

# Institutional Commitment and Policy Indicators Checklist

The following are some of the **key indicators of institutional commitment** to research and scholarship, along with the **essential policies or policy attributes** discussed during the working group sessions. **Please utilize this checklist to determine which of these indicators your institution displays.**

## Faculty Handbook

Demonstrating an institutional commitment to research within the **faculty handbook** offers clarity and structure as to how research and scholarship are integrated into expectations of faculty and their professional development and consistently promotes a scholarship culture.

- **Governance:** Include provisions that outline the decision-making processes as they relate to research and scholarly activity.
- **Faculty Appointment Guidance:** Detail the criteria, expectations, and procedures used to govern faculty appointments, reappointments, and promotions that integrate research and scholarly criteria.
- **Responsibilities of the Faculty:** Outline the research and scholarly activity duties, obligations, and expectations for the faculty, including engagement with students, publication standards, acquisition of grants, contributions to the academic field, and active engagement in scholarly pursuits.
- **Faculty Workload Expectations:** Provide guidance on how faculty should balance research and scholarship activities with instructional, teaching, and other service requirements. This should include information such as standard teaching loads and course reduction policies.
- **Leaves of Absence:** Allow faculty the opportunity to take a sabbatical or leave of absence to promote and enhance the quality of research and scholarly activities at the institution.

## Faculty Recruitment and Retention

**Faculty recruitment and retention guidelines and policies that specifically seek to build and grow research and scholarship along with institutional capacity** indicate that the university is committed to building a faculty that contributes to its multifaceted mission.

- **Position Types and Position Descriptions:** Determine which distinctions in faculty positions are used to recognize and account for research and scholarly activity that is integrated and concurrent with teaching activities. Clearly articulate expectations for research and scholarly activity that allows for distinctions and variations across fields in setting professional metrics and success measures.
- **Faculty Retention:** Define a plan to retain faculty and to anticipate how existing faculty will participate in the institution's goals. Institute policies that focus on retaining existing faculty in addition to recruiting new faculty.
- **Selection Criteria:** When defining selection criteria (or adding new faculty positions), incorporate the requirements and focus on research and scholarly impact—including publication record, grant acquisition, teaching and graduate records, and scholarly reputation—as essential selection and recruiting criteria.
- **Search Committee Training:** Provide training and guidance for search committees to ensure that they understand how to effectively assess candidates' research and scholarly potential as well as how to balance these skills against other considerations.
- **Research Seminars and Presentations:** Invite candidates to give research seminars or presentations during their campus visits, and allow faculty members to evaluate the candidates' research and scholarly impact firsthand.

## Fundamental Organizational Policies and Guidelines

**Fundamental organizational policies and guidelines** are focused on a university's broader operations but should be optimized to foster a research-enabling operating environment. These policy elements advance the institution's ability to conduct scholarly activities efficiently across various functional areas.

- **Enhance University Policies:** Account for the nuances of research by establishing clear guidelines for conducting research across functional service areas.
- **Procurement and Purchasing:** Integrate research into procurement policies and procedures to ensure compliance with federal and sponsor requirements as well as to determine potential exceptions or distinctions for grant-funded purchases, requirements for vendor screening, flow-down provisions, etc.
- **Human Resources (HR):** Establish standard HR infrastructure for a research organization, such as job descriptions for common research roles, hiring processes for soft-funded positions, etc.
- **Information Technology (IT):** Ensure that IT policies contain provisions for requirements that are specific to research and sponsored activities, such as limitations in foreign-vendor technologies, requirements for data and information security, mandatory screenings, etc.
- **Financial Policies:** Update financial policies to account for sponsored program nuances, such as a non-fiscal year calendar management and sponsored cost transfers.
- **Risk Tolerance:** Ensure that policies incorporate a balanced risk-management perspective to manage risks associated with research activities, enable the need for innovation, and consider the necessary ethical implications.

## Institutional Strategic Plans

A **college or university's strategic plan** shows its high-level priorities and aspirations.

- **Incorporate Research and Scholarly Activity:** Explicitly integrate research and scholarship, either as an institutional goal or focus area or as a critical component of institution, service, and engagement.
- **Measurable Outcomes:** Define clear, measurable outcomes related to research within the strategic plan to allow for the assessment of progress and accountability in achieving research-related goals.
- **Student Research Opportunities:** Foster a culture of inquiry and discovery by incorporating opportunities and goals within the strategic plans for students to engage in research and scholarly activity under the mentorship of faculty members.
- **Faculty Engagement:** Involve faculty members in the strategic planning process to ensure that the research- and scholarship-related goals and objectives of both the institution and the faculty are aligned.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Build flexibility into strategic plans to accommodate changes in the research landscape, allow for emerging priorities, and foster an environment of innovation and responsiveness.

## Other Indicators

**Other indicators** can also help create a consistent and supportive environment for researchers by cultivating a culture in which research is valued and encouraged.

- **Internal Funding Mechanisms:** Establish clear policies for internal research funding—including eligibility criteria, application procedures, and allocation mechanisms—to support faculty research endeavors.

- **Financial Conflict of Interest:** Develop robust policies and procedures for managing financial conflicts of interest related to research activities to ensure transparency, integrity, and compliance with regulatory requirements.
- **Budgetary Systems for Research:** Implement budgetary systems that are tailored to support research activities—including provisions for seed funding, cost-sharing arrangements, and overhead allocation—to facilitate research project management and sustainability.
- **Research Collaboration and Partnerships:** Foster policies that promote collaboration and partnerships in research, including mechanisms for securing subawards, managing collaborations with external partners, and facilitating interdisciplinary research initiatives.
- **Faculty Recognition and Incentives:** Design policies and incentives to recognize and reward faculty engagement in research—including provisions for release time, grant writing support, and career advancement opportunities—to foster a culture of research excellence and innovation.
- **Commitment of Resources:** Commit resources to match the institution's goals. If programs do not have adequate funding, they will not be successful.