

Guidelines for Establishing Thematic Research Clusters

Research and Development Cell, GNLU

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Gujarat National Law University

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1. About Research Clusters

The research cluster is a formal assembly of researchers with a common area of research interest.

These clusters aim to promote collaborative research work among faculties, research staff and students of the university. The initial idea is to create a research network of people with common interest within the university and then expand the same to other academic institutions within and outside the country. This idea of establishing research cluster is in line with the objective one of UGC's **Guideline on Establishing Research and Development Cell in Higher Education Institutions, March 2022** and in line with the **National Education Policy, 2020** that encourages the promotion of quality research with higher education institutions. The clusters shall bring together the faculties, research staff, students and research scholars, for a joint quality research. Shared expertise will enable cross fertilization of ideas and mobilization of resources for interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary areas.

2. Vision

To promote interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research and achieve University's goal to excel as a research-oriented institute.

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this guideline;

- 3.1 'Faculty' means faculty with any specialization, contractual or permanent, working with Gujarat National Law University.
- 3.2 'Interdisciplinary Research' means a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice.



- 3.3** ‘Multidisciplinary Research’ means faculties from different disciplines work independently on a common problem or research question to answer a complex research problem.
- 3.4** ‘Research Staff’ means Assistant Professor (Research) or Teaching and Research Associates or Research Associates appointed under the Chairs at Gujarat National Law University, made in centres for excellence
- 3.5** ‘Research Activities’ means and include research projects both doctrinal and empirical research; consultancy projects; research reports; publication in reputed journals (preferably Scopus/ WoS /UGC Care List/ABDC), book chapter, book etc; policy suggestions to government on bills, acts, programmes and schemes etc.
- 3.6** ‘Transdisciplinary Research’ means research conducted by investigators from different disciplines working jointly to create new conceptual, theoretical and methodological knowledge that integrate and move beyond discipline-specific approaches to address a common problem.

4. Objectives

The purpose of the clusters is to create a research network and promote collaborative research and add value to the existing knowledge framework. Research clusters are construed broadly to include research that contributes meaningfully to societal issues and need.

The cluster shall work exclusively on research (both doctrinal and empirical). The main proposed activities may include;

- 4.1** Mobilizing fund for the purpose of projects from national or international funding agencies;
- 4.2** Conducting action research and finding solutions for a specific problem.
- 4.3** Publishing the findings of the research in the form of reports or articles in renowned national/international journals, books for disseminating knowledge etc.
- 4.4** Evaluation study of government initiatives and analysis of government policies and bills.



5. Establishment and Composition of the Clusters

Any faculty or Assistant Professor (Research) can identify a specific area for establishing the cluster. Post that the concerned faculty /AP research is expected to submit an application along with a detailed proposal to the Office, Research and Development Cell for establishing the Research Cluster as per the format given in ANNEXURE I. Each application will be reviewed by the team of Research Council members and a subject expert before granting approval.

5.1 Composition of Cluster

- 5.1.1** Any faculty or Assistant Professor (Research) can initiate the process for establishing the cluster, however, the eligibility is subjected to clause 5.2 of this guideline.
- 5.1.2** He/she shall act as the coordinator of the cluster.
- 5.1.3** The proposal should specify the objectives and the planned activities for 2 years.
- 5.1.4** Each cluster shall constitute a core committee with three members consisting of faculty member, teaching and research associates and research scholars (PhD scholars, as required. Under graduate and post-graduate students can be involved in the capacity of Student Research Associates.
- 5.1.5** The coordinator can call the Expression of Interest from the faculties, research staff and students (Ph.D.) for working as a member of the cluster.
- 5.1.6** Each cluster can be constituted with members from faculties/ research staff/research scholars including core committee and there is no ceiling on the number of members.
- 5.1.7** The clusters are allowed to collaborate with researchers from other institutions within or outside the country.

5.2 Eligibility to initiate a Cluster

To initiate the establishment of a cluster the faculty/research staff should fulfil the below mentioned eligibility criteria.



- 5.2.1** He/she must have completed minimum two years as an employee at GNLU and;
- 5.2.2** He/she must have at least one publication in a renowned journal/book/project/consultancy.

6. Responsibilities of the Clusters

The main responsibility of the clusters is to work towards achieving the objectives mentioned under point 3 of this guideline. In addition to that the clusters are expected to comply with the following points.

- 6.1** The research cluster established under this guideline is required to undertake only the research activities. However, they may organise any focus group discussion, panel discussion or consultation for the particular research endeavor subject to the approval of the core committee.
- 6.2** The research activities of each cluster should be limited to the specific area chosen by the cluster.
- 6.3** As the objective of the cluster is to promote research, any member of the cluster is allowed to initiate research activity. However, every such idea requires the approval of the committee constituted under the cluster.
- 6.4** No single member is allowed to initiate research under the cluster. Cluster promotes only collaborative research.
- 6.5** The minimum compliance of each cluster is either one research report or one publication in 2 years duration. The cluster shall cease to operate if it fails to execute the minimum compliance criteria in two years' time without appropriate justification.
- 6.6** Each cluster is expected to maintain complete record of their activities and submit completion report and utilization certificate.
- 6.7** Each cluster shall make a presentation before the Research Council after completion of two years.



7. Funding for Research

- 7.1 If the research idea requires funding, it is subjected to the approval from the Office, Research and Development Cell. The maximum amount can be allotted to one cluster for a year is Rs. 3,00,000/-. Out of that, Rs. 1,00,000/- per thrust area (maximum 3 thrust area) will be provided a grant under the scheme.
- 7.2 The Research and Development Cell shall utilize the fund allotted to the division under budget head AC-RA 3.1 in the financial year 2022-23 for promotion of research through clusters.
- 7.3 The required funding for carrying out the research activities can be requested by a member of the cluster as per the annexure II through Core-Committee of the respective cluster to the Office, Research and Development Cell. The Office, Research and Publication shall take a decision after consulting the Research Council and the Director of the Institution.
- 7.4 In case of requirement of financial assistance, the member initiating the research is under an obligation to submit all bills and furnish details to the Office, Research and Development Cell through core-committee of the cluster.
- 7.5 The funding is provided only to meet the data collection expenses, data analysis and printing as per Annexure II.

8. Changing the name and Focus area of Research Cluster

For changing the name or focus area of research of a cluster established as per this guideline, the Committee constituted under the cluster shall move an application highlighting the reasons for such change to the office of Director through the Office, Research and Publication. The Decision of the Director shall be final in such circumstances.

9. Miscellaneous

- 9.1 The Director of the University shall be the final authority in matters involving finance in relation to the functioning of the cluster.
- 9.2 In case of any conflict, the joint decision of the Office, Research and Publication, Research Council and the Director of the University shall be final.
- 9.3 The clusters shall from time to time abide by all rules, regulations and policies governing the University.



Annexure- I

Format of Application for Establishing Thematic Research Cluster

Part -A

1. Theme/Topic of the Thematic Research Cluster:
2. Vision and Mission of the Thematic Research Cluster
3. Objectives of the Thematic Research Cluster
4. Name of the Proposer
5. Details of the Core Committee Members (Refer Clause 5.1.4)
6. Details of the Members (Refer Clause 5.1.6)
7. Research Experience of the Proposer

a) Number of Projects Completed

Sr. No	Title of the Project	Name of the Funding Agency	Year of Completion	Total Grant Received

b) Publications

Sr. No	Title of the Paper	Name of the Journal	Indexing of the Journal (UGC CARE/Scopus/WoS/ABDC/Peer reviewed)	Year of Publication



c) Research Experience of the Committee Members

8. Proposed Research Activities of the Cluster

9. Action plan with date and other details of the Proposed Research Activities

Sr. No	Proposed Activity	Month	Brief description about the proposed activity

10. Financial Assistance Required



Annexure II

The member of a cluster requesting for financial assistance shall follow the below guideline. As mentioned in point 7 the funding is provided only to meet the below mentioned heads;

Sr. No	Expense Head	Percentage Allotted for Each Head	Justification
1.	Data Collection Expenses (Travel and lodging expenses, Food, Stationary for data collection, etc.)	50% of the total funding	
2.	Data Analysis	30% of the total funding	
3.	Printing of the Report	15% of the total Funding	
4.	Contingency	5% of the total Funding	

