KFU
جامعة الملك فيصل
KING FAISAL UNIVERSITY

Institutional Innovation Policy at King Faisal University

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Prepared by:	Innovation Zone
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Introduction:

Institutional innovation in modern universities is considered one of the fundamental pillars for promoting excellence. Stemming from King Faisal University's role as an academic, research, and developmental institution that contributes to building knowledge, developing solutions, and meeting the needs of society and the economy, and based on its strategic direction toward innovation, this policy is established to institutionalize innovation as a sustainable and integrated approach within the university's operations, programs, and outputs. Institutional innovation is no longer a complementary activity or scattered initiatives; rather, it has become a fundamental element in increasing efficiency, enhancing competitiveness, accelerating the transformation of knowledge into impact, and enabling the university to respond effectively to scientific, technical, economic, and social changes.

International benchmarks in effective innovation management emphasize that an effective institution does not merely encourage ideas, but rather builds an integrated system for innovation management that defines the vision, strategy, policies, and objectives; establishes the necessary structures, processes, and resources; and ensures continuous improvement. Modern professional models also highlight the importance of institutional leadership, culture, innovation portfolio management, and institutional learning in achieving sustainable innovative results.

This policy was developed to serve as an institutional governing framework for innovation within the university, ensuring the integration of roles, clarity of responsibilities, protection of rights, and enhancement of efficiency in developing innovative initiatives and projects and transforming them into tangible impact. This policy also reflects the university's commitment to building an enabling environment for innovation that enhances competitiveness, supports entrepreneurship, and contributes to achieving the targets of Saudi Vision 2030.

Article 1: Policy Name:

This document shall be titled "Institutional Innovation Policy at King Faisal University," hereinafter referred to as the "Policy."

Article 2: Regulatory and Strategic Reference

This Policy is based on the regulations and bylaws applicable at King Faisal University (KFU) and the University's strategic directions, particularly the Fifth Strategic Pillar related to innovation. This pillar aims to develop effective innovative solutions that meet the needs of society and industry, supporting sustainable development and the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030. It also draws upon the role of the Innovation and Business Development Sector, the Innovation Zone, and the Science Park in supporting innovation incubators and accelerators, enhancing technology transfer, and transforming research and innovation outputs into commercial and industrial applications.

Furthermore, this Policy has been developed in accordance with international benchmarking practices in institutional innovation management and the manuals and regulations supporting innovation published by Saudi national authorities. These include manuals and publications issued by the Research, Development, and Innovation Authority, such as the Innovation Zones Framework, the National Manual for Technology Transfer Offices, and the Manual of Services and Enablers Supporting Innovation.

Article 3: Policy Objectives

This Policy aims to establish an institutional governing framework for innovation at King Faisal University, ensuring the transformation of innovation from an individual activity or temporary initiative into a sustainable and integrated institutional practice. This framework contributes to enhancing the University's efficiency in generating ideas, developing solutions, investing in intellectual property, building partnerships, and converting research outputs into products, services, and startups with economic and societal impact.

Specifically, the Policy aims to achieve the following:

1. Consolidating innovation as a sustainable institutional practice across all university sectors.
2. Aligning innovation with the University's institutional strategy and its national and developmental priorities.
3. Building a governed institutional system for innovation within the University.
4. Motivating university affiliates to submit and develop original ideas, research, and innovations.
5. Regulating the relationship between scientific research, innovation, entrepreneurship, technology transfer, investment, and partnerships.
6. Enabling the transformation of ideas and research outputs into impactful applications, products, services, and solutions.
7. Marketing innovations and research discoveries and transferring them to society, industry, and relevant sectors.
8. Protecting and enhancing intellectual property rights as well as the University's legal, financial, and reputational interests.
9. Strengthening the role of the Innovation Zone and the Science Park in enabling and leading the innovation ecosystem.
10. Increasing the number of knowledge-based and technology-based startups and spinout companies.

11. Building an institutional environment that supports creativity, experimentation, learning, and multidisciplinary collaboration.
12. Maximizing the economic, social, and knowledge return from innovation, and contributing to the support of a knowledge-based and innovation-driven economy.

Article 4: Scope of Application

This Policy applies to all university entities, specifically including:

- Colleges, Institutes, and Research Centers.
- Deanships, Administrations, and Support Units.
- The Innovation and Business Development Sector.
- The Innovation Zone.
- The Center for Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Knowledge Transfer.
- The Science Park.
- Incubators, Accelerators, and Innovation Programs.
- Faculty members, Researchers, Students, and Employees.
- Spinout and hosted companies when their activities are linked to the innovation ecosystem.
- External partners when implementing joint innovative initiatives or projects with the university.

This Policy shall not prejudice any higher-ranking regulations or bylaws, or any approved contracts or agreements; rather, it shall serve as a complementary and regulatory framework for their application in the field of institutional innovation.

Article 5: Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings assigned to each, unless the context requires otherwise:

Word / Term	Meaning / Definition
University	King Faisal University (KFU) as a public legal entity, including all its sectors, units, and whoever is delegated by the authorized official.

Innovation and Business Development Sector	The sector responsible for leading innovation trends, entrepreneurship, and technology transfer within the University.
Innovation Zone	An institutional entity affiliated with the University, authorized to coordinate and enable the innovation ecosystem, and link research and innovation outputs with the needs of society, industry, and the market.
Innovation	The process of developing, adopting, or applying a fundamentally new or improved idea, solution, product, service, process, or business model, achieving an identifiable or measurable added value for the organization, society, industry, or economy. This includes technical, administrative, educational, service-oriented, social, digital, and organizational innovation. This understanding aligns with modern references that view innovation as a value-driven institutional system, rather than merely producing new ideas.
Institutional Innovation	A structured and sustainable approach adopted by the University to integrate innovation into its strategy, culture, structure, processes, resources, and outputs, ensuring it becomes an integrated institutional practice rather than an individual activity or temporary initiative. This includes enabling ideas, developing projects, managing risks and opportunities, and transforming outputs into impact and value. This concept is based on the attached document and is reinforced by the international vision of innovation management systems.
Innovative Project	Any project based on an idea, research output, technical knowledge, or emerging technology that is capable of development, application, or investment.
Innovation Portfolio	A group of innovative initiatives, projects, programs, and outputs managed in a balanced manner according to the University's priorities, resources, maturity level, feasibility, and expected impact. This concept is vital in modern institutional innovation management models.

Creativity	The ability to produce original and meaningful ideas, concepts, or approaches to address a problem, capitalize on an opportunity, or reimagine an existing reality. Creativity is an important input for innovation but is not considered full innovation unless transformed into application, value, or impact.
Invention	A new intellectual or technical output characterized by novelty and practical or industrial applicability, which may be subject to legal protection under intellectual property laws, such as patents. Invention is a form of innovation but does not encompass all its types.
Science Park	The executive entity of the Innovation Zone in transforming research and innovation outputs into applications, products, and knowledge-based companies.
Translational Innovation	The process of transferring innovation from the idea, research, or prototype stage to the stage of practical, commercial, or industrial application.
Technology Transfer	The process through which knowledge, patents, models, or research outputs are transformed into products, services, applications, licenses, or companies.
Intellectual Property	All rights resulting from intellectual, research, or technical creativity, including patents, industrial designs, copyrights, technical expertise, trade secrets, and any other related rights.
Spin-out Company	A company established or restructured to exploit an intellectual property asset belonging to the University under an approved license, benefit, or contractual arrangement.
Hosted Company	A company hosted within the Science Park under a hosting or service-and-space utilization contract, without its activity necessarily being based on intellectual property owned by the University.

Article 6: Policy Principles

In implementing this Policy, the University shall adhere to the following principles:

- **First: Institutional Integration:** Innovation is a shared responsibility among all university sectors and is not limited to a single entity. The Innovation Zone shall lead the coordination, enablement, and follow-up.
- **Second: Value and Impact:** Innovation is not measured solely by the number of ideas, but by its capacity to produce a tangible scientific, economic, social, or industrial impact.
- **Third: Alignment with Market and Societal Needs:** Innovative projects shall be directed toward the actual needs of society and industry, thereby supporting sustainable development.
- **Fourth: Protection of Rights:** All entities are committed to protecting the intellectual property, returns, and the moral and financial rights of the University, its affiliates, and participants in innovation activities.
- **Fifth: Transparency and Governance:** Innovative initiatives and projects are subject to clear procedures for evaluation, approval, follow-up, and funding.
- **Sixth: Conflict of Interest:** Any direct or indirect interest that may affect decisions related to projects, companies, or licenses must be disclosed.
- **Seventh: Financial Sustainability:** The innovation ecosystem works to develop sustainable income sources for the University through licensing, investment, partnerships, and companies.
- **Eighth: Learning and Continuous Improvement:** The University adopts periodic reviews, measurement of results, and feedback to develop the institutional system for innovation.

Article 7: Policy Statement

King Faisal University is committed to adopting institutional innovation as a strategic direction and an integrated administrative and operational approach aimed at creating sustainable value for the University, society, and the economy, in alignment with its mission and strategic priorities. The University acknowledges that institutional innovation requires effective leadership, a supportive organizational culture, clear processes, appropriate resources, transparent governance, and continuous measurement of performance and impact.

Accordingly, the University is committed to the following:

1. Integrating innovation into institutional planning, performance, and continuous improvement.
2. Building an organizational and cultural environment that encourages initiative, creativity, responsible experimentation, and learning from practice.

3. Managing innovation through a systematic path that includes identifying opportunities, generating ideas, evaluation and selection, development, incubation or acceleration, protection, transfer or application or investment, and then measuring impact and improvement.
4. Adopting objective criteria for evaluating innovative initiatives and projects, taking into account novelty, value, feasibility, applicability, strategic alignment, and expected impact.
5. Protecting intellectual property, contractual rights, returns, technical expertise, and the University's legal interests.
6. Supporting the building of partnerships with governmental, private, and non-profit entities to expand the impact of innovation and accelerate its adoption.
7. Developing sustainable income sources for the University through licensing, investment, partnerships, and spinout companies.
8. Monitoring, reviewing, and periodically updating performance indicators and innovation results to achieve continuous improvement.

Article 8: Institutional Governance for Innovation

The innovation ecosystem at the University shall be managed according to a governance structure that ensures clarity of authorities and integration of roles, as follows:

Entity	Roles
University Council	Approves general directions and policies related to innovation, and delegates the necessary authorities in accordance with approved regulations.
Relevant University Vice President	Supervises the Innovation and Business Development Sector, and approves recommendations, initiatives, and decisions within their responsibilities.
Innovation and Business Development Sector	Leads the institutional direction for innovation; develops policies, manuals, and executive frameworks; follows up on performance; builds partnerships; and enhances integration among relevant entities. It serves as the primary reference for institutional innovation governance within the University. Based on best practices, it also oversees

	capacity building, development of an innovation culture, management of the innovation portfolio, and submission of continuous improvement reports.
Innovation Zone	Leads the implementation of the policy; aligns initiatives with the University's strategy; monitors key performance indicators (KPIs); and submits periodic reports to the authorized official. It is responsible for designing innovation programs, receiving initiatives, coordinating relationships between colleges, centers, and the private sector, monitoring project execution, and submitting recommendations.
Science Park	Executes incubation, acceleration, and hosting programs; supports spinout and hosted companies; and monitors their compliance with approved contracts and policies.
Technology Transfer Office (or the competent entity)	Manages the protection of intellectual property; studies licensing opportunities; negotiates contracts; and monitors returns in coordination with relevant entities.
Colleges and Research Centers	Generate research and innovation outputs; nominate viable projects; and provide the necessary scientific and technical expertise.
Legal Affairs	Reviews contracts, agreements, and bylaws; and ensures the integrity of the regulatory relationship between the University, partners, and companies.
Financial Affairs and Investment Administration	Regulates returns, incentives, expenditures, and financial obligations associated with innovative projects.

Article 9: Priority Areas

Priority in supporting innovation shall be given to areas linked to the University's institutional identity as well as regional and national needs, specifically:

- Digital Transformation.
- Emerging Technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Innovation in Teaching and Learning.
- Social and Cultural Innovation.

- Food Security and Agriculture.
- Environment and Sustainability.
- Health and Quality of Life.
- Water and Energy.
- Manufacturing Industries.
- Industrial and Private Sector Solutions.

Article 10: Commitment to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The implementing entities are committed to linking their programs and initiatives with clear performance indicators, including:

- Number of innovative projects converted into commercial applications.
- Number of startups established and launched into the market.
- Number of products transformed and transferred to the market.
- Number of innovative solutions transferred to the industrial sector.
- Number of research and innovation outputs transferred to industry.
- Number of research and applied projects based on Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies.
- Total income generated from the implementation of innovative initiatives and programs.
- Number of ideas submitted and developed.
- Number of initiatives transitioned from idea to prototype.
- Number of innovations protected or licensed.
- Volume of partnerships and external funding associated with innovation.
- Number of startup and spinout companies.
- Number of innovations adopted internally within the University or externally in the market or industrial sector.

These indicators are an integral part of measuring the performance of the Innovation Sector, the Innovation Zone, and the Science Park.

Article 11: Review and Update:

This Policy shall be reviewed every two years, or as needed, based on changes in regulations, strategic priorities, performance indicator results, or lessons learned from implementation. Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the authorized official for approval. Furthermore, the review should include an assessment of governance effectiveness, process efficiency, the maturity of the innovation culture, and the extent of the Policy's alignment with technical, regulatory, and economic changes.

Article 12: References

This Policy shall be adopted, interpreted, and applied in light of the following:

1. The regulations, bylaws, and decisions applicable in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and at King Faisal University.
2. The attached document regarding the Institutional Innovation Policy at King Faisal University, as it serves as the local foundation developed in this proposal.
3. ISO 56002 Standard: As a guiding reference for establishing, implementing, maintaining, and continuously improving the innovation management system.
4. Reference resources issued by the Global Innovation Institute (GInI) regarding innovation models, institutional innovation architecture, the six stages of the innovation management system, and professional accreditation in innovation.
5. National manuals and regulations published by the Research, Development, and Innovation Authority (RDIA) in the Kingdom, including the Innovation Zones Framework, the National Manual for Technology Transfer Offices, and the Manual of Services and Enablers Supporting Innovation.
6. Published government reference policies in the field of innovation.

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