



WEILL BUGANDO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

RESEARCH POLICY

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FOREWORD

Research plays a significant role in Weill Bugando School of Medicine (WBSoM), which commits to promoting and intensifying research activities. To ensure that we can compete in the national and globally competitive environment, this commitment to the research is aligned with Catholic University of Health Sciences (CUHAS) research policy, and the national imperative to increase the production of research outputs to expand the pool of researchers that can contribute to knowledge production and generation in our society. The various departments of WBSoM are all already involved in some form of research, but there is a need to harmonize all such research activities. This will invariably improve sharing of results with regional, national, and international partners leading to better practice outcomes. It will also have a positive impact on monitoring and evaluation of research activities within the school. The research policy provides a wealth of information about the vision and missions of WBSoM and its innovative training programs. However good health research is always underpinned by adherence to guidelines, ethical conduct of research and to rights and well-being of participants. These call for an appropriate legal framework with ethical standards well understood by all stakeholders (researchers, sponsors, participants, health authorities, policymakers and funding agencies).

This research policy is meant to be a guide to our researchers and other stakeholders when formulating and undertaking research activities. We hope that stakeholders will find this document a valuable source of information and indeed reference material whenever one wants to engage or support research activities at WBSoM and CUHAS in general.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome
BMC	Bugando Medical Centre
BUCHS	Bugando University College of Health Sciences
CME	Continuing Medical Education
CUHAS	Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences
ENT	Ear, Nose and Throat
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IRB	Institutional Review Board
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPH	Master of Public Health
MUHAS	Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences
NIMR	National Institute of Medical Research
NTD	Neglected Tropical Disease
REC	Research Ethical Committee
SAUT	Saint Augustine University of Tanzania
SUA	Sokoine University of Agriculture
TCU	Tanzania Commission for Universities
TEC	Tanzania Episcopal Conference
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam
URT	United Republic of Service
WBSom	Weill Bugando School of Medicine

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Research is a core element of daily activities for Weill Bugando School of Medicine (WBSoM). The need for a close collaborative effort in research between clinicians and basic scientists has become paramount to motivate research, create a thriving research environment and reward research productivity. Adopting a common operational framework in all the steps of research will allow an increased performance and a better coordination of research.

1.2 RESEARCH WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF WBSoM STRATEGIC PLAN

1.2.1 WEILL BUGANDO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Weill Bugando School of Medicine was established in 2003 as the only faculty of Bugando University College of Health Sciences (BUCHS), which was a constituent college of Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT). The vision was to *“to become an outstanding Tanzanian Catholic Medical School excelling in health care, training, and research; while remaining responsive to societal needs.”* The establishment of the school was made to implement Tanzania Episcopal Conference’s (TEC) primary objective namely: *“to establish in Tanzania a place which would train skilled and competent human resources in the health sector; a human resource that was vested with moral and ethical values that could advance the frontiers of knowledge and provide quality services to the individual and the community”*. The school was named “Weill Bugando School of Medicine” in honour of the first collaborating partner, Sandy Weill of the Citigroup.

The school is located within the Bugando Medical Centre (BMC) premises in Mwanza. Bugando Medical Centre is a teaching hospital for the school. The Zonal Referral Hospital consists of 900-beds and engages in teaching and consultancy, in addition to the medical services it provides. BMC is also owned by the Episcopal Conference of the Tanzanian Catholic Bishops. It serves about a third of the country’s population of around 44.5 million people. The University location is appropriate for its capacity for clinical training of its students within the seven regions of the Lake Zone Tanzania.

1.2.5 WBSoM VISION, MISSION, FUNCTIONS AND CORE VALUES

1.2.5.1 WBSoM Aspiration

The Weill Bugando School of Medicine has both short- and long-term aspirations of becoming one of the leading schools offering higher education in Tanzania in line with the expectations of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and its people. The school's aspirations are reflected in the way the Strategic Plan is designed and how it will effectively be implemented.

1.2.5.2 Vision statement

The vision of the school is to become a leading center in providing training, patient care and consultancy with high adherence to professional code of conducts and fostering a culture that supports diversity, inclusion, critical thinking, and creativity.

1.2.5.3 Mission statement

Activities of the School are guided by the following mission statements:

- *Produce skilled and competent health care professionals vested with moral and ethical values.*
- *Provide quality health services to the patients and community.*
- *Search, discover and communicate the truth to improve the quality of life of all the people served.*
- *Observe the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and humanity across all missions.*

1.2.5.4 Objectives and functions of the Weill Bugando School of Medicine

The broad objectives of WBSoM, like all medical schools, are to advance and to transfer knowledge from one generation to another in the health and allied sciences, advance technology, and learning, provide higher education and mentoring intellectual, social and moral growth of the students at the University. Specifically, WBSoM's functions include to:

- a. The provision of an academic centre of excellence for the advancement of learning, knowledge, innovation and creativity.
- b. The diffusion and extension of health, physical, natural, and social sciences.
- c. The provision of higher education, research and consultancy in medical practice and delivery of health services, as far as is consistent with these objects.
- d. The nurturing of balanced intellectual, cultural, and moral growth of the school's students and
- e. The promotion of public charity interest in the field of health for the benefit of mankind in general and the Tanzanian society.

1.2.5.5 Weill Bugando School of Medicine Core values

To achieve its mission functions and transform the University into a respectable Tanzanian medical school, the WBSoM is committed to ensure that the following values will be observed and upheld always:

i. ***Equity and justice***

WBSOM through its operations will ensure equal opportunity and exercise social justice and non-discrimination based on gender, race, religion, political affiliation, disability or any other form.

ii. ***Professional standards, Ethical and Moral norms***

The school, staff and students will uphold the highest professional standards, ethical practices, respect for persons and human dignity.

iii. ***Academic Excellence***

iii. Academic excellence will be a cornerstone in all teaching, learning and advancement of frontiers of knowledge as well as by delivery of quality and relevant public services to communities in the country, region and globally.

iii. ***Academic freedom in teaching and learning, research and community service.***

iii. Academic freedom of expression, critical thought and enquiry through openness, transparency and tolerance will be upheld and emphasized.

iii. ***Democratic governance at all levels of management.***

iii. ***Student access to success in all programmes within the school.***

iii. ***Staff development and leadership capacity for all school staff.***

iii. ***Relevance to the needs of those we serve, especially students and the community.***

iii. ***Respect for and Abide to the Laws and Constitution of the Country***

The school staff and students shall enhance citizenry by abiding to the Tanzanian Constitution and the law of the land

xii. ***Fostering Catholic Identity***

As a Catholic university it will uphold Catholic ideals, attitudes and principles in its teaching research and service.

1.2.6 THE WBSOM STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2011/22 – 2025/26

The Weill Bugando School of Medicine had developed the Five-Year Strategic Plan for 2021/22 – 2025/26 period. From the identified key issues, it was possible to cluster the key issues into eight strategic priority areas:

- i. Transforming the organization and management to achieve the school's vision and mission
- ii. Expanding access and participation
- iii. Providing relevant and high-quality programs and innovative educational experience
- iv. Enhancing resources for excellence in delivery
- v. Improving student services and experience

- vi. Intensifying research performance.
- vii. Strengthening engagement for mutually beneficial partnerships with national, regional and global communities.
- viii. Enhancing diversity school-wide and foster a culture of inclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH POLICY STATEMENT, PURPOSE, SCOPE, AREAS OF FOCUS AND RESEARCH STRATEGIC ISSUES

2.1 RESEARCH POLICY STATEMENT:

This statement is a summary of the research accomplishments, current work, and future direction and the potential of research work. The statement discusses the following specific issues:

- Research activities which had been implemented by WBSoM
- Funding history and potential
- Requirements for other resources
- Research administration
- Potential research and industrial collaborations
- Contribution of the research
- Future directions

The research policy statement of this document policy is stated as follows: research is undertaken on the causes, associated factors, challenges, treatment and prevention of diseases, as well as research for interventions and services which could improve the lives of people. In all forms of research collaboration, partners will ensure that ownership of the research findings is respected. For these research activities to be implemented fully and successfully, they must be adequately financed, well designed, focus on relevant topics, be conducted with the highest ethical standards, presented in formats accessible to multiple audiences, and have a positive impact on people's lives.

2.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the research policy is to ensure that all research conducted in collaboration between CUHAS and BMC are of the highest ethical and scientific standard, and complies with the relevant legislation, regulatory guidelines, codes of conduct, national priorities and best practice guidelines, standard operating procedures, and institutional policies. It ensures that the ultimate benefit of research lies not only in the generation of new knowledge but also in the translation of knowledge into technologies, interventions and strategies for an effective delivery of health services to the surrounding communities. Research at BMC and CUHAS shall also complement the effort of the

Tanzanian Government and the international community for the creation, dissemination and sharing of research products, processes and services and their utilization for the betterment of people's living.

2.1.2 Scope

This policy will apply to:

- i. All persons temporarily and permanently employed in WBSoM, that is those with honorary appointments, volunteers, with contract, party time employees, consultants and students who undertake training under WBSoM.
- ii. Any person from outside WBSoM undertaking research using WBSoM facilities and staff and/or other resources such as data.
- iii. All persons who plan to conduct research in WBSoM are expected to take initiatives to manage, disclose, or resolve conflicts of interest or commitment as appropriate.
- iv. All mentors, guides, external experts and sponsors associated with any of the research activities at WBSoM
- v. Scholarly activities intended to expand knowledge boundaries by analysis, synthesis and interpretation of ideas and information by making use of rigorous methodologies
- vi. Knowledge compilation and communication initiatives for keeping abreast of academic developments in any knowledge domain such as writing of textbooks, chapters of textbooks, monographs; developing/updating curriculum, etc.
- vii. Creative activities involving the generation of new ideas, innovations, hypotheses, images, performances or artefacts, including design in any field of knowledge which leads to the development of new knowledge, understanding or expertise.
- viii. Research projects of students undertaken as part of the curriculum or for enriching it.
- ix. Publication, presentation and communication of the research outcomes and related activities.

2.1.3 Areas of Research Focus/Priorities

The research priorities on this policy will be linked to the national health care priorities, as well as institutional strategic plans. Health research priorities for this research policy refer to diseases, conditions and risk factors that produce a significant burden of disease but lack an effective intervention for their control. Health research priorities also include the investigation of ways of

improving the overall effectiveness of health systems. Since both public and private investments in research are constrained by limited resources, it is very important to identify high priority areas in which to invest those limited resources.

The country health research priorities are described in The Tanzania National Health Policy of 2017. The following are highlighted as research policy priorities in the strategic plans of both institutions:

A. Diseases and other health conditions

- i. Non-communicable and communicable diseases, including antimicrobial resistance
- ii. Neglected Tropical Diseases
- iii. Maternal and child health
- iv. Nutrition
- v. Environmental health
- vi. Occupational health
- vii. Determinants of health
- viii. Disease outbreaks and emergent threats
- ix. Cross cutting issues – Gender, culture and tradition, human behaviour, sexual violence, child abuse, HIV/AIDS

B. Health services delivery and health systems performance

- i. Health services delivery – clinical and diagnostic
- ii. Human resources availability
- iii. Drugs and Medical supplies
- iv. Medical equipment
- v. Health financing
- vi. Health information management system
- vii. Collaboration and partnership
- viii. Medical Education

2.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH POLICY:

In line with the National Health Policy and the TEC Health Policy, the following are the objectives of this Policy:

- 2.2.1 To increase the productivity of quality research and publications
- 2.2.2 To increase of the number of research translated to policy or clinical practice
- 2.2.3 To create an enabling environment for research
- 2.2.4 To strengthen administration and coordination of research
- 2.2.5 To stimulate a research and publications culture
- 2.2.6 To improve funding for research and innovations
- 2.2.7 To strengthen collaborative research
- 2.2.8 To establish mechanisms for taking stalk of the research activities and their outcomes
- 2.2.9 To develop surveillance mechanisms to anticipate the needs for research
- 2.2.10 To strengthen multi-disciplinary research

CHAPTER THREE

PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH CONDUCT AND RESEARCH PROCESS

3.1 PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH CONDUCT

The hallmark principles of responsible research conduct provide the framework integrity in the design, conduct and communication. These principles include:

- i. Compliance with this research policy is mandatory for all researchers. It is expected that all who are responsible for research at WBSoM will adhere to this policy and associated WBSoM, and CUHAS research procedures to ensure their research is of the highest ethical and scientific standards and complies with the relevant legislation, regulatory guidelines, codes of conduct, national best practices guidelines, standard operating procedures and institutional policies.
- ii. Institutional responsibilities – WBSoM has obligation to encourage and support quality research and is accountable for how research is undertaken in line with this Research Policy. In this way, the responsible research conduct is fostered and underpinned by the research culture of WBSoM and CUHAS
- iii. Researcher Responsibilities – Researchers will ensure the principles and values of responsible and ethical research conducts are manifest in all aspects of their research.

3.2 RESEARCH PROCESSES

3.2.1 RESEARCH PROTOCOL

The research starts by writing a research proposal. The exact format and requirements for a research proposal can vary slightly depending on the type of research being proposed and the specific demands of the institution you plan to submit your proposal to, but there are a few common basics that are almost always needed. In addition to the research proposal, a consent form should be part and parcel of the proposal.

3.2.2 APPROVALS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

In order to conduct research at WBSoM, it is a requirement that all researchers first obtain:

- Joint BMC/CUHAS Research Ethics and Review Committee (CREC) ethical clearance
- Local Authorities (Site authorization) approval i.e., regional, district, village or institute authorities where the research is going to be conducted
- National NATHREC ethical clearance is needed before undertaking clinical trials.
- In case a researcher has already obtained a NATHREC ethical clearance, national procedures and regulations will be followed.

Research shall not commence until both processes are formally completed.

3.2.3 CONDUCTING RESEARCH.

After obtaining approval to conduct research, the researcher is responsible to organize pre-test and data collection. However, before data collection, the training of the research assistants who will assist the researcher to collect data should be conducted. After data collection is over, data analysis and report writing will follow.

3.2.4 RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

3.2.4.1 Monitoring of Approved Research

WBSoM is responsible for ensuring that all approved research activities are monitored. Monitoring of research refers to the process of verifying that the conduct of research conforms to the approved research proposal. The process of monitoring promotes the safety of research participants and best research practice through the confirmation of adherence to appropriate processes, collection of quality research data, appropriate record keeping, access and storage of research records. It also ensures relevant REC, governance and regulatory compliance.

The purpose of research monitoring is to verify that research projects conducted in WBSoM follow the approved research proposal in order to; protect the rights and well-being of research participants; verify the accuracy of research data and ensure regulatory compliance by the institution; and provide a level of assurance of the quality of the researchers' processes.

Furthermore, monitoring provides an opportunity to educate and develop researchers, enhance quality processes and also prepare them for external funding or regulatory body audit processes.

Technology in the research management

In the pursuit of quality research and the creation of an efficient research process, new technologies have evolved. The delivery of new and enhanced technologies to support, enable and enhance the complete research lifecycle might be required and will be adapted as the research output and the number of researchers grows. The electronic review of research proposals, digital tools in the informed consent process, cloud-based software for the secure storage and networking platforms for research data will be developed and implemented as needs arise.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FUNDING

WBSoM is donor dependent for research undertakings. In this regard, WBSoM management therefore shall:

- Provide general information on possible sources and modes of research funding both within and outside the country
- Encourage employees and students to write research proposals to attract fund from different sources including public, private development partners or donors.
- Request individual researchers to have initiatives of looking for different sources of research funds
- Both institutions endeavour to strengthen their research capacity through mechanisms that shall be supported through internal budgetary allocation, potential beneficiaries of research outputs (for example, pharmaceutical companies, government, UN agencies), consultancy services, contracts, grants, scholarships but also through institutional support costs from funded projects
- All funded projects shall contribute a minimum of 15% overhead costs depending on the funders 'regulations. This will however depend on funders' own policy. In case the funder cannot provide 15%, the request needs to be approved by Vice Chancellor depending where the fund will be managed.
- The funds shall be used to facilitate research training and human capacity building for research, to establish basic research infrastructure as per an agreed percentage based on the research proposal and activities

There are a number of opportunities for research within WBSoM:

- The increased recognition by the Government and the international community of the role of private health institutions in health improvement and the importance of an effective public-private partnership in health planning and delivery
- The Government's willingness to allocate funding for research

- The availability of funding for specific health problems like HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, maternal health, child health and family planning
- An increased recognition by the international community and donor agencies that health systems strengthening is important in improving care and that all the pillars of the health system must be understood clearly so that appropriate and targeted interventions be selected.

There are also a number of challenges hampering the research output, which the Policy aims at addressing by pooling and regulating its activities:

- Small pool of researchers with little succession plans
- Low motivation of the scientists/clinicians due to an unfriendly work environment
- Lack of efficient dissemination procedures
- Few publication avenues in the country
- Low focus on developing mechanisms for translating research into policies and programmes and evaluating their impact
- Little interaction among researchers, and between researchers and policy makers, programme planners/implementers, trainers
- Researchers often involved in multiple roles and functions, therefore reducing their full concentration on research
- Little diversity in funding sources
- Little knowledge in grant writing and fund raising strategies
- Inadequate focus on long term research culture
- Lack of multi-disciplinary research teams.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH COLLABORATION AND DISSEMINATION

5.1 RESEARCH COLLABORATION

In fulfilling the research mission, the WBSoM may partner with other schools or institutions in Tanzania, in other regions of the world, as well as international research centres, institutes and organizations.

Collaborative research programs and projects shall be based on equality, mutual respect, and information sharing. The WBSoM may enter into a memorandum of understanding, if need be, with any research organization in furthering its research mission, regarding funding management and distribution as well as modalities of implementation.

5.2 RESEARCH DISSEMINATION

Researchers within WBSoM should responsibly communicate and disseminate the outcomes of all research undertaken within its facilities to contribute to the collective knowledge base and to extract maximum benefit from the research activity for the health service and the academic community. Different channels can be used to disseminate research such as Continuing Medical Education (CME), annual conferences local or international, peer reviews, seminars and publication.

The overarching purpose of research is to generate new knowledge that leads to benefits for effective and efficient delivery of quality patient care. Those who undertake research within the WBSoM have a responsibility to undertake informed, well designed and executed research that addresses knowledge gaps and generates outcomes that have potential to be translated into health care advances. There is an obligation to publish research outcomes and disseminate results of research to a wide range of relevant audiences including academic peers, the health sector and the community.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLEMENTATION OF RESEARCH POLICY

The following activities are necessary for the successful implementation of the Research Policy.

6.1 Research Coordination Activities:

- i. WBSoM Research and Publication Committee shall work closely with the Directorate of Research and Innovation (form hereon called the Directorate) to coordinate internal and external linkages on all matters related to research. This will require staff, equipment and some seed funds.
- ii. School Research and Publication Committee shall focus on the following specific actions
 - Ensure participation of researchers in evolving the research agenda
 - Facilitate securing research funds from public, private and external sources
 - Facilitate and support marketing of research results where appropriate
 - Establish and publish a regular Research Bulletin and Research Annual Report or any other similar publication indicating the status of research activity within WBSoM
- iii. Facilitate the liaison process with research donors
- iv. Establish liaison relationships with other national stakeholders to form pressure/lobbying groups to contend for increased share of research funding from government, the private sector and the international donor community
- v. Work closely with potential researchers in preparing research proposals for submission to potential donors
- vi. Where potential for multi-disciplinary research projects exists, initiate the formation of such teams which once formed shall be left to operate under the approved modalities of multi-disciplinary research teams
- vii. Establish a research data bank and dissemination of research results
- viii. Produce a good brochure to market research services at WBSoM

- ix. The Committee shall develop and institute a process of monitoring and reporting on the following research quality indicators on regular basis:
- Research planning
 - Research training
 - Research publications
 - Peer reviewed research reports
 - Proportion of staff having published research output in the last three years
 - Proportion of staff directly doing research
 - Number of local/international research assignments that WBSOM wins in a competitive environment
 - Collaboration with regional and international institutions – establishment of active research networks
 - Subsequent availability of funds for the research following completion and dissemination of a phase of the research.
- x. In order to standardize and harmonize research process, the Research and Publication Committee shall provide clear guidelines in the form of a Research Operational Procedures (SOP). The basic documents that would constitute the Operational Procedures shall include and not limited to:
- Guidelines for Approval of Research Proposals
 - Format for Research Proposals
 - Format for Evaluation of Research Proposals
 - Research Contract Format for Researchers
 - Research Progress Reporting Form
 - Standard Layout for Research Reports
 - Guidelines for Research Report Peer Review, etc.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE POLICY

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of research provide the framework for checking progress on a continuous basis and accessing the quality and adherence to ethical standards.

The following will be carried out during monitoring and evaluation of the policy:

- 7.1 The WBSoM Research and Publication Committee will develop and implement a plan that clearly stipulates indicators for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of research at WBSoM.
 - 7.2 The M&E plan will be based on existing national and international guidelines.
 - 7.3 The data collected during the process of M&E will be shared with relevant stakeholders.
 - 7.4 Indicators for M&E research will include:
 - 7.4.1 Inflow of research funds
 - 7.4.2 Number of publications
 - 7.4.3 Number of proposals written
 - 7.4.4 Number of proposals submitted for funding.
 - 7.4.5 Number of funded proposals
 - 7.4.6 Number of research collaborators
 - 7.5: Policy Review
- The policy will be reviewed every three (3) years.

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