State of Research in the Somali Higher Education Institutions 2022

Study Highlights

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Outline

- Policy and strategy
- Research capabilities
- Research Focus Areas and Output
- Opportunities for developing research

About the Study

- Qualitative survey
- 22 member institutions interviewed
- Pending desk reviews for benchmarking purposes and these discussions

Research Policy and Strategy

- All the universities in the study indicated that research is a priority, and has been accommodated in their strategic plan

- Some of the universities are working on the development of their research policy; but none had a written research policy as a separate document

- Ethical review boards have been established by some of the universities

- Few of the universities demonstrated or indicated budgetary commitment to research development
  - Research budgets ranged from $0 to over $100,000 for research grants, research capacity building etc. (0-4% of the annual budget)
  - The budget allocation have been smaller this year relative to the previous one due to financial constraints

- Ranking officer in charge of research reports to either:
  - The academic department (vice president, academics) – the majority
  - Independent office reporting to the president of the university – 20/22 institutions

- New research centers have been established by the universities

- The leadership of the university themselves are involved in research and research training. A good indicator of how committed the institution is to research.

Research capabilities

- Very few dedicated research staff except for the head of research in the university in most cases
- Capabilities reported:
  - Well-grounded research methodology
  - Quantitative research and data analysis skills
- Shortage of qualified researchers reported as manp
- Research partnerships:
  - Most MoUs signed by the universities have an element of research collaboration
  - Implementation of the agreements and the execution is a challenge
- Key weakness areas:
  - Qualitative data analysis
  - Language skills for report writing

Research Focus Areas and Outputs

- A growing trend of publications, research activities and conferences in the last 5 years
- Focus areas:
  - Economics and social science
  - Health sciences
  - Veterinary and agriculture
  - Computing and information technology
- A few institutions have annual research journals
- Collaboration
- Some have launched recently their research repositories
- Publications in high impact journals are a challenge. There is a need to build skills to identify high impact journals, the publishing process and establishing research/co-publishing partnerships

Research facilities

- Some of the universities reported their computer labs and other teaching labs as the key research facilities at their disposal

- Insufficient clinical labs for medical research

- Access to digital research libraries a big challenge

- Facilities our institutions need to improve research output:
  - Medical labs
  - More computer labs
  - Software for research data analysis

Research issues

- Lack of sufficient funding is cited as the biggest challenge to research development in the member institutions

- Management commitment is also a key impediment

- Collaboration opportunities:
  - Research collaboration between the counterpart faculties
  - Shared research training
  - Joint applications for research grants
  - Launching research repositories and journals
  - Empowering the communities of practices which shall comprise of professionals and researchers from across all the institutions as effective platforms for collaboration

The State of Research Report

- An annual publication that aims to:
  - Track and measure the progress of our institutions in terms of research development
  - Give a snapshot of the state of research output by our member institutions
  - Propose solutions that empower research development across the members
  - Benchmark our institutions' research development against those of other countries
- The process:
  - An annual qualitative and quantitative data collection exercise
  - A desk review of the research development practice around the world for benchmarking purposes
- The first official issue is to be released in August