



REPUBLIQUE DU BENIN
MINISTRE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE
UNIVERSITE D'ABOMEY-CALAVI

CENTRE DE RECHERCHE POUR LA LUTTE CONTRE LES MALADIES INFECTIEUSES TROPICALES (CreMIT)/
TROPICAL INFECTIOUS DISEASES RESEARCH CENTER (TIDRC)

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RESEARCH POLICY

VERSION 1.0

2025

TIDRC/UAC RESEARCH GRANTS MANAGEMENT OFFICE

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FORWARD

The Tropical Infectious Diseases Research Center of the University of Abomey-Calavi (TIDRC/UAC) has the mission to advance knowledge through teaching, training, both fundamental and applied research and diseases control services. Research is central to the mission of the TIDRC/UAC and the cornerstone to the continuing creation of knowledge, the foundation of all disciplines in a higher education institution. At TIDRC/UAC, Researchers have a duty to ensure that their work complies with professional ethics and codes of practice, and contributes to addressing the health challenges facing their society.

The TIDRC/UAC's Research Policy provides support for the advancement of the Center's research strategy, setting out the framework for appropriate behaviours to achieve its strategic aims.

The TIDRC/UAC is grateful to individuals and offices that were involved in initiating, developing and shaping this Policy.

INTRODUCTION

The Tropical Infectious Diseases Research Center of the University of Abomey-Calavi (TIDRC/UAC) continues to conduct cutting-edge research to inform teaching, training, and to address societal challenges. Research conducted at the TIDRC/UAC drives and thrives innovation and technology for industry uptake and contributes to the research agenda of the nation and beyond. TIDRC/UAC seeks to distinguish itself by the quality of its research and innovations and strives to adjust to new circumstances and apply them consistently for the benefit of society.

In a bid to expand the frontiers of research, the TIDRC/UAC has developed this Research Policy to guide, improve and increase research output and positively impact the stakeholders' decision-making process and in long terms our community's wellbeing.

2.VISION STATEMENT OF THE TIDRC/UAC

The vision of the TIDRC/UAC, with its core inspired by the University of Abomey-Calavi one, is to be a Center of Excellence in Benin and Africa for producing well-skilled professionals to conduct both fundamental and applied research in the fields of Parasitology, Entomology, Environment, Epidemiology, Malacology, Microbiology, Social Sciences, and Clinical Trials, for a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying the transmission of pathogens and the development of tools and strategies against the tropical infectious diseases occurred in Benin and at the regional level.

3. MISSION OF THE TIDRC/UAC

TIDRC/UAC has the mandate to provide outstanding training for students; to promote knowledge through active research and dissemination of information; to recommend proven strategies for diseases control in order to respond effectively to the health concerns of Benin and of Africa continent in terms of tropical infectious diseases; and to offer professional services related to its area of expertise.

TIDRC/UAC is also mandated to offer opportunity and encourage researcher in all units to participate in collaborative and interdisciplinary research projects, locally and internationally.

4. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Research Policy is to provide a framework and guidelines for assuring quality standards, regulation and accountability in the conduct of research at the TIDRC/UAC.

5. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Research Policy are to:

- a. ensure that research conducted at the TIDRC/UAC is consistent with national, and international standards and guidelines in terms of procedures and biosafety;
- b. create and promote a scientific research culture that encourages and rewards excellence in research, innovations and technologies;
- c. contribute to health system policy making toward tropical infectious diseases control and elimination;
- d. strengthen research grant management and coordination;
- e. Mobilize and manage funds for quality research, Innovations and technologies;
- f. secure the outputs/outcomes from the conduct of research to achieve international researcher/Scientists and all Staff visibility and attract of both human and financial resources to the University of Abomey-Calavi through the TIDRC.

6. POLICY STATEMENT

The Research Policy shall ensure that research (applied and fundamental) carried out at TIDRC/UAC meets the highest standards of excellence in research enterprise.

In pursuit of this, TIDRC/UAC shall:

- a. Provide resources for research and create opportunities for researchers to access funds/ resources both locally and internationally;
- b. Promote interdisciplinary research approach and research networks within Benin and internationally;
- c. Promote excellence among researchers;

- d. Promote public-private partnerships in identifying relevant research needs to support national development;
- e. Put in place a system for routine monitoring compliance with this policy by researchers.

7. APPLICATION & SCOPE

The Research Policy applies to all staff, interns, students, visiting fellows and all other stakeholders involved in research activities at TIDRC/UAC.

8. GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH

8.1 Priority Areas for Research

The TIDRC/UAC strives to conduct research using problem-solving approaches aimed at addressing national development challenges. The priority areas are as follows:

- a. Biology and surveillance of tropical infectious diseases transmitting vectors;
- b. Biology and surveillance of tropical infectious diseases pathogens.
- c. Vector-pathogen and/or host-pathogen interactions.
- d. Drug sensitivity assays using medicinal plants and chemical drugs for controlling tropical infectious diseases.
- e. Research results translation into operational and practical infectious diseases control interventions through innovations and technologies.
- f. Scientific research in supporting policymakers to solve infectious diseases public health challenges;
- g. Social science research involving socio-economic disparities and socio-cultural dynamics associated with infectious diseases;
- h. Clinical trials;
- i. Research through consultancy services to industry and the general public;
- j. Research capacity building targeted staff, interns and students of the TIDRC/UAC.

8.2 Responsibilities

8.2.1 TIDRC/UAC's Responsibilities

- a. TIDRC/UAC shall provide commitment to supporting, developing and promoting equity, diversity and inclusion in all its practices; it aims to establish an inclusive culture, free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying;
- b. TIDRC/UAC will provide **Training Programme** that contributes to understanding and adopting best practices as quickly as possible. This may include, but is not limited to, appropriate research training in legal and regulatory issues, ethics approval and consent, research design, data analysis, good laboratory practice, equipment use, risk assessment, health and safety, confidentiality, research data management and data protection.
- c. The Director and Deputy-Directors or Head of the Research Unit are responsible for research oversight at TIDRC/UAC and in ensuring that the Center policies and procedures relating to the conduct of research are publicized and implemented;
- d. TIDRC/UAC shall strengthen and maintain relationships with research institutions in the country and beyond, to ensure effective collaborative research to address Benin's developmental challenges;
- e. TIDRC/UAC shall provide a work environment conducive for research through academic freedom, creativity and innovation; respect for animal and human participants in research and the environment;
- f. TIDRC/UAC shall also support the responsible conduct of research by providing facilities, technical, financial and human resources for research activities based on scholarly and educational merits;
- g. TIDRC/UAC shall ensure that Director and Deputy-Director or Head of the Research Unit, and the Research and Grant Management Office (RGMO) promote and facilitate responsible conduct of research set out in this policy and other related policies.

8.2.2 Deputy-Director or Heads of the Research Units Responsibilities

Deputy-Director or Head of the Research Unit are expected to include the following responsibilities as part of their activities at the TIDRC/UAC:

- h. Heads of the Research Units should take account of equity, diversity & inclusion considerations in all aspects of their work, including the recruitment of personnel associated with research in accordance with regulations and laws of the Benin Republic;
- i. Identify required project-specific research skills and training needs, and to ensure that the necessary research related training is accessed by researchers working on the projects under their supervision;
- j. Ensure that new staff who will be coordinating, managing, conducting or supervising research are provided with a training programme (see details above) that is suited to their role.
- k. ensure that the proposal is of adequate quality, and that the research proposed would avoid legal, regulatory and ethical misconducts such as falsification, fabrication and plagiarism in the same way as applicable to any published research outputs;
- l. Ensure that the research is carried out within scope of the proposal approved by the funder;
- m. Ensure that novelty and quality of the research are applied with rigour and discipline-specific standards of study design, methodology, data and sample collection, data and sample analysis, and interpretation of results. Research protocols and outputs should be produced to facilitate both replication of a study and reproducibility of results;
- n. Ensure progress reports to funders and other bodies are produced on schedule and to an acceptable standard;
- o. Ensure that the research team under their supervision is following due process regarding contracting in close collaboration with TIDRC/UAC Research and Grant Management Office. They will ensure that collaboration agreements and subcontracts with partners reflect robust procedures in place to monitor compliance with legal and funder terms and conditions;
- p. The Head of UEGDFU must ensure that all data generated are following the appropriate TIDRC/UAC data supported guidance in terms of collection, processing, analysis, storage, archiving or destruction, as well as guidance from funders and

- journals. Research data should be handled in accordance with regulatory bodies governing data acquisition and processing in Benin.
- q. organize training workshops and seminar on manuscripts writing, publication in impact-factored journals, dissemination and research-uptake etc. for researchers;

8.2.3: Researchers' responsibilities

Researchers are expected to include the following responsibilities as part of their activities at the TIDRC/UAC:

- a. Researchers must ensure that research is given high priority as part of their academic work;
- b. Researchers are encouraged to explore opportunities for multi, inter and trans disciplinary research as a means of addressing real-world challenges;
- c. Researchers are responsible for conducting research in accordance with the research policy and guidelines, and other related policies at the TIDRC/UAC;
- d. Researchers are free to select the subject matter of their research and to seek support from internal and external sources for their work;
- e. Research techniques should not violate established professional ethics pertaining to the health, safety, privacy, and other personal rights of human beings or to the infliction of injury or pain on animals or environment.
- f. Researchers must ensure that conflicts of interest are acknowledged and disclosed, and appropriate steps taken to manage them. Researchers must comply with the requirements of the TIDRC/UAC's Conflict of Interest Policy.
- g. Researchers must seek approval from ethics committees as required and may only commence a relevant research activity after final ethics committee's approval for that activity has been received.
- h. All researchers must comply with the TIDRC/UAC's Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedures.
- i. Collaborative research within the University, with other institutions and across borders often results in issues such as authorship, ownership of intellectual property, patenting, copyrights, conflicts of interest and commercialisation of findings. There should therefore be an agreement on such matters at the beginning of the collaboration and arrangements must be consistent with the TIDRC/UAC's relevant policies.

- j. Research conducted for commercial purposes, or research that is to be commercialised or conducted under a contractual arrangement, must be conducted in accordance with relevant policies of the TIDRC/UAC and the related Universities, institutions and companies.
- k. TIDRC/UAC recognizes the importance of mentoring and supervision of research trainees for the promotion of a research culture that demonstrates excellence, integrity, respect and recognition. All research trainees (students and early career researchers) and their supervisors must therefore observe the relevant policies.
- l. Researchers must provide information on current and past research and consultancy projects to the Research and Grant Management Office (RGMO), to have a record of the Center's research/grant profile;
- m. Research uptake should be a key element of all research activities by researchers. Uptake plans must be developed as part of the research proposals and must be undertaken to determine the research output.

8.2.4: Students' responsibilities

Students are expected to consider these responsibilities as part of their activities at the TIDRC/UAC:

- a. Students should seek guidance from their supervisor(s) or other relevant colleagues to ensure compliance with TIDRC/UAC policy and procedures.
- b. Students must be familiar with respective processes governing the ethical review of their study. They must follow the guidance in response to their study, to maximise data integrity and participant safety. Students must ensure they are handling research data in accordance with the appropriate TIDRC and funder guidelines, seeking support when needed.

9. SCIENTIFIC MISCONDUCT

The scientific coordination (SC) of the TIDRC/UAC is expected to prevent scientific misconduct such as plagiarism. The primary responsibility for preventing scientific misconduct rests within the scientific coordination. All employees at the TIDRC/UAC are required to report observed, suspected, or apparent misconduct in science to the Research Ethics Committee.

10 TRANSPARENCY OF RESEARCH

The TIDRC/UAC seeks to promote transparency in research. This includes access to research data, analytical processes, final results, software and other products emanating from research. It further makes possible the analyses of secondary data for further research as well as technology transfer to interested or targeted parties. In its efforts to promote openness in research, the TIDRC/UAC shall also endeavour to protect research data from unauthorized persons by adhering to guidelines in the Center's Record Retention Policy and other related policies.

11. RESEARCH COOPERATION

The TIDRC/UAC shall enhance its collaboration with other Universities and research Institutes, and create platforms for exchanging research scholars with these collaborators. This shall include the protection of research-related rights of visiting scholars doing research at TIDRC/UAC and the Center staff doing research in other institutions.

12. RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES

The TIDRC/UAC, through its RGMO and other related offices shall provide the necessary administrative and management support to research and ensure efficient implementation of all research and consultancy projects. These support services will include the following:

- a. be aware of their responsibilities towards colleagues within the research Units and promote a positive culture within research teams;
- b. advice should be sought from the Head of the Research Unit and TIDRC/UAC Training Programme which training courses are required for their role and complete the courses within the appropriate timeframe;
- c. follow the TIDRC/UAC contracting process, overseen by the Head of the Research Unit, they will ensure that collaboration agreements and subcontracts with partners reflect robust procedures in place to monitor compliance with legal and funder terms and conditions;
- d. submit financial reports to funders as required in the collaboration agreements and subcontracts;
- e. ensure that research protocols go through ethical clearance;
- f. facilitate the patenting and management of Intellectual Property emanating from research and consultancy contracts;

- g. provide incentives for outstanding innovators through the TIDRC/UAC's innovation and career program.

13. EXTERNALLY FUNDED RESEARCH

Externally funded research will be charged a percentage of the direct cost of the research as prescribed in the TIDRC/UAC Indirect Cost Rate Policy as overheads. Consultancy fees for externally funded research undertaken by staff for which no TIDRC/UAC resources are used will be surcharged 5%. Where the research is carried out with TIDRC/UAC resources, 15% shall apply.

14. FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

The TIDRC/UAC recognises that research requires resources including adequate time and space. The general principle governing the allocation of all research funding at the TIDRC/UAC is that it should be seen as an investment that will maximise the range of outcomes that the Center expects to result from staff and student/interns research.

Expenses on research in principle must be reasonable and permissible under Beninese government, University of Abomey-Calavi, and TIDRC rules and regulations. Funds approved for research should be used as approved by Finance Office or any other funding organisation and within the restrictions of the grant.

Recipients of research grants shall be required to report both on the academic content of their research, and on their use of the funds to the funder, and if required to RGMO and Finance Office.

11.0 KEY DEFINITIONS

Terms	Definition
Center	Refers to the Tropical Infectious Diseases Research Center of the University of Abomey-Calavi (TIDRC/UAC)
Deputy Director or Head of the Research Unit	

Research	Research is original, independent investigation undertaken to contribute to knowledge and understanding. Research typically involves inquiry of an experimental or critical nature driven by hypothesis or intellectual positions capable of rigorous assessment by experts in a given discipline.
Researcher	Researcher means any member of the TIDRC/UAC community who engages in or supervises Research.
Research Ethics	Research Ethics is a set of principles governing the way any research involving interaction between the researcher and other humans or human tissue or data relating to humans, is designed, managed and conducted. In preparing a research project, the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of human participants must at all times be considered, respected and safeguarded.
Copyright	<p>Under Benin's copyright law, copyright is the original works of authors which have been fixed in any tangible medium of expression from which they can be perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated, either directly or with the aid of a machine or device.</p> <p>These works include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary works such as books, journal articles, poems, manuals, memoranda, tests, computer programs, instructional material, databases, bibliographies; musical works including any accompanying words; • Dramatic works, including any accompanying music; • Pantomimes and choreographic works (if fixed, as in notation or videotape); Pictorial, graphic and sculptural works, including photographs, diagrams, sketches and integrated circuit masks; • Motion pictures and other audiovisual works such as videotapes; and • Sound recordings.
Conflict of Interest	Conflict of interest is a divergence between an individual's professional obligations and his/her private interests. Such conflicts may not be unethical and do not constitute or imply any

	wrong-doing. But they may lead to actual misconduct when considerations of personal gain, financial, influence or compromise an individual's judgment and actions in the performance of his/her primary responsibilities.
Intellectual Property	The legal rights which result from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary and artistic fields including an Invention and Trade Secrets.
Patent	A patent is a legal document that grants an inventor exclusive right to exclude all others from making, using, or selling the invention for a specific period, typically 20 years from filing date. When a patent application is filed, especially in Benin, the "Offices de propriété industrielle" reviews it to ascertain if the invention is new, useful, and non-obvious and, if appropriate, grants a patent.
Scientific Misconduct	Is the fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data. Also included as "scientific misconduct" for this purpose is retaliation of any kind against a person who, acting in good faith, reported or provided information about suspected or alleged misconduct.

12. POLICY REVIEW

The policy will be renewed every three to five years.

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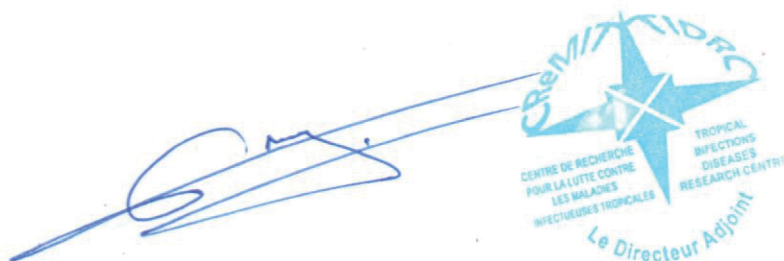
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Approval & adoption

This Research Policy version 1.0 is hereby formally approved and adopted as the official policy of the Tropical Infectious Diseases Research Center/University of Abomey-Calavi, effective August 28, 2025.



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