



Policy Title	Policy on Research Professors
Scope of Application <i>(All persons to whom policy applies)</i>	All academic & Research staff.
Parties Consulted (Development) <i>(State the stakeholder group/s consulted during policy formulation/revision)</i>	Executive Deans, Academic Staff, HR and Finance
Parties Consulted <i>(State the stakeholder group/s consulted during policy formulation/revision)</i>	Executive Deans, Academic Staff, HR and Finance
Policy Owner	DVC: Research, Innovation, Commercialisation, and Internationalisation.
Policy Implementer <i>(A person doing the implementation and monitoring)</i>	Directorate of Research
POLICY HISTORY <i>(To be Completed by Policy Owner)</i> <p>This policy is completely new. It has been developed to address a policy gap in the creation of the position and appointment of Research Professors at Vaal University of Technology. This policy does not replace the existing Policy on Academic Appointments.</p> <p>Many other South African Universities of Technology have created similar positions without accompanying policy guideline, so an attempt at benchmarking exercise did not yield any helpful reference material or information to consider in developing this policy except for one, the University of South Africa. Therefore, in finalising the VUT Policy, the Unisa Policy was taken into consideration.</p> <p>It has become necessary to develop policy and procedures as well as criteria for making such Research Professor appointments.</p>	

cy Number	Resolution Number	Status	Implementation Date	Approving Authority	Next Review Date
<i>(Unique number assigned to each policy)</i>		<i>(New/Revised/No Status)</i>	<i>(Compulsory if 'New' or 'Revised')</i>		<i>(Date of which the committee approves revision proposal)</i>



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1 POLICY STATEMENT

The Vaal University of Technology (VUT) is developing and growing its research culture. The university seeks to improve on its research productivity and visibility. The Research Professor position was introduced as early as 2012 in order to support the Institutional Research Strategy. However, the introduction of this critical intervention mechanism was not accompanied by any policy development. Research Professor positions and appointments were largely linked to the various faculties and Research Institutes. It has become necessary that such appointments follow approved policy with clear guidelines.

These critical appointments therefore remain as relevant now and even more critical as the university rebuilds and position itself for the future. Therefore, these research appointments will be made to support and strengthen approved Research Centres, Research Institutes and Faculties in the further development of approved research focus areas.

The purpose of this policy therefore is to set out the terms and conditions for the appointment of Research Professors, together with their activities, expected outcomes and terminations of Research Professor contracts. In addition, this policy seeks to ensure accountability in the implementation and evaluation of the Research Professor position.

2. SCOPE

The Research Professor position should normally be affiliated to Research Centres, Research Institutes and Faculties. The aim of the appointment will be to support and strengthen research at VUT.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation and Commercialisation (DVC RIC) will be charged with the responsibility of administering the Research Professorship Policy and ensuring that appointments, activities, outcomes and terminations comply with this policy and that the terms of individual Memoranda of Agreement with each appointee are compliant to the outcomes as stipulated in this policy.

This policy will apply to all Research Professor positions linked with Research Centres, Research Institute and Faculties and with any other entity that appoints Research Professors.

3. LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The Research Professorship Policy is aligned with and contributes directly to the VUT Strategic Plan and takes into consideration other approved policies such as: Appointment Categories and Conditions of Employment Policy, Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy, Criteria for Appointment and Promotion of Academics Policy, Research Funding Policy; Intellectual Property Rights Policy; Research Ethics Policy; and Grants and Contracts Policy.

At all times, Research Professors must comply with all VUT Policies and procedures in executing their responsibilities.

This policy is also aligned to the 2019 White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation and the Department of Home Affairs Policy on Critical Skills.

This policy should also be in line and address the regulations and equity targets in the Basic Employment Act as amended

4. DEFINITIONS

- **Research Professor:** This title or appointment is parallel to Professors as per policy on Academic Appointments. This title will however be used specifically to refer to those individuals who hold a terminal degree appropriate to the discipline, have made outstanding contributions in research and technology development, have demonstrated excellent ability to lead a group of students or staff teams in undertaking research and have also demonstrated substantial ability to generate external funding. Ordinarily, unless a deviation is approved by the DVC (RICI), the appointment will be linked to Research Institutes, Research Centres of Excellence and Faculties to develop university identified and approved Research Focus areas.
- **Faculty** refers to the specific faculty with departments which has undertaken to host the Research Professors.
- **Research Institute** refers an approved Research Institute in line with the VUT framework on Research Entities as approved by ManCom.
- **Research Centre:** This refers to a VUT Research Centre which has been approved in line with the VUT approved framework for Research Entities.
- **Conditions of appointments:** refers to the specific appointment conditions of the Research Professor position
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** is the agreement between the Faculty Executive Dean or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on the one hand and the Research Professor on the other, defining the expectations of each by the other.
- **Research output:** refers to output as recognised in the Policy and Procedures for Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Public Education Institutions namely:
Peer reviewed periodical publications such as research articles, research letters, research papers and review articles.
Books such as monographs, chapters and edited scholarly contributions
Proceedings such as record of a conference, congress, symposia or other meetings whose purpose is to disseminate original research.
Completed research masters and doctoral degrees.
- **MANCOM:** Refers to the University Management Committee.

5. POLICY MANDATE

The aim of this policy is to ensure accountability and streamline the implementation and evaluation of the Research Professorship position at VUT.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To provide for the qualifying criteria to be used in the appointment of Research Professors.
- To provide a process for VUT towards the appointment of suitable Research Professors.
- To provide the framework for the successful functioning of these Research Professor positions.
- To provide conditions for the performance assessment and renewal or termination process of such positions

6. RULES/ GUIDELINES

This section of the document outlines the eligibility, mechanisms of appointment, privileges, responsibilities, expected outcomes, process of renewal or extension and termination of the Research Professorship.

6.1 Eligibility:

The position of Research Professor is open for an application by any Professor at VUT who meets the requirements for the position. It is also open to Professors from other universities locally and internationally.

6.2 Criteria:

The candidate should normally be a professor who has demonstrated considerable research output in the previous (preceding) 5 years.

The candidate should have a current NRF rating and should renew such rating if it lapses during the 5-year tenure. In the event of Professors from outside South Africa, they should be required to submit for the NRF rating within six months after the appointment is made. The continuation of the appointment will be conditional to an NRF rating.

The candidate should have a considerable training record for the successful supervision of masters and doctoral students. Considerable refers to at least 10 masters and 5 doctoral students graduated in the previous 5 years.

The candidate should have attracted sufficient external research funding to provide for the planned research plan.

The candidate should have extensive industry collaboration and has been successful in innovation and technology development.

6.3 Mechanism of Appointment

The call for submission of applications by eligible candidates for vacant VUT Research Professorships will be made once a year as determined by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation, Commercialization and Internationalisation (RICI). The position will be advertised externally as well as internally. The adverts will also be placed on the university website and circulated amongst staff of the university.

Applicants must submit their applications directly to the Executive Director Human Resources and copy the potential suitable host. The Executive Director Human Resources will liaise with the suitable host and the Executive Dean for processing the application of the candidate.

Submitted applications should include:

- Detailed CV
- Certified approved Qualifications from Undergraduate studies on wards
- Teaching Philosophy
- Research Philosophy

Detailed curriculum vitae. The Curriculum vitae should include all publication outputs (accredited and non-accredited), the names of students trained and qualifications awarded, and the external research grants obtained in the previous five years.

Detailed Research plan for the period of appointment by VUT. The Research plan must indicate the sources of research funding from external agencies or industry, the envisaged research publications and the number of students to be recruited and trained.

An application should also include a recommendation from the Executive Dean of the relevant host Faculty, Research Institute or Research Centre. Such a recommendation from the Executive Dean should indicate the kind of support from the Faculty to enable the success of the Research Professorship position

The Executive Director Human Resources should solicit letters of support from the Faculty Executive Dean and an external referee.

The University will establish a Research Professor Appointment Committee to be chaired by the DVC(RICI). The role of the Research Professor Appointment Committee will be to interview the candidate and make recommendations to MANCOM.

Once a candidate has been appointed, it is expected that they enter into an agreement through a MoU with the Faculty Executive Dean. Such an MoU will detail the expected support from the Faculty and University as well as the expected annual outputs and outcomes.

6.4 Privileges and responsibilities**Privileges:**

The appointed Research Professor will be accorded the same status and privileges of a Professor appointed at VUT. They will also be expected to attend Senate and Senate Research and Innovation Committee.

The Research Professor will qualify for support of at least one research assistant funded by the host Faculty.

The Research Professorship will be tenable for 5 years with a possible renewal based on the performance of the candidate. There is no limit of renewals unless the candidate reaches retirement age.

The Research Professor will be subject to annual performance assessment and mid-tenure evaluation.

The Research Professor will have a reduced undergraduate teaching load but will still be expected to teach.

If the appointed Research Professor is from VUT (internal appointment), the candidate will be entitled to return to their previous position at VUT after the 5-year term has ended or if the appointment is not renewed. If the appointed Research Professor is from outside VUT, the Research Professor will not be entitled to return to any position at VUT if the position is not renewed.

Responsibilities:

- Undertaking of research in line with the submitted research plan.
- Training and supporting of masters and doctoral students until graduation.
- Mentoring of staff members within the University.
- Apply for external funding to support research plan.
- Submit at least twice per years submit Progress Research report based on the approved research plan.
- ensure that a NRF rating is maintained at all times.

6.5 Expected outcomes

The Research Professor is expected to produce the required research output as per the agreed upon research plan. This should include, students graduating, research papers, attendance of conferences and conference proceedings, technology development as well as applications for external research funds. In addition to the research outputs, the candidate is expected to conclude collaborative partnerships either with Industry or other universities.

6.6 Evaluation and Reappointment

At year 4 of the appointment tenure, the University must establish a review committee to be chaired by the DVC(RICI). Such committee will assess the achievement of the previous 3 years based on the agreed upon research plan. The committee will also review the potential success of the candidate in the event that the renewal is approved. The Research Professor must submit a report on the achievements based on the approved research plan.

The DVC (RICI) should then submit the recommendation to ManCom after which the Research Professor will be informed of the outcome of such an assessment.

The University should also consider the continued support for post graduate students should the appointment not be renewed.

6.7 Hosting Department/Faculty:

The hosting department or Faculty is expected to provide material support to the Research professor. Such material support must include adequate laboratory or office space, laboratory assistant, appropriate networking and computer devices.

Where necessary, the University or the Faculty should provide seed funding to support the research plan pending the awards of external grants.

7. DEVIATION FROM THIS POLICY

Deviations from this policy must be approved by the Senate.

8. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY AND REVISION PERIOD

- 8.1 Once the policy is approved by the ManCom for implementation, the policy should go into effect and guide all activities relating to Research Professor position. An annual progress report must be submitted by the Research Directorate to both Senate and University management on the effective implementation of this policy.
- 8.2. This policy should apply retrospectively. Research Professors appointed in the previous 5 years will also be required to follow this policy. They should provide a Research plan and apply for an NRF rating.
- 8.3 This policy should be evaluated at the end of 5 years of implementation and revisions should be made if necessary.
- 8.4 Key activities and their respective outcomes set out in this policy will be evaluated at the end of each year to evaluate progress made in implementing this policy.

NOTE: This policy was customised for VUT based on the UNISA Policy on Research Professorships.