



Policy on Institute Thematic Research Areas (TRAs)

Purpose

To foster collaboration (intra and interdisciplinary) among the faculty members, enhance research impact, and align institutional strengths in several focused research areas, the Institute establishes a formal mechanism for supporting Institute Thematic Research Areas (TRAs).

TRAs are collaborative research clusters formed by faculty members with shared or complementary expertise, working together on focused themes of strategic importance for the Institute. Essentially, a TRA is a formally recognized, Institute-supported research initiative that:

- Focuses on a clearly defined research theme or problem area.
- Involves a group of faculty members (typically two to five) across one or more research domains.
- Demonstrates potential for high-impact outcomes over a 3–5 year horizon.

The objectives of this TRA initiative are to:

- Promote intra and interdisciplinary and collaborative research among DAU faculty.
- Build critical mass in research domains of strategically importance for the Institute.
- Enhance the Institute's visibility and leadership in selected thematic areas.
- Facilitate external funding, industry collaboration, and translational research.
- Support high-impact publications, patents, and technology development.

Scope

This policy outlines the framework for inviting, evaluating, funding, and reviewing such thematic initiatives.

This policy applies to:

- All full-time DAU faculty members.
- Research staff participating under faculty-led research initiatives.
- Collaborative proposals involving external partners



Call for Proposals

- Calls for TRA proposals shall be issued by the Office of the Dean of Research.
- Proposals must be submitted by a group of at least two DAU faculty members, with one faculty member serving as the TRA Coordinator (interdisciplinary participation is encouraged)
- Each proposal shall include the following:
 - 1) Title and Theme Description
 - 2) Rationale and Strategic Relevance (maximum one page)
 - 3) Participating Faculty and Expertise
 - 4) Description of the Proposed Research (maximum five pages)
 - a) Research Objectives
 - b) Proposed Approach
 - c) Methodology
 - d) Expected Outcomes (publications, patents, prototypes, standardization impact, etc.)
 - 5) Funding Requirements (manpower, contingency, consumables and travel), including a justification
 - 6) Plan for External Funding
 - 7) Collaboration Plan (role of individual faculty member)
 - 8) Student and Research Staff Involvement
 - 9) Milestones and Timeline (3–5 years)

Evaluation of Proposals and Selection

Proposals shall be evaluated by a TRA Review Committee constituted by the Director. The committee may include senior DAU faculty members, external experts, and representatives from industry/research organizations (optional).

Proposals shall be assessed based on scientific/technical merit and novelty, strategic relevance to the Institute, feasibility and clarity of work plan, track record of participating faculty, potential for attracting external funding, and expected outcomes and deliverables.

Final approval shall be granted by the Director.

Funding Support



Selected TRAs may receive funding for research activities, support for PhD students or JRFs employed on the research project, travel support, etc.¹ The maximum annual financial support from the Institute (comprising support for the manpower, consumables and travel) is Rs. 15 lakhs.

Initial funding shall be provided for two years, extensible based on performance review.

Process for Periodic Monitoring and Review

The PI shall prepare and submit to Dean Research Office an annual report – along with a presentation – that includes the project status, a summary of key technological achievements, a detailed description of technical development, a list of publications and patents that have resulted from the project activities in the past year, and planned activities for the next year (including open challenges and red flags).



Director, School of Technology



Director General

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¹ The lab space and the equipment related funding requirement should not be included in this proposal – such requirements are to be met with a separate Institute-level budget for the development of new infrastructure.