



مجلس التعليم العالي  
Higher Education Council

# UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CAPACITY & ENVIRONMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL



## Introduction

The Higher Education Council (HEC) is delighted to introduce this self-assessment toolkit to the higher education sector in Bahrain as we look to support universities improve. This toolkit will enable institutes to assess internal capacity and capability and then put in place plans to improve over time. This toolkit is for your use only and HEC does not require you to send us any report, all that we ask is that you apply honesty when using it and to use its findings constructively to help make positive changes. The content of the toolkit is only a starting point and we encourage you to build on it and adapt it for your own use.

Finally HEC wishes to thank our partners who have worked with us to develop this toolkit, we are confident that it will produce improved outcomes.

Secretariat General of the Higher Education Council

## Introduction

A key objective of the Bahrain Research Strategy is to strengthen university research capacity. To support this objective, the Higher Education Council (HEC) Directorate of Scientific Research has developed this assessment tool to help universities assess activities associated with their research processes, investment, capacity, and institutional support structure. The tool is intended to encourage discussion within the university about the status of various elements necessary for an effective research system, and to help universities identify ways to strengthen support for research. The tool focuses on six aspects of a university's research activity:

1. The University's Research Strategy
2. Availability of Research Funding
3. Quality and Availability of Research Laboratories and Equipment
4. Engagement of Faculty in Research
5. Effectiveness of Administrative Support for Research
6. Vibrancy of the Research Culture

Associated with each of these aspects of research activity is a set of individual questions for participants to answer on a scaled multiple-choice basis (instructions are provided below). The evaluation is qualitative rather than quantitative, as its purpose is to encourage discussion within the universities, rather than evaluation and benchmarking.

## Suggested Use of the Self-Assessment Tool

Institutions are encouraged to use this assessment tool as a checklist or guide to stimulate conversations on campus, and as a means to inject research objectives into the university strategic planning process. Universities will not be asked to submit the survey results to the HEC, nor will the results be used by HEC to evaluate or assess university performance. However, universities will be asked to provide a brief report to HEC that summarizes findings and any planned actions.

This survey should be filled out by a cross-section of university administrators, faculty, staff, and graduate students, some of whom could be convened to participate in a workshop to discuss their impressions of the university research environment and potential areas for improvement. At such a workshop, participants could review and discuss aggregated responses from the assessment.

Universities should feel free to modify the survey as needed to suit specific objectives associated with assessing the research enterprise at each university.

### Assessment Instructions for Participants

In the questions below, participants are asked to evaluate how well their institutions are performing with respect to various activities related to academic research. Respondents are asked to respond to these questions using this four-point scale:

1	Poor performance
2	Minimally acceptable performance
3	Above-average performance
4	Excellent performance

Respondents are also provided an opportunity to indicate that their university does not engage in the activity in question, or that they do not know enough about a specific activity to answer.

For example, Question 1.i asks whether the university uses a formal research strategy to guide university research activities. If a respondent works at a university that has not adopted a strategy for research, he or she would circle the “Does not use” response. Similarly, if the respondent does not know whether the university has a research strategy, or how well the university is managing its research enterprise according to that strategy, he or she would circle the “Do not know” response. Otherwise respondents should indicate a score of one (1) to four (4)

**Part A: University Affiliation**

1. What is your position within the university?  
(If you hold more than one position, check all that apply)

University Leadership (President, Rector, Chancellor; Vice President, Vice Rector)		Senior Administrator (Dean, Vice Dean; Director of Division, Office, or Center; Deputy Director)
Department Head		Faculty, Tenured
Faculty, Non-Tenured		Faculty, Adjunct/Lecturer
Faculty, Research		Non-Faculty Investigator/Researcher
Academic Administration		Research Administration
Financial Administration		Technology Transfer
Economic Development, Outreach		Department Staff (non-faculty)
Graduate Student		Other—please specify:

**Part B: Research Assessment**

Respondents are asked to respond to these questions using this four-point scale:

1	poor performance
2	minimally acceptable performance
3	above-average performance
4	excellent performance

Research Activity		How well is the institution performing with respect to this research activity?					
<b>1) The University's Research Strategy (circle one number or phrase in the answer column)</b>							
a	The university uses a formal research strategy to guide university research activities	1	2	3	4	Does not use	Do not know
b	The university reports on research inputs, such as research funding, number of faculty and students engaged in research, etc.	1	2	3	4	Does not report	Do not know
c	The university reports on research outputs, such as publications, patents, economic impacts, etc.	1	2	3	4	Does not report	Do not know
d	The university reports on the number of MS and PhDs awarded	1	2	3	4	Does not report	Do not know

2) Availability of Research Funding (circle one number or phrase in the answer column)							
a	The university raises external research support	1	2	3	4	Does not raise	Do not know
b	The university raises external research support from government sources	1	2	3	4	Does not raise	Do not know
c	The university raises external research support from industry	1	2	3	4	Does not raise	Do not know
d	Research funding from the university is available to individual faculty researchers who wish to conduct research	1	2	3	4	Is not available	Do not know
e	Research funding from the external sources is available to individual faculty researchers who wish to conduct research	1	2	3	4	Is not available	Do not know
f	Funding is available at the university to support research by graduate students	1	2	3	4	Is not available	Do not know
g	Research funding from the external sources is available to individual graduate student researchers who wish to conduct research	1	2	3	4	Is not available	Do not know
h	The university provides funding support for attendance at research related seminars, conferences, workshops, etc.	1	2	3	4	Does not provide	Do not know

3) Quality and Availability of Research Laboratories and Equipment (circle one number or phrase in the answer column)							
a	The university provides laboratory and other facilities for research	1	2	3	4	Does not provide	Do not know
b	The university provides research equipment and materials	1	2	3	4	Does not provide	Do not know
c	The university provides maintenance, repair and operations support for research equipment	1	2	3	4	Does not provide	Do not know
d	The university maintains soft research resources such as library holdings, electronic journal access, specialized databases, software, etc.	1	2	3	4	Does not provide	Do not know



4) Engagement of Faculty in Research (circle one number or phrase in the answer column)							
a	Faculty regularly conduct research	1	2	3	4	Do not conduct research	Do not know
b	Faculty routinely publish in the scientific literature (peer reviewed journals, books, book chapters, proceedings, etc.)	1	2	3	4	Do not publish	Do not know
c	Faculty serve as members of editorial boards of peer-reviewed academic publications	1	2	3	4	Do not serve in this capacity	Do not know
d	Faculty serve as peer reviewers for such scientific review activities as academic publication review, grant selections, etc.	1	2	3	4	Do not serve in this capacity	Do not know
e	Faculty are members of national, regional, or international research oriented organizations, committees, associations	1	2	3	4	Are not members	Do not know
f	Faculty participate in significant cooperative research projects with researchers based outside of Bahrain	1	2	3	4	Do not participate	Do not know
g	Faculty participate in academic conferences, nationally and internationally	1	2	3	4	Do not participate	Do not know
h	Faculty supervise graduate students and serve on PhD committees	1	2	3	4	Do not supervise	Do not know
i	Faculty receive research awards and prizes (nationally, regionally, internationally)	1	2	3	4	Do not receive	Do not know
j	Faculty research generates commercially relevant IP, such as patents, other invention disclosures, registered designs, or research results that form the basis of startup companies	1	2	3	4	Does not generate	Do not know

5) Effectiveness of Administrative Support for Research (circle one number or phrase in the answer column)							
a	The university provides support to researchers for identifying sources of research funding and seeking funding from them	1	2	3	4	Does not provide	Do not know
b	The university possesses the administrative capabilities required to manage external research support (e.g. processes for applying for external research support, receiving and spending funds, reporting to funders, etc.)	1	2	3	4	Does not possess	Do not know
c	The university reduces the number of courses faculty must teach when they receive external research funding	1	2	3	4	Does not reduce	Do not know
d	The university allows faculty to consult with industry	1	2	3	4	Does not allow	Do not know
e	The university maintains and communicates standards for the ethical conduct of research	1	2	3	4	Does not maintain	Do not know
f	The university assists researchers with compliance to internal and external research conduct standards	1	2	3	4	Does not assist	Do not know
g	The university commercializes faculty and student research results	1	2	3	4	Does not commercialize	Do not know
h	The university encourages interdisciplinary collaboration across the university departments and research groups	1	2	3	4	Does not encourage	Do not know
i	The university develops research partnerships and collaborations with externally universities, locally, regionally, and internationally	1	2	3	4	Does not develop	Do not know

6) Vibrancy of the Research Culture (circle one number or phrase in the answer column)							
a	The university provides for research-focused intellectual exchange on campus through such things as regular and well-attended seminars, lectures, symposia, presentations, etc.	1	2	3	4	Does not provide	Do not know
b	The university formally recognizes faculty contributions to research in faculty evaluation and promotion decisions	1	2	3	4	Does not recognize	Do not know
c	Graduate students, especially doctoral students, are actively involved in all aspects of university research, including attending conferences at which they present their work	1	2	3	4	Are not involved	Do not know
d	The university allows for faculty study/ research leave (sabbaticals)	1	2	3	4	Does not allow	Do not know
e	The university hosts visiting faculty and scholars, including those from other countries.	1	2	3	4	Does not do	Do not know
f	The university offers research methods courses	1	2	3	4	Does not offer	Do not know
g	The university promotes the value of research to the broader community	1	2	3	4	Does not do	Do not know









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