fundraising business to raise more funds for research.

Instead of relying on funds from government specifically earmarked for research alone, UG should consider allocating a percentage of the University's total annual revenue to research. This will boost up research activities tremendously in the university.

UG should establish a monitoring and evaluation system that will track the performance of faculty members in terms of research and also assess the authenticity of research outcomes.

A quota of the Research and Conferences Fund (RCF) should be allocated for junior researchers and another quota for students' research.

Funders of research activities should provide flexible funding for research, the researcher should be given a say in the area of research to be conducted.

UG should decentralise the management of the RCF. Allocations should be given to colleges, schools and faculties to be managed and disbursed at that level. This will make the fund more accessible and researches conducted more relevant.

8.0   CONCLUSION

The importance of research in national development cannot be overemphasized. Research is so relevant in tackling the problems faced by people in Africa in many areas and in promoting national development. For effective and efficient research in a higher learning institution like the University of Ghana, there should be a good research governance system in place. The study identified some strengths and weaknesses in the state of research governance in the University of Ghana; with respect to the organization of research, Institutional Steering of Research and the management of research. The study also identified issues that could be supported, capacity building requirements and the researcher made a number of recommendations to the government of Ghana, the University of Ghana, research funders and researchers.

There are three (3) main structuring types for the organisation of research in UG, formal, semi-formal and informal research structures. The structure of research is mainly determined by the source of funding, size and scope of the research

The organisation and functioning of the academic structures, Colleges, Faculties, Institutes, Schools and Departments, are governed by the statute of the University of Ghana but there are no established certification criteria for research units in UG. Research is mainstreamed into the entire academic structure of the university

Various research units have no formal structural links with government agencies but they collaborate with their respective sector ministries, Civil Society organisations (CSO) and private companies whenever necessary.

The institutions that steer academic work in the university are also responsible for steering research.

The Research and Conferences Committee (RCC) assesses and approves research proposals for funding by the University Research and Conferences Fund (RCF). The RCF is managed by the School of Research and Graduate Studies (SRGS).

UG has no policy document on research neither does the university have a strategic plan for research. Again the University has no internal Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms for research

All types of research exist in the UG. The University has a well functioning administrative and financial manual that is also used for the management of the formal and semi-formal research structured types.

The environment for research is generally conducive in Ghana but the University has no incentive scheme to motivate research personnel,

In addition to the gaps identified in the governance of research, the following major issues that could be supported were identified:

- Faculty members are giving more attention to teaching and other consultancy assignments to the detriment of research

- Sometimes researches initiated are abandoned midway.

- There are neither formal/structural linkages between researchers and industry nor are there formal/structural linkages between researchers and policy makers so most research findings neither feed into policies nor industry.

Capacity building requirements captured include training in: research project management and administration; fund raising and research project proposal writing; disseminating and promoting research results and research strategic planning.

The following recommendations were made for the nation Ghana, University of Ghana and technical and financial partners:

The government of Ghana should put in place a National Research Policy and provide more infrastructures to promote research governance in UG.

UG should establish various relevant policy documents and systems for effective governance of research. The University should make more funds available for research and endeavour to motivate researchers in their work. UG should decentralise the management of the RCF

Funders of research activities should provide flexible funding for research, the researcher should be given a say in the area of research to be conducted

Indeed in order to improve upon the state of research governance in the University of Ghana, Ghana as a nation needs to recognize the importance of research in national development and establish policies to enhance research activities and the utilization of research findings in policy making and in industry.

Also, the University of Ghana needs to recognize that there is far more to ensuring effective research governance than the establishment of a research grant and a committee to see to its disbursement.

9.0   ANNEX

Table 1: Research Bonus and Allowance Received by Researchers

Types	Amounts	Frequency	Eligibility conditions, given in return for
Research bonus	Nil		
Research allowance	$333.3	Annually	All teaching and research faculty members are eligible
Other research allowance	Nil		

Table 2: List of Research Centres

N°	List of research centres	Single discipline	Multi - disciplinary
1	Legon Centre for International Affairs		√
2	Centre for gender Studies and Advocacy		√
3	Centre for Migration Studies		√
4	Centre for Social Policy Studies		√
5	Volta basin Research Project		√
6	Language Centre		√
7	West Africa centre for Crop Improvement	√	
8	Agricultural Research Centre - Kede	√	
9	Agricultural Research Centre - Kpong	√	
10	Agricultural Research Centre - Legon	√	
11	Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research		√
12	Institute of African Studies		√
13	Regional Institute for Population studies	√	
14			

			√
15	Ecology Laboratory Centre		√
15	Centre for Tropical Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics		√
16	International Centre for African Music and Dance	√	
17	Legon botanical Garden	√	
18	Legon Seismological Observatory	√	
19	Biotechnology Centre		√

Table 3: List of Research Laboratories

N°	List of Research laboratories
1	Ecological Laboratory
2	Language Laboratory
3	Biotechnology Laboratory
4	Crop Science Laboratory
5	Soil Science Laboratory
6	Animal Science Laboratory
7	Physics Laboratory
8	Chemistry Laboratory
9	Botany Laboratory
10	Zoology Laboratory
11	Nutrition and food Science Laboratory
12	Geology Laboratory
13	Biochemistry Laboratory
14	Noguchi memorial Institute Laboratories
15	Medical School Laboratories

Table 4: Research Journals Produced In the University of Ghana

N°	List of Journals	Department/Institute/School
1	Legon Journal of Sociology	Sociology Department
2	Research Review	Institute of African Studies
3	The Legon journal of the Humanities	Social Science Department
4	Ghana Social Science Journal	Social Science Department
5	Management and Organisation Journal	University of Ghana Business School (UGBS)

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