

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

Definition

- Oxford Dictionary : term “ research has French origins and appeared in the 16th century
- Rooted in the term “**search**” and defined as “examine *thoroughly*”.
- Research meant an “**act of searching closely and carefully**”, or *intensive searching*”.
- First applied to science in 1639 as “*scientific inquiry*” (Godin, 2001)

The OECD Frascati Manual defines research as:

- **Research within higher education comprises creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including of humankind, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications.
(OECD, 2002:29)**

The South African Context

- **Understanding social change as a specific focus**
- **Collective and individual development as a fundamental objective**

Types and Modes of Research

- **Basic research**
- **Strategic research**
- **Applied research**
- **Experimental development**

Basic Research

- **Experimental or theoretical work to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts without any particular application or use in view**

Strategic Research

- Also known as oriented basic research
- Carried out with the expectation that it will produce a broad base knowledge
- Likely to form the background to the solution of recognised or expected current or future problems or offer possibilities for solving them (OECD, 2002:78)

Applied Research

- **Original investigation to acquire new knowledge**
- **Directed towards a specific practical aim or objective**
- **Results intended primarily to be valid for a single or limited number of products, operations, methods or systems**

Experimental Development

- **Systematic work, drawing on existing knowledge gained from research and practical experience**
- **Directed to produce new materials, products and devices, installing new processes, systems and services, and substantially improving those already produced or installed**
- **This category has little or no meaning for the humanities (OECD, 2002:79)**