PHILIPPINE ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, INC.

Research Excellence in Accredited Graduate Education Programs (2024-2025)

An Analysis of Research and Research Result Areas (Standards 18, 19, and 22)

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Executive Summary

This analysis consolidates findings from the Research and Research Results Areas of PAASCU-accredited graduate education programs drawn from eleven institutions evaluated during the 2024–2025 accreditation cycle. In line with PAASCU's ethical commitment to confidentiality and fairness, the identities of these institutions have been deliberately anonymized to ensure that the analysis focuses on collective insights rather than individual performance. Drawing from institutional self-survey reports, accreditor observations, and consolidated area analyses, the report examines common practices, strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement under Area 7: Research Management and Collaboration, Intellectual Property Rights and Ethics, and Standard 22: Research Results. It aims to identify cross-institutional patterns that can inform continuous quality enhancement and policy direction within PAASCU's graduate education framework.

The findings reveal that research in graduate education is becoming increasingly institutionalized, characterized by deliberate governance structures, growing faculty–student engagement, and alignment with institutional missions and national development priorities. Graduate schools such as **S006**, **S0011**, and **S008** demonstrate strong research governance systems through specialized research offices, ethics boards, and innovation centers that ensure coherence and accountability. Internal dissemination venues like **S001's Likhang Ariba Conference**, **S007's Sidlak Journal**, and **S0011's iCREaTe Conference** foster a thriving research culture by promoting collaboration, visibility, and professional recognition. Many schools have likewise aligned their research agendas with national frameworks such as the *National Higher Education Research Agenda (NHERA)* and the *National Unified Health Research Agenda (NUHRA)*, ensuring relevance to both institutional identity and societal needs.

Five major strengths emerged across institutions:
(1) established governance structures for research planning and oversight;
(2) effective incentive and recognition systems for faculty and students;
(3) active dissemination platforms through institutional journals and conferences;
(4) expanding external linkages and partnerships; and
(5) operational ethics and intellectual property frameworks that uphold research integrity and innovation.

However, five recurring challenges remain evident across programs:
(1) inconsistent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
(2) uneven faculty participation and limited mentoring systems;
(3) delays in ethics review and underutilization of IP offices;
(4) limited documentation of research utilization and impact; and
(5) fragmented data and feedback systems.

These issues suggest the need for stronger institutional coherence, improved data management, and outcome-based evaluation to deepen the culture of research accountability.

In response, the report outlines practicable interventions at two levels. For **PAASCU**, the focus is on refining its survey standards and rubrics to emphasize measurable performance indicators, faculty participation breadth, ethics functionality, research utilization, and integrated data systems. For **institutions**, recommended actions include establishing research dashboards,

mentoring structures, automated ethics processes, research utilization frameworks, and centralized databases supported by systematic stakeholder feedback mechanisms.

Overall, the analysis affirms that graduate research within PAASCU-accredited institutions is transitioning from activity-based compliance to a culture of **intentionality, accountability, and impact**. The emerging best practices show that Philippine graduate schools are steadily integrating research into their institutional DNA—bridging scholarship, innovation, and service. Continued alignment of PAASCU's standards with these evolving practices will further strengthen the quality and relevance of graduate education, ensuring that research contributes meaningfully to institutional excellence and national development.

Table of Contents

Introduction **1**

I. Accredited Graduate Schools' Practices in the Research Area **3**

II. Top 5 Best Practices / Strengths **4**

III. Top 5 Recurring Challenges **5**

IV. Practicable and Actionable Interventions to Address Recurring Research Challenges **5**

V. Conclusion **6**

References **8**

Appendices **9**

Appendix A – List of Participating Graduate Schools and Programs Covered (2024–2025 Cycle) 9

Appendix B – Accreditation Guiding Questions Used in the Analysis 10

Appendix C – Glossary of Terms and Acronyms 11

Introduction

Research serves as the cornerstone of quality graduate education and an essential measure of institutional maturity. It is both a hallmark of academic excellence and a strategic driver of innovation and national development. The *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2022)* underscores that higher education must advance "the production, dissemination, and application of knowledge" to address global challenges and promote sustainable development. Within this vision, research in graduate education transcends disciplinary boundaries and becomes a transformative process—linking theory, policy, and practice.

In the Philippine higher education landscape, research is formally embedded as a core function of universities and graduate schools. The *Commission on Higher Education (CHED),* through CMO No. 15, series of 2019 (Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for Graduate Programs), identifies research competence as one of the critical outcomes of advanced education, emphasizing originality, ethical rigor, and relevance to national development goals. Likewise, the *National Higher Education Research Agenda (NHERA III, 2017–2022)* provides a policy framework that encourages graduate institutions to conduct research addressing pressing social, health, and environmental challenges, while the *National Innovation Agenda and Strategy Document (NIASD 2023–2032)* calls for research that drives innovation and industry collaboration.

Internationally, quality assurance bodies such as the *Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)* and the *International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)* highlight the importance of embedding research within institutional quality frameworks, emphasizing measurable outcomes, ethical practices, and societal impact as indicators of academic excellence. Consistent with these principles, the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU*)* has integrated research quality and management as a distinct focus area within its accreditation standards. This reflects PAASCU's broader shift toward an outcomes-based and evidence-informed approach to quality assurance, aligned with ISO 9001:2015's emphasis on continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making.

Against this backdrop, PAASCU conducted a thematic analysis of the **Research and Research Results Areas (Area 7 and Standard 22)** of accredited graduate education programs during the 2024–2025 accreditation cycle. This study consolidates findings from institutional self-survey reports and accreditor feedback, covering eleven (11) institutions representing diverse geographical and disciplinary contexts. The analysis specifically examines how graduate programs manage and sustain research excellence under the dimensions of **Research Management and Collaboration, Intellectual Property Rights and Ethics, and Research Results.**

Guided by eleven analytical questions, the analysis examined how graduate programs demonstrate research quality and originality; engage faculty and students in scholarly work; sustain productivity and impact; reflect continuous improvement in accreditation results; and integrate research into teaching, institutional priorities, and societal applications such as community, industry, or policy engagement. Using qualitative thematic coding of institutional evidence and consolidated accreditor feedback, the synthesis identified cross-institutional patterns, best practices, and areas for improvement that characterize the evolving landscape of graduate research.

The synthesis report is organized into five sections. Section I discusses the Accredited Graduate Schools' Practices in the Research Area, capturing institutional initiatives and

governance patterns. Section II identifies the Top Five Best Practices or Strengths derived from cross-institutional evidence, while Section III analyzes the Top Five Recurring Challenges that persist across participating schools. Section IV outlines Practicable or Actionable Interventions, specifying what PAASCU and institutions can do to address these challenges. Finally, Section V presents a Concluding Synthesis, integrating insights to inform strategic improvements in the quality assurance of graduate research.

Ultimately, this report aims to support PAASCU's continuing effort to promote research as a driver of innovation, academic integrity, and social transformation. By consolidating institutional experiences and translating them into shared insights, the analysis contributes to strengthening the quality assurance community's collective understanding of how Philippine graduate schools are shaping the evolving landscape of research, where excellence is not only measured by output but also by impact and ethical responsibility.

I. Accredited Graduate Schools' Practices in the Research Area

The consolidated Research Area reports from PAASCU-accredited graduate programs reveal a sector steadily maturing in research governance, productivity, and ethical stewardship. Graduate schools across the consortium demonstrate intentional efforts to enhance research quality and originality, foster faculty and student engagement, and institutionalize systems that align scholarship with institutional and societal priorities. Across the 2024–2025 accreditation cycle, these practices reflect a broad cultural shift—from viewing research as a compliance requirement to recognizing it as a defining element of academic excellence and institutional reputation.

Most institutions have now established formal **research governance structures** that provide direction and oversight for graduate research. **S006** offers a notable model through its *Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation (OVPRI)*, which supervises specialized centers such as the *Center for Advanced Research in Education (CARE)* and the *Center for Data Analytics, Informatics, and Computing (CDAIC)*. **S0011** operates a similarly comprehensive system under its *University Research and Innovation Center (UnRIC)*, ensuring alignment between research initiatives and institutional goals. **S008**, through its network of discipline-based research centers, coordinates research across multiple schools—demonstrating coherence and administrative support that anchor its scholarly agenda. These governance frameworks enable transparency, continuity, and accountability in research management.

Graduate schools have also made strides in promoting **faculty and student engagement**. Many institutions have institutionalized incentive systems, mentorship programs, and internal grants to stimulate scholarly activity. **S006** provides generous publication awards for papers accepted in indexed journals; **S008** recognizes researchers through its *University Innovation* and *Scholarly Publication Awards*; and **S0011** annually confers the *Gawad San Luis Awards* to celebrate faculty and student achievements. **S001**, through its *Likhang Ariba* annual research conference, provides a platform for internal dissemination. At the same time, **S007** maintains the *Sidlak Journal*, which publishes faculty and student works. These practices strengthen research motivation and cultivate an institutional culture of inquiry and recognition.

In terms of **productivity**, the reports reveal steady progress across graduate schools, with notable increases in research outputs, conference presentations, and grant-supported projects. **S0011**, **S008**, and **S006** have maintained strong publication pipelines and active participation in national and international symposia. **S005** contributes through its applied health and management research outputs, while **S007** and **S009** link research to community extension programs, demonstrating localized relevance. These outcomes show that institutions are increasingly measuring research performance not merely in volume but also in quality and impact.

Continuous improvement is likewise evident in the **enhancement of research infrastructure and systems**. Many schools have upgraded digital libraries, subscribed to databases, and adopted digital research management systems. **S006**, **S0011**, and **S0010** have updated their research manuals to reflect clearer policies on authorship, ethics, and dissemination. These reforms show a deliberate effort to align operations with accreditation feedback and institutional strategic directions.

Integration of **research into teaching and learning** has also become a more intentional practice. Graduate faculty increasingly draw from their own studies to enrich course materials, promote inquiry-based learning, and mentor students in publication and presentation. **S004** and

S008 require students to present or publish their theses prior to graduation, reinforcing a culture of scholarly dissemination and practical application of research. These practices reflect the view that research and teaching are mutually reinforcing, contributing to both academic rigor and professional competence.

Research themes are also **aligned with institutional missions and national development priorities**. **S006** focuses on sustainable development and public health; **S0011** pursues education, environment, and technology research in keeping with its Catholic and social-development orientation; **S001** emphasizes culture, governance, and ethics within its Dominican tradition; and S009 anchors its projects on education and community empowerment. Such thematic coherence ensures that institutional research contributes to both academic advancement and societal impact.

Ethics and intellectual property management further reinforce the credibility of institutional research. **S008's** *Intellectual Property Office (IPO)* and *University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)* provide models of mature research integrity systems. **S006** maintains an *Ethics Board Committee* whose members are trained in ethical review. At the same time, **S0011** refines its *Manual of Operating Policies and Guidelines for Ethics in Research* in preparation for PHREB re-accreditation. These efforts affirm a shared commitment to integrity, compliance, and respect for intellectual ownership.

Finally, graduate schools recognize that a strong research culture enhances both **graduate employability and institutional reputation**. Research-active universities like **S008**, **S0011**, and **S006** are known for producing graduates with strong analytical and leadership competencies. Employers and partners view these graduates as capable of translating research into practice. The strengthening of research also boosts institutional visibility, fosters trust among stakeholders, and elevates academic prestige within the higher education landscape.

Overall, the consolidated findings portray graduate schools that have deeply embedded research within their institutional systems and academic culture. From **S006's** integrated governance model and **S0011's** innovation ecosystem to **S001's** research conferences and **S004's** institutional journal, these practices illustrate a collective movement toward research excellence that is both rigorous and relevant. Through deliberate alignment of governance, engagement, productivity, and ethics, PAASCU-accredited graduate schools are transforming research from an academic requirement into a defining institutional hallmark that advances learning, leadership, and societal development.

II. Top 5 Best Practices / Strengths

A synthesis of the consolidated Research Area and Research Results reports reveals a clear pattern of institutional maturity and shared commitment among PAASCU-accredited graduate schools. Across varying contexts, five dominant practices consistently emerged as the most commendable indicators of an evolving culture of research excellence, ethical integrity, and innovation.

1. **Established Research Governance Structures** – Offices such as S006's *OVPRI*, S008's specialized research centers, and S0011's *UnRIC* exemplify institutional leadership in research planning, coordination, and monitoring.

2. **Effective Incentive and Recognition Systems** – Incentives like S006's publication bonuses, S008's innovation and scholarly awards, and S0011's *Gawad San Luis* foster motivation and sustained engagement.
3. **Active Research Dissemination Platforms** – Journals such as *Sidlak* (S007) and conferences like *Likhang Ariba* (S001) and *iCREaTe* (S0011) enhance visibility, peer exchange, and institutional pride.
4. **Growing Collaboration and External Partnerships** – Linkages across academe, government, and industry—seen in the efforts of S001, S002, and S009—expand research scope and impact.
5. **Functional Ethics and IP Frameworks** – The presence of operational ethics boards and IP offices (S008's *UREC* and *IPO*, S006's *Ethics Board*) ensures adherence to integrity and knowledge protection standards.

These best practices underscore how research in graduate education has evolved into an organized, mission-driven, and values-grounded enterprise.

III. Top 5 Recurring Challenges

Despite notable gains, recurring challenges remain that temper the full realization of a cohesive and sustainable research culture across institutions. The five most commonly identified concerns are:

1. Inconsistent Monitoring and Evaluation Systems
2. Uneven Faculty Participation and Limited Capacity Building
3. Delays in Ethics Review and Limited IP Utilization
4. Limited Evidence of Research Utilization
5. Fragmented Data and Feedback Systems

These issues, while varying in scope across programs, collectively point to the need for more consistent data management, equitable faculty engagement, streamlined processes, and outcome-based assessment. Their persistence underscores the importance of structural reforms, process integration, and evidence-based quality assurance within the Research Area.

IV. Practicable and Actionable Interventions to Address Recurring Research Challenges

Building on the preceding analysis, the following recommendations identify complementary actions at two levels: (a) what **PAASCU** can undertake to refine its survey standards and evaluative criteria, and (b) what **institutions** can operationalize within their internal systems.

1. Inconsistent Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

PAASCU can refine its survey instruments to include explicit indicators assessing the presence of measurable KPIs, regular performance reporting, and data-based decision-making in research management.
Schools can develop research dashboards and performance scorecards that track outputs, citations, dissemination, and ethics compliance—integrating findings into annual planning and quality reviews.

2. Uneven Faculty Participation and Limited Capacity Building

PAASCU can strengthen survey rubrics to evaluate the breadth of faculty involvement, mentoring systems, and mechanisms that promote equitable participation.
Schools can institutionalize mentoring frameworks, align research assignments with teaching loads, and recognize collaborative research and supervision as part of faculty evaluation and promotion systems.

3. Delays in Ethics Review and Limited IP Utilization

PAASCU can update its standards to require documentation of ethics committee accreditation, turnaround times, and IP office functionality as indicators of operational maturity.
Schools can ensure continuous PHREB accreditation of ethics committees, automate review tracking, and encourage faculty and student IP registration as part of their research lifecycle.

4. Limited Evidence of Research Utilization

PAASCU can strengthen its evaluation of research impact by requiring institutions to show concrete evidence of how research informs curricula, policies, and community or industry engagement.
Schools can establish utilization frameworks and case logs documenting how outputs lead to policy influence, curricular revisions, or service innovations.

5. Fragmented Data and Feedback Systems

PAASCU can introduce a standard on Research Information Management, assessing whether institutions maintain centralized databases that consolidate proposals, outputs, and feedback.
Schools can develop integrated research information systems and structured stakeholder feedback mechanisms—engaging alumni, employers, and partners to evaluate research relevance and effectiveness.

Together, these interventions form a coherent roadmap for continuous improvement—anchoring accountability and impact as central dimensions of graduate research quality assurance.

V. Conclusion

The collective analysis of Area 7 (Research Management and Collaboration; Intellectual Property Rights and Ethics) and Standard 22 (Research Results) affirms that PAASCU-accredited graduate schools are progressively shaping a **vibrant, evidence-based, and ethically grounded research ecosystem**. Institutions have established stable governance structures, incentivized

engagement, and aligned research agendas with both institutional and national priorities. At the same time, they acknowledge that true research maturity lies in consistent monitoring, wider participation, and demonstrable impact on practice and policy.

The findings underscore the need for continued refinement of PAASCU's standards to highlight measurable outcomes, research utilization, and integrated data systems—ensuring that quality assurance frameworks evolve alongside institutional capacity. For schools, the challenge is to transform promising practices into sustained systems that not only produce knowledge but also use it to improve lives, professions, and communities.

In sum, the research enterprise within PAASCU-accredited graduate programs has reached a pivotal point—moving from activity-based compliance to a culture of **intentionality, accountability, and impact**. With coherent standards and responsive institutional systems, the Research Area stands as a cornerstone of educational excellence and social contribution within the Philippine higher education landscape. By reinforcing evidence-based evaluation and collaboration between PAASCU and its member institutions, the Philippine graduate education sector can continue to translate research into meaningful impact that advances both scholarship and society.

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Appendices

Appendix A – List of Participating Graduate Schools and Programs Covered (2024–2025 Cycle)

This appendix presents the graduate schools and specific programs included in the 2024–2025 accreditation cycle whose Research Area reports were consolidated for this thematic analysis. It provides an overview of the institutional scope that informed the synthesis of practices, strengths, and challenges discussed in the report. Again, to uphold the principles of confidentiality and ethical reporting, PAASCU has chosen to anonymize the names of participating schools in this analysis report. This approach ensures that institutional identities are protected, allowing for open and honest reflection on shared experiences and insights without attributing specific findings to individual schools. It also fosters a respectful and inclusive environment for learning and improvement across the educational community.

Institution	Programs Accredited
S001	DBA, MBA (Regular Program), MBA (Special Management Program)
S002	Doctor of Philosophy in Education, Doctor of Business Management, Master of Business Administration
S003	Master in Library and Information Science (MLIS), PhD in Management, Master's in Public Administration (MPA)
S004	PhD in Educational Leadership, MA in Education (majors in English Language, Marriage & Family, Mathematics, Educational Leadership), PhD in Business Management, Master's in Business Administration
S005	MA in Educational Management, MA in Organization Development, PhD in Organization Development
S006	(Set 1) MA in Education, MBA; (Set 2) PhD in Education (Educational Management), PhD in Management, DBA; (Set 3) PhD in Management, Master's in Nursing, MA in Nursing, Doctor in Public Health, Master's in Public Health, MS in Public Health, MS in Medical Laboratory Science
S007	Master of Business Administration
S008	Master of Science in Sustainability Management, PhD in Leadership Studies (Business Leadership, Theology & Ministry) –

	under GED Humanities, Science & Engineering, Social Science, and Management clusters
S009	MA in Education (majors in Early Childhood Education, Educational Management, Teaching English as a Second Language, Guidance & Counseling, Mathematics, Science Education, Physical Education), Master's in Public Administration, Master's in Business Administration
S0010	MA in Nursing, MS in Nursing, PhD in Nursing, MBA, DBA
S0011	PhD Philosophy, PhD Biology, PhD Nursing, MS Physical Education & Sports

Appendix B – Accreditation Guiding Questions Used in the Analysis

The following questions guided the synthesis of the consolidated Research Area reports from PAASCU-accredited Graduate Education programs (2024–2025). These prompts provided a structured lens for identifying institutional practices, strengths, recurring challenges, and opportunities for continuous improvement in research management and outcomes.

- **How do graduate programs demonstrate the quality, originality, and scholarly contribution of their research outputs based on accreditation survey findings?**
  (Understanding research quality is fundamental to sustained productivity and institutional distinction.)
- **To what extent are faculty and students actively engaged in research activities, as reflected in the accreditation evaluations?**
  (Research engagement directly strengthens institutional research culture and productivity.)
- **How has the level and impact of research productivity—such as publications, conference presentations, and research grants—progressed throughout the accreditation period?**
  (Tracking productivity trends supports evidence-based planning and strategic enhancement.)
- **In what ways do accreditation results reflect continuous improvement initiatives in research quality, infrastructure, and institutional support systems?**
  (Insights into ongoing development efforts inform benchmarking and best practices.)
- **How do the accreditation findings illustrate the integration of research into graduate teaching and learning processes?**
  (Embedding research within pedagogy nurtures inquiry-based learning and reinforces research competence.)
- **To what extent are graduate research agendas aligned with institutional priorities and national or societal development needs?**

(Alignment ensures research relevance, responsiveness, and potential external collaboration.)

- **What evidence from the accreditation process indicates that research outcomes contribute to community engagement, industry collaboration, or policy development?** *(Demonstrating impact beyond academia enhances the social and economic value of research productivity.)*
- **How do research outcomes correlate with graduate employability, leadership potential, and institutional academic reputation?** *(Establishing this linkage highlights research's role in improving graduate outcomes and institutional branding.)*
- **What key strengths in research governance, policies, support mechanisms, or practices are consistently identified across the consolidated accreditation results?**
- **What recurring challenges to research development and implementation emerge from the consolidated area reports?**
- **What practicable and actionable interventions can be undertaken—by both PAASCU and the accredited institutions—to address the identified recurring challenges in research management and outcomes?**

Appendix C – Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

This appendix consolidates the acronyms, abbreviations, and key terms used in this Graduate Education thematic analysis. It includes institutional names, accrediting and regulatory bodies, and quality assurance terms relevant to PAASCU's Research Area evaluation.

A. Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Meaning / Definition
APQN	Asia-Pacific Quality Network
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
DBA	Doctor of Business Administration
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
GED	Graduate Education Department / Graduate Education Programs
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IP	Intellectual Property
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights

Acronym	Meaning / Definition
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MA	Master of Arts
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MLIS	Master in Library and Information Science
MPA	Master of Public Administration
MS	Master of Science
NUHRA	National Unified Health Research Agenda
OVPRI	Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation
PAASCU	Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities
PHREB	Philippine Health Research Ethics Board
RERC	Research Ethics Review Committee
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UREC	University Research Ethics Committee

B. Key Terms

Term	Definition
Accreditation	A formal quality assurance process conducted by PAASCU to assess institutional and program performance against established standards.
Research Governance	The structures, policies, and systems established to plan, coordinate, and oversee research activities within an institution.
Research Productivity	The measurable output of research activities, including publications, presentations, funded projects, and creative works.
Research Utilization	The application of research findings to inform policy, practice, curriculum design, or community development.
Research Ethics	A set of principles and standards guiding the responsible conduct of research, ensuring integrity and the protection of participants.

Term	Definition
Intellectual Property (IP)	Creations of the mind, such as research outputs, inventions, and creative works, are protected by legal rights.
Quality Assurance (QA)	A systematic process of evaluating and improving institutional performance based on defined standards and continuous improvement.
Thematic Analysis	A qualitative analytical method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes from consolidated institutional data.
Continuous Improvement	An ongoing effort to enhance institutional systems, processes, and outcomes through evidence-based evaluation and reform.
Graduate Education	Advanced-level academic programs that develop research competence, professional expertise, and leadership in specialized disciplines.