



Research in private universities and the journey to a BETTER FUTURE

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Research paves the path that leads towards a university achieving the goal of becoming a hub of academia. Private universities in Bangladesh have made significant strides towards achieving this goal over the last two three decades. We spoke to representatives from some of the most notable private universities in Bangladesh to get an understanding of the current state of their research, and what steps they are taking to encourage students and faculty to participate more in this effort.

American International University Bangladesh (AIUB)

"AIUB has established the 'Dr Anwarul Abedin Institute of Innovation (D2A2I)' to oversee impactful research projects, including the Center for Sustainable Energy Research, Center for Nanotechnology Research, Center for VLSI and Embedded Systems, Centre for Biomedical Research, and Business Incubation," Professor Dr Mohammed Jashim Uddin, Convenor, Office of Research and Publications, AIUB, said.

"Recognising the significance of research publications, AIUB has implemented various

a theoretical and practical foundation for a high standard of educational process and educational research. ISU regularly offers research training courses and serves as a source of training to develop the capacity and experience of Bangladeshi/Foreign consulting firms."

International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT)

Dr Sajal Saha, Director of Miyan Research Institute at IUBAT, said, "Currently, IUBAT is focusing on necessary fields essential to society's progress. IUBAT prioritises sustainable development to address social and environmental issues, business to promote economic growth, agriculture to produce food sustainably, and engineering to innovate in technology. This all-encompassing strategy highlights IUBAT's dedication to thorough research."

He added that, "Frequent research seminars encourage academics and students to engage in scholarly research and foster intellectual exchange. The institution provides modern lab facilities, which actively promote research projects by creating an atmosphere that encourages experimentation and creativity. Establishing the Miyan Research Institute also promotes idea sharing by being a focal point for collaborative and multidisciplinary research. In addition, IUBAT is dedicated to providing research funds and enabling academics to work on worthwhile topics. With these diverse initiatives, IUBAT establishes a vibrant research community that promotes academic excellence and innovation."

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)

According to Rajib Bhowmick, Director, Media and Public Relations at IUB, "The University's research priorities, in sync with National Research Priorities and evolving scientific trends, are periodically reviewed and updated. IUB actively involves students in research, employing them as Research or Graduate Assistants. Current focus areas include the RMG sector, ICT, 4IR, Robotics and Internet of Things (RIoT), Climate Change, Astronomy, Mental and Physical Health, Generation Z, Youth and Adolescents, Public Health, and STEMM. Noteworthy projects at IUB include studies on employment sustainability in the RMG sector, the effectiveness of ICT tools for stress management among healthcare professionals, astronomical data analysis, and ecosystem-based adaptation strategies for climate risks in coastal fishing communities in Bangladesh, and so on."

North South University (NSU)

Professor Atiqul Islam, VC of NSU, spoke on the focus of research at his institution, "NSU's commitment to research is evident through its leading position in research and publication among both public and private universities. NSU graduates have pursued higher education and research at prestigious institutions like Harvard, Stanford, Oxford, and Cambridge."

NSU focuses on collaboration between industry

and academia, and that, in effect, encourages its students to pursue avenues of research. On this, Professor Atiqul Islam said, "NSU is resolute in its mission to foster connections between students and the industry. To realise this goal, the university hosts a range of events and activities. NSU also provides a significant amount of funds to its faculty members to conduct research projects. Moreover, NSU has a dedicated Research Department which helps NSU develop the best researchers to ensure research quality following ethical standards."

Presidency University (PU)

PU engages in research activities and boasts great pride in their robust research culture. Speaking on the topic of what the university does to engage students and faculty in research, Professor Abul Lais Haque, PhD, Dean of School of Engineering, at PU, said, "Presidency University actively promotes research endeavours across departments, encouraging students and faculty alike to explore new frontiers of knowledge."

He further added, "Financial support is often a crucial factor in enabling research initiatives. Presidency University has instituted various research grants and scholarships, facilitating access to resources necessary for conducting high-quality research. These grants are designed to encourage innovative projects, cover expenses related to data collection, laboratory work, or conference attendance."

Mentioning some exciting research projects that are ongoing, he said. Some exciting projects include creating a system to identify the authenticity of ancient Bengali coins using deep learning, using deep learning for lesion segmentation in medical imaging, and a machine learning system for early earthquake prediction.

On the other hand another group of researchers are working on RCC Structures, Advance Concrete, Ferro-Cement Technology, and Soil Improvement Technique, advanced Soil Mechanics, Soil Dynamics, and Earthquake Engineering, Sanitation, Disaster Management etc."

State University of Bangladesh (SUB)

"SUB delivers world-class education by ensuring outstanding teaching, extensive hands-on laboratory demonstration, and innovative world-class research activities across multiple sectors. Besides the regular teaching programs, the SUB faculty members seek and get research funds and grants from various private and public organisations. Some notable ongoing projects include 'Efficacy and safety of black cumin combined formulation with several antibacterial natural products to tackle antimicrobial resistance', and 'Repurposing functional foods against drug induced nephrotoxicity, cardiotoxicity, and hepatotoxicity', said Md. Jamal Hossain, Assistant Professor, at the

Department of Pharmacy, School of

Pharmaceutical Sciences and Assistant Proctor of SUB.

To encourage its students, SUB engages various strategies. In this regard, Md. Jamal Hossain said, "Students are primarily inspired and involved in undergraduate or postgraduate research projects/thesis, faculty mentorship, internships, recruiting as research associates, workshops, and training, offering scholarships or stipends, publication opportunities, awards, and recognition."

United International University (UIU)

Professor Dr Md Abul Kasem Mia, VC of UIU, spoke about UIU's current research activities, "UIU has two institutes and one centre working for research and development. UIU envisioned the importance of institutional and international collaboration for excellence in research and established the Institute for Advanced Research (IAR) in 2019 to provide substantial support for the quality research and development activities. IAR is a pioneering initiative by UIU to provide Research and Development (R&D) fund to set examples for other institutions and bring a qualitative change in the field of R&D."

"The Institute of Research, Innovation, Incubation and Commercialization (IRIIC), UIU is working for building a Smart Bangladesh by establishing active links between academia, industry and government. It has brought AIIMS Lab, BCI Research Lab, Center for Digital Health Innovation and Policy Research and Industry and Academia Collaboration Center for 4IR under one roof. Additionally, the Centre for Energy Research (CER) was established in September 2010 at United International University under the department of EEE."

University of Asia Pacific (UAP)

Professor Dr Tanveer Ferdous Saeed, Director, Institute of Energy, Environment, Research and Development (IEERD), summarised their efforts, "IEERD emphasises funding research projects focusing on the following broad research areas (but not limited to) as defined by the research committee of each individual department of UAP: Sustainable environment for infrastructure development (Civil Engineering); Knowledge-based, outcome-oriented architectural pursuit for the people (Architecture); Role of Law and Human Rights in Building a Democratic, Just and Egalitarian Society (Law and Human Rights); Advancing Electronics, Power and Communication Systems for Smart Living (Electrical and Electronic Engineering); Language and Literature in times of change (English), amongst others."

Speaking about what's being done to encourage students and faculty to engage themselves in research activities, he said, "IEERD provides grants to the faculty members for conducting fundamental research and publication, as well as conference registration fees for faculty members of UAP to disseminate their research findings to the broader community. IEERD provides remuneration to eligible UAP graduates to work as research assistants in IEERD-funded projects."

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB)

Speaking of their current and ongoing research activities, Professor Jude William R. Genilo, PhD, Pro-Vice Chancellor, at ULAB, said, "In August 2020, the Center for Sustainable Development of ULAB conducted a research study on the impact of COVID-19 on the socio-ecological system of the Bay of Bengal. The main objective of the study was to identify the consequences of a fishing ban, and the situation as a whole generated by the pandemic, on the livelihood of fishermen and their overall health situation. The study revealed as well that small-scale fishers do not have income round the year, nor the skills to diversify when they are unable to go fishing. Thus, they are caught in cycles of debt and bound to pay off loans from boat owners with their work."

Uttara University (UU)

Professor MD Shahrukh Adnan Khan of the Department of EEE at UU, who is also the Director of Brand, Communication & Admission spoke on the research activities of his university, "UU has established five innovative centres of excellence, more than 20 research cells and more than 40 laboratories with cutting-edge equipment and high-configured machines."

"To accelerate the research as well as to inspire and encourage the knowledge-seeking eager mind, UU has introduced a revolutionary research policy and grant that would bear the scholarly publication APC (article processing charges) and registration fees of any SCOPUS indexed peer-reviewed journal and conference. The Centre for Research and Training (CRT) offers funding twice a year to innovative and novel ideas and proposals from the university's research centres, research cells, labs, departments and schools."

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policies to promote research and publication-related activities, including research colloquia, seminars, workshops, and conferences for both students and faculty members. Incentives, such as course waivers, are offered to encourage faculty members and students to publish in reputable Q-indexed journals, attend conferences, and cover expenses like article processing fees," he added.

International Standard University (ISU)

Md Mahbubur Rahman, Associate Professor, DBA and Director of Center for Research, Development, and Publications (CRDP) at ISU said, "ISU is currently undertaking policy-oriented research in the spheres of business, development, literature, computing research, clothing and textile, and environmental issues in general. The research activities involve baseline research and consultancies which have been designed to be funded by different public and private agencies, as well as by development organisations."

According to the director of CRDP at ISU, to encourage students and faculty to engage in research, "ISU establishes

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