

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

**THE ROLE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS IN SUPPORTING RESEARCH AT THE
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Against a backdrop of reports of poor research support in developing countries, the purpose of this study was to assess the way in which academic librarians at the National University of Science and Technology were executing their mandate of research support and identifying any constraints thereof. From the reviewed literature, the concept of embedded librarianship in the research context model was used. This concept detects that academic librarians need to be proactive through leaving the library buildings to become more actively engaged in their clients' work processes, paying more attention to user needs and providing customised services. A survey within a case was conducted using interviews and questionnaires to obtain qualitative and quantitative data. The target population constituted of 40 researchers consisting of lecturers, teaching assistants, staff development fellows and research fellows from the Faculty of Communication and Information Science and 4 library representatives responsible for the Faculty. Findings showed that key research support services available at NUST library included institutional repositories, reference services and document delivery services which researchers deemed as inadequate. In offering these services, the library was regarded as reactive rather than proactive. Researchers indicated that library staff lacked customer care, marketing and research skills among others. The librarians therefore needed more training in order to gain more relevant skills such as ICT, customer service skills and research skills. The study also recommended that librarians must be proactively engaged in research activities since academic staff proved to be busy people with less time to visit the library.