

Building Institutional Reputation, Research Impact and Global Visibility: The role of researchers, students and the university community in making institutional excellence visible

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What Do We Mean by University Visibility?

- The limited contribution of African scholarship to global knowledge production according to UNESCO (2025) report is not necessarily a reflection of inadequate research activity on the continent, but rather, to a large extent, the limited visibility, accessibility, and discoverability of African research outputs on the global stage. [<https://www.iicba.unesco.org/en/transforming-knowledge-africas-future>]
- Visibility should be a strategic priority for every university.
- If excellence and knowledge exist but cannot be discovered, recognised or verified, its institutional value is greatly diminished.

University visibility is therefore the extent to which the university's **knowledge**, **people**, **achievements**, **innovations** and **contributions** are discoverable, recognised and trusted.

Why Should University Visibility Matter?

Visibility converts institutional activities into institutional value.

A visible university is better positioned to:

- attain higher webometrics rank
- Increase research impact
- Attract grants and research funding
- Build international partnerships
- Strengthen alumni engagement
- Attract industry collaboration
- Influence policy and society
- Improve institutional reputation
- Demonstrate accountability to stakeholders

Activity → Visibility → Recognition → Trust → Opportunity → Impact

Visibility and Institutional Reputation

A university's reputation is increasingly shaped by what stakeholders can find, verify and experience about the institution.

What does the world see when it searches for us?

- Can our researchers be easily found?
- Can our publications be accessed?
- Can our research expertise be identified?
- Are institutional achievements documented?
- Are our programmes clearly presented?
- Are students and alumni achieving notable outcomes?
- Are our innovations visible?
- Is our university represented in scholarly and professional networks?

Reputation Principle: What we do matters. What people know about what we do also matters.

Researchers: The University Is Visible Through Its Scholars

Researchers are among the most important ambassadors of university visibility.

Researchers can strengthen institutional visibility through:

- ORCID and scholarly profiles
- Accurate institutional affiliation
- Institutional repository deposits
- Open access publishing where appropriate
- Conference participation
- Research datasets and outputs
- Policy briefs and public engagement
- National and international collaboration

Every publication is an opportunity to leave a digital footprint for the university.

Students: Students Are Also Institutional Ambassadors

Students contribute to visibility through:

- Academic excellence
- Competitions and awards
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Research projects
- Hackathons and conferences
- Community service
- Student associations
- Sports and cultural achievements
- Professional certifications
- Internships and placements
- Alumni success stories

Social proof: “A student of [University] developed...” / “Students from [University] won...”

Students are not only beneficiaries of the university. They are also carriers of its reputation.

The University Community: Everyone Has a Role

Visibility should become a culture, not a function assigned only to the Public Relations Unit or ICT Directorate.

Management – Strategic direction, support and recognition
Researchers – Research discoverability and scholarly profiles
Students – Achievements and academic engagement
Librarians – Repositories and research support
ICT – Digital infrastructure and accessibility
Communication/PR – Institutional storytelling

Every member of the university community is a potential institutional ambassador.

What We Are Doing at FUHSI to Strengthen Visibility

- Even though we are a young university, we recognise the importance of visibility.
- Consistent sponsorship of researchers to workshops and conferences through funding from TetFund
- Institutional scholarly publishing - We currently have three journal outlets (Annals of Medical and Health Sciences Innovation, FUHSI Journal of Health Humanities and Multidisciplinary Studies and Transactions of Applied Sciences and Innovations) to support health sciences research dissemination.
- We support Open Science and Open Access activities and efforts are ongoing to put in place a function Institutional Repository that will be managed by the University Library.
- Research events and knowledge sharing - using webinars, conferences, seminars and public lectures to showcase the expertise and knowledge generated within the University.
- Partnership with Open Science Initiative like LIBSENSE .
- Strong digital presence
- Promoting academic programmes
- Showcasing institutional achievements
- Student visibility - celebrating student research, innovations, competitions, academic achievements and community contributions.
- Digital communication and social media - using appropriate digital platforms to communicate FUHSI's activities and achievements to national and international audiences.

Our Institutional Call to Action

Closing thought: *“Excellence that remains invisible cannot achieve its full potential for impact.”*

Let us not only build an excellent university. Let us build a university whose excellence AND impact the world can **see, discover, trust and remember.**

THANK YOU.