POLICY AND PROCEDURE
ON RESEARCH

CODE: P043
Procedure Owner: ARPB
Policy Owner: Chief Operating Officer – Academia

Last Reviewed: October 2022

INSTITUTE OF TOURISM STUDIES

1. Scope
The Research Policy shall apply to all academic staff, including full-time and part-time members, and to all stakeholders. This policy is in line with the Institute of Tourism Studies' strategy whereby it specifies the need to constantly address key issues in Tourism and Hospitality through Research and Innovation.

2. Aims
This policy draws from the National Research and Innovation Strategy 2020 of the Maltese Government, which specifies that "Tourism is a key pillar of economic activity in Malta. The sector is well established and mature and there is a good degree of collaboration among operators. The sector is not R&D intensive but must innovate in order to remain attractive and competitive. Consultations yielded several avenues for innovation activity, however innovation in tourism product development was repeatedly highlighted as a key niche where Malta has potential for growth through innovation. In addition to linkages with other specialisation areas such as ICT and health, this specialisation area should involve extensive collaboration with the creative industries" (MCST, 2014:21, available at https://mcst.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/National-RI-Strategy-2020-June-2014.pdf).

3. Objectives
- Foster integrity in research ethics.
- Carry out regular research to contribute towards capacity building in the Tourism, Hospitality, Culture, and Heritage sectors.
- Publish and promote the results of the research carried out by ITS academics and students to contribute towards theoretical and practical knowledge with the abovementioned industries.
- Discuss ITS academics' and students' research findings with the industry community.
- Publish research work inhouse, and in international academic and semi-academic journals.
- Seek R&D EU funding to support the Institute's research activities.

4. Advanced research training
All ITS academics shall undergo inhouse training on how to carry out publishable research. Such training should include but should not be limited to:

- Training on advanced research methods (both qualitative and quantitative);
- Seminars on advanced academic writing; and
- Training on common practices in academic journal publications.

This policy shall be read in light of other policies, namely the Plagiarism Policy, the Intellectual Property Policy, and the Quality Assurance Policy.
The With a view to investing in the research capabilities of the Institute of Tourism

Studies, the Chief Operating Officer – Academia shall identify members of the academic staff to share their knowledge and expertise towards the publication of quality research and other academic material.

For this purpose, the Board of Governors (BoG) has approved the constitution of the Academic Research and Publications Board (ARPB) in May 2022.

Academics who are interested to sit on the ARPB must apply to a Call for Expression of Interest and the Board of Governors shall appoint such academics on recommendation of the Executive Management. The ARPB must be composed as follows:

Chair: ARPB Coordinator
Members: Five to eleven faculty members appointed through an internal Call for Expression of Interest
Observers: Academic Managers (ex officio)
Secretary: Administrative Staff at ITS (ex officio)

The Board shall discuss and propose the publication of academic research and other content which showcase the finest research and best competences of both the academic staff and the students at ITS. The ARPB Coordinator shall chair the Board and liaise with ITS Management and the Board of Studies (BoS) for the implementation of the Board's proposals.

THE PROCEDURE:

1. Research

In terms of research, the ARPB shall:

1. Advise and support the Board of Governors and the Academic Management in the development and implementation of strategic initiatives related to academic research, or which have academic research as an integral component;
2. Develop, implement, monitor, and review policies, rules and regulations, and guidelines related to academic research by both members of the Academia and students;
3. Support Internal Quality Assurance at ITS as far as research standards are concerned;
4. Provide advice and support to units and departments within ITS that participate in research projects with the industry and within the frameworks of the European Union and other national and international agreements;
5. Design, implement, and review rules, regulations, and guidelines related to ethical considerations in research by both members of the Academia and students;
6. Advise the Board of Studies and the Board of Governors and the Executive Management on issues related to ethical considerations in research by both members of the Academia and students;
7. Design, implement, and review procedures and processes for students to carry out research as part of their studies;

8. Advise the Board of Studies and the Programme Quality Validation Board on the standards and quality of the research component of the programmes, courses, and any training offered by ITS;
9. Support members of the Academia in their research work on behalf of ITS;
10. Support the Academic Management in the organisation of events and initiatives that have a strong academic research component such as Continuous Professional Development for faculty members, Academic Writing Seminars for both students and faculty members, and related activities;
11. Develop links with external academic research communities for the benefit of academics, students, and the Institute;
12. Appoint working groups or subcommittees to carry out its mission more effectively and draw the necessary resources from the Management to conduct its business; and
13. Provide leadership and promote a quality academic research culture and advise the Board of Studies, the Board of Governors, and the Management on how the necessary environment and facilities can be provided to support this culture.

2. Publications

In terms of publications, the ARPB shall:

1. Propose and implement the publication of academic research and other academic content that showcases the best competences of both the academic staff and the students at ITS;
2. Develop, implement, and review the editorial and publication processes;
3. Ensure adherence to high quality academic and publication standards; and
4. Ensure adherence to ITS's Rules and Regulations and to ITS's vision and Strategic Plan.

3. Membership and procedures:

1. The ARPB shall consist of a minimum of five voting members and a maximum of eleven voting members, appointed from among the academics at ITS. The Board shall also include observer members, who have the right to attend meetings and receive correspondences, but in no way can they intervene in the Board's discussions, make statements, or express opinions, with the exception of submitting clarificatory questions and answers, to the best of their knowledge, and requests for information from present Board members. The observers can sit ex officio (see below) and/or can be called by the Board to attend and observe meetings, as necessary.
2. The quorum for a sitting is 50 % of the voting members after 10 minutes of the scheduled starting time. The simple majority voting will be used for decision-making if needed. In case of a 50 %-50 % voting outcome, the vote will be taken again at the next Board meeting.
3. ITS Management shall appoint a secretary to the Board from among the Institute's administrative staff.

4. ITS Management shall appoint a Coordinator for Research and Publications in accordance with Clause 32 and Appendix G of the Collective Agreement for Academics. The Coordinator for Research and Publications shall sit on the ARPB and shall have the responsibility to coordinate the business of the Board. The Coordinator shall have the right to convene and chair ARPB meetings as delegated by the Chief Operating Officer – Academia.

5. The Coordinator for Research and Publications shall sit ex officio with full voting rights and liaise with the Chief Operating Officer – Academia and ITS Management for the implementation of the Board's proposals. The Coordinator and the other voting members sitting in the Board must be an odd number.

6. The voting members shall be appointed from ITS Academic Staff following a Call for Expression of Interest issued by ITS Management. Selected candidates shall serve for a period of two years or until they resign from the post. The Management reserves the right to expel any member who does not abide by ITS's Rules and Regulations or by the Board's Terms of Reference or does not make a valid contribution. Appointed ARPB members from the Academic Staff and any members of the working groups/subcommittees in terms of clause A.12 above (excluding the Coordinator and the ex officio members) shall be compensated financially in accordance with ITS's current remuneration policies.

7. The Chief Operating Officer – Academia may sit ex officio as a voting member and ITS Academic Managers may sit ex officio as observers. The Chief Operating Officer – Academia may delegate this membership on the ARPB to a senior member of the COO – Academia's office who shall update the COO – Academia following each ARPB meeting.

8. The ARPB shall appoint subcommittees and working groups, as necessary, including a research ethics committee or group, which shall manage all operations involving the review and approval of all research ethics applications submitted by ITS students and external parties intending to carry out research within ITS. These committees or groups shall always be chaired by a member of the ARPB and can invite members to sit on them from both inside and outside ITS. Work in these groups shall be financially compensated according to ITS Policies.

9. ITS Management shall provide the ARPB with the necessary administrative human and material resources to conduct its business.

10. The ARPB shall meet at least six times per calendar year. Minutes shall be taken for all official meetings, and these shall be forwarded to ITS Management. The quorum to start a meeting is 50 % of members. In case of diverging views among the members, decisions shall be based on the principle of a simple majority in a vote taken by the attending members.

11. The ARPB shall refer all pertinent issues concerning programmes, courses, and tuition to the Board of Studies and shall abide by the decisions taken by the latter. The Board of studies shall in turn consult with the ARPB in matters related to academic research and publications, and follow the decisions taken by the

ARPB. The Coordinator for Academic Research and Publications shall report to the ARPB any proceedings of the BoS that are directly related to academic research and publications, and act as a liaison between the two Boards.