

Policy name	Internal Research Grant Policy		
Policy number	RS0004		
Contact Person	Chair of University Research and Enterprise Committee		
Approval Authority	Board of Trustees		
Date first approved	23 March 2023	Last substantive review	23 March 2023
Policy Review Cycle	Annual	Next review	23 March 2024

1. Definitions

Terms / Abbreviations	Definition
ASU	A'Sharqiyah University
Co-Is	Co-Investigators
Co-PI	Co-Principal Investigator
DVCAAR	Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research
IDC	Institutional-Defined Criteria
IIEC	Institutional Internal Evaluation Committee
IRG	Internal Research Grant
OMR	Omani Riyal
PI	Principal Investigator
RAs	Research Assistants
RITTC	Research, Innovation and Technology Transfer Center

2. Purpose

To achieve sustainability and enrich research and scholarly activities, A'Sharqiyah University (ASU) is committed to provide internal research funding for its eligible staff. The Internal Research Grant (IRG) policy aims to support the University Research Strategy as well as the University Strategic Plan and steer them towards building research capacity among ASU staff, enhance their research skills and thus improve the institutional

research outcomes and achievements which lead to better the University research profile national and internationally.

3. Scope

This IRG policy is dedicated for providing internal research funding for ASU staff. The IRG funds are obtained from the University budget and resources. Similar internal funding schemes exist in local and international institutions [1][2][3].

4. Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria of the IRG are as follows:

- The applicant for the IRG must be a full time ASU staff who is not under probation.
- The applicant for the IRG shall not have another active IRG project by the closing date of the Call for Proposal Submissions.
- The IRG application must include at least one external local or international collaborator as a Co-Investigator (Co-I).
- The IRG application shall not include a research grant proposal approved by an external funding agency. Also, a successful proposal under the IRG program shall not be submitted again in the future as is to external funding agencies.

5. Proposal Guidelines

The general guidelines of the IRG are as follows:

5.1 Project Leadership and Membership

- The Principal Investigator (PI) and the Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) of the IRG project must be both from A'Sharqiyah University (ASU).
- Co-Investigators (Co-Is) can be from ASU, local or international collaborator. Research collaboration with highly cited researchers is strongly encouraged.
- An ASU staff can submit only one IRG proposal as PI for an open Call for Proposal Submission. However, the PI of a given IRG project can be a Co-PI or Co-I in other IRG projects.

- The IRG program is independent from external funding programs. Thus, recipients of external research grants can still apply for the IRG program.

5.2 Project Budget Planning

- The maximum budget of an IRG project is 5,000 Omani Riyal (OMR).
- The project budget shall be used for acquiring manpower or for any items or services that benefit the project and assist on achieving its research outcomes such as recruitment of Research Assistants (RAs), dissemination, administration, equipment, materials, travels to site visits or for data collection, etc. The recruitment of the RAs under IRG projects is governed by the Policy for Recruitment of Researchers on Sponsored Research Projects (RS0012) [4]. The procurement of research equipment, materials or services under IRG projects is dictated by the ASU Rules and Regulations for operation and utilization of the Research Funds (RS0005) [5].
- The project budget shall not be used for recruiting consultants or paying for any consultancy services.
- The project budget cannot be used for attending local or international conferences, recruiting consultants and scholarships. ASU staff can benefit from the Conference Support Fund of ASU to attend conferences (RS0001) [6].

5.3 Project duration

- The duration of an IRG project can be one (1) or two (2) years.
- Project extension is strongly discouraged and may negatively impact the potential of securing future IRG funds. The timely completion of IRG projects is one of the assessment criteria of determining the success rate of a completed IRG project.

6. Call for Proposal Submission

The submission of research proposals under the IRG program is invited within the duration of the Call for Proposal Submission announced by the Research, Innovation and

Technology Transfer Center (RITTC) during a given academic year and as per the following timeline, except for the first academic year in which this policy is approved:

- Commencement Date of Call for Proposal Submission: 1st of October.
- Closing Date of Call for Proposal Submission: 30th of November.
- Notification Results of Successful Projects: Last Week of January.
- Commencement of Research Projects: 1st of February.

Based on the availability of funds, a second Call for Proposal Submission may be announced within the same academic year. Applicants must use the template of the IRG application form and attach supporting documents, if any. Incomplete application forms shall not be entertained.

7. Proposal Evaluation

7.1 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of a submitted IRG proposal shall be carried out based on its scientific “Excellence” and “Institutional-Defined Criteria” (IDC) with a weight of 50% each. The rubrics for evaluating the Excellence and IDC are presented in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively.

Table 1: Evaluation rubrics for the Excellence of a submitted IRG proposal

No.	Proposal Element	Description	Weight
1.	Novelty and Originality	The scientific merit of the research proposal and its methods that lead to advancing knowledge in the research field of the the proposal.	15%
2.	Literature Review	A comprehensive survey of related literature to review the exiting research works and identify research gaps.	5%
3.	Clarity of Proposal	Clarity in mapping the research gaps identified from the literature review to the research objectives and approaches of the proposal.	5%

4.	Methodology	Sound research methodology that describes clearly the methods and techniques to be used to achieve the presented objectives.	10%
5.	Significance	Significance of research outcomes and findings anticipated from the research project.	15%

Table 2: Evaluation rubrics for the IDC of a submitted IRG proposal

No.	Criteria	Description	Weight
1.	Research Track Record of Principal Investigator	Number and quality of journal publications published by the Principal Investigator in the past and current calendar years.	15%
2.	Potential Research Publications	Number and quality of anticipated journal publications resulting from the IRG project.	15%
3.	Success Rate of Past IRG Project	Successful achievement of deliverables of the past IRG project. This component is waived for new applicants and its weight shall be distributed equally among the other components.	10%
4.	Research Collaboration with Local & International Partners	Membership of local or international co-investigators in the project. Collaboration with highly cited researchers enhances the score of this criteria.	5%
5.	Multidisciplinary Research Field	Proposals with multidisciplinary research fields shall be prioritized under this criterion.	5%

7.2 Processing Procedure

The processing procedure of IRG applications is described as follows:

- The submission of the IRG applications shall be made to RITTC who shall check the eligibility criteria and completeness of the submitted IRG applications.
- An IRG Evaluation Committee (IRGEC) shall be formed by the DVCAAR by the closing date of the Call for Proposal Submissions.
- The eligible IRG applications shall be forwarded from the RITTC to the IRGEC who shall carry on the following two main tasks:
 - Appointing two external peer reviewers for each IRG proposal to evaluate the Excellence of the proposal as per Table 1. IRGEC may invite internal peer

reviewers if no external peer reviewers can be found within the same research field of a submitted IRG proposal.

- Evaluating the IDC of the proposal as per Table 2. The 10% of the “Success Rate of Past IRG Project” of IDC shall be made available to IRGEC based on RITTC’s record.
- The processing procedure of a submitted IRG proposal is presented in Figure 1.

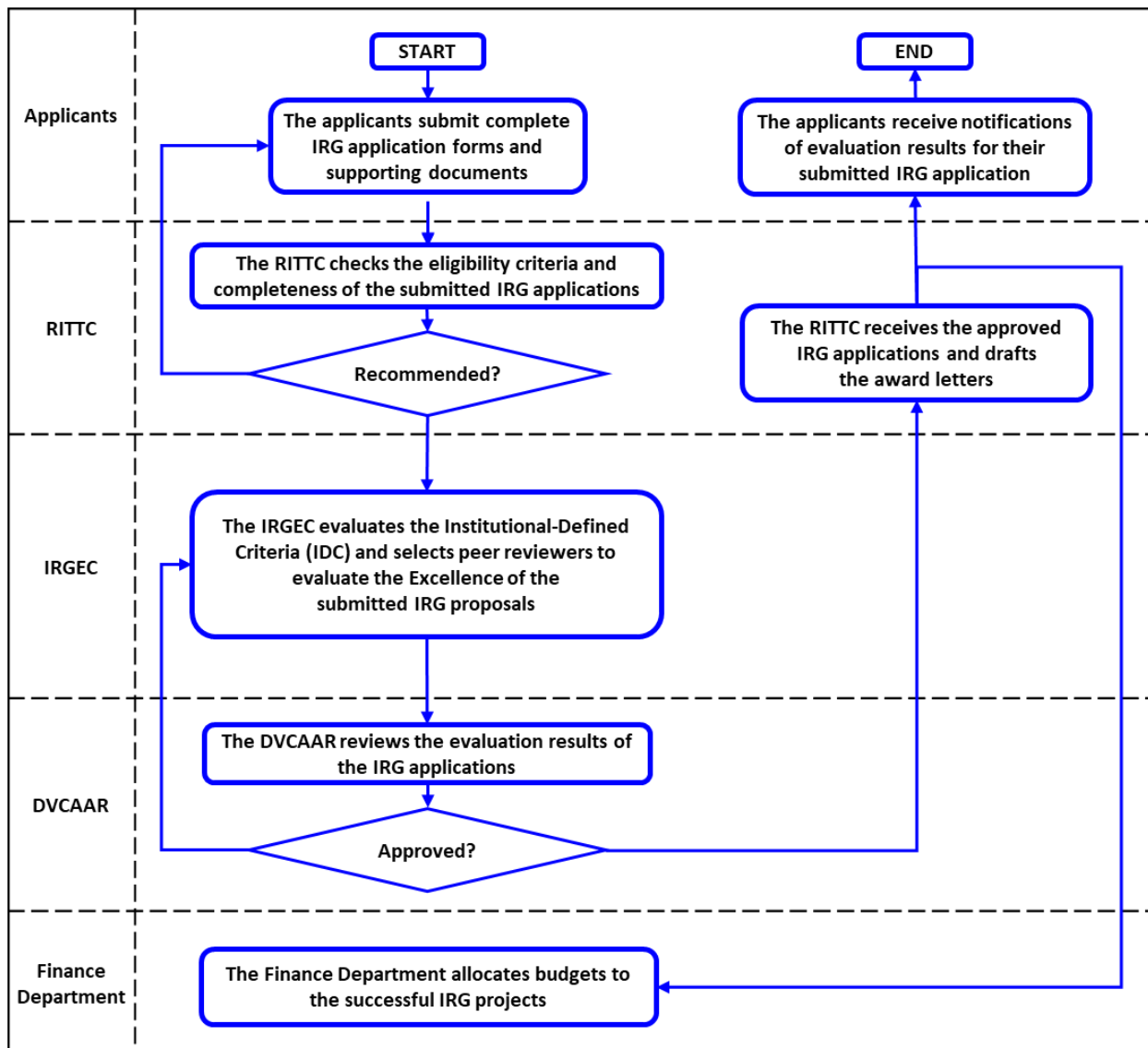


Figure 1: The processing procedure of a submitted IRG proposal

8. Project Management

- The management of an IRG project is governed by the ASU Rules and Regulations for operation and utilization of the Research Funds (RS0005) [5] and associated procedures.
- The IRG project must be transferred to the Co-PI if the PI is leaving the University. The project can also be transferred to a Co-I with proper justification.
- A portion of the approved budget of a given IRG project may be transferred to another IRG project with a proper justification and as per the ASU Policy for Transfer of Research Project (RS0003) [7]. However, this transfer of budget incurs the transfer of associated research outcomes too.
- All the financial expenses and payments of RAs' salaries of an IRG project must fall within the approved project duration.

9. Project Completion and Assessment

- A final report must be submitted within one (1) month from the date of project completion. The final report shall include sufficient description of the project details including a financial statement. Failure of compliance with this requirement shall negatively impact future IRG applications made by the PI.
- The assessment of deliverables and research outcomes of an IRG project is described in Table 3.

Table 3: The assessment of deliverables and research outcomes of an IRG project

No.	Criteria	Description	Weight
1.	Number of Resulting Publications	Number of resulting publications against the research outcomes promised in the proposal.	25%
2.	Quality of Resulting Publications	Quality of resulting publications against the research outcomes promised in the proposal.	25%
3.	Timely Completion of Project	Timely completion of the IRG project as per the approved proposal with no extension.	15%

4.	Timely Submission of Project Reports	Timely submission of the final report of the project within the stipulated submission due date.	15%
5.	Efficient Utilization of Project Budget	Project budget within the program guidelines with minimum unused funds.	20%

10. References

- [1] Internal Grants, Deanship of Research, Sultan Qaboos University.
- [2] Seed Grants, University Research Board (URB) Policy, Dhofar University.
- [3] Internal Research Fund (IRFund), Research Management Center (RMC), Multimedia University (MMU), Malaysia.
- [4] Policy for Recruitment of Researchers on Sponsored Research Projects (RS0012), A'Sharqiyah University, ASU Document Management System (DMS), Internal Document.
- [5] ASU Rules and Regulations for operation and utilization of the Research Funds (RS0005), A'Sharqiyah University, ASU Document Management System (DMS), Internal Document.
- [6] Conference Support Fund Policy (RS0001), A'Sharqiyah University, ASU Document Management System (DMS), Internal Document.
- [7] ASU Policy for Transfer of Research Project (RS0003), A'Sharqiyah University, ASU Document Management System (DMS), Internal Document.

11. Revision History

Version	Author/ Reviewer	Revision(s) made and justification	Date
1.	University Research Committee (URC)	Policy Name: ASU Internal Research Grants: ASU Faculty Seed Fund for Research (ASU –FSFR) Program Type of Review: NA.	January, 2015

2.	University Research and Enterprise Committee (UREC)	<p>Policy Name: Policy and Procedures for Internal Grant</p> <p>Type of Review: Substantive</p> <p>Amendments:</p> <p>The purpose of/amendments made to the policy are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Use a unified standard policy format. • To Add the required new sections such as the scope and purpose of the policy. 	December, 2018
3.	University Research and Enterprise Committee (UREC)	<p>Policy Name: Research Seed Fund Policy</p> <p>Type of Review: Substantive</p> <p>Amendments:</p> <p>The purpose of/amendments made to the policy are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To change the policy name from “Policy and Procedures for Internal Grant: ASU Faculty Seed Fund for Research” to “Research Seed Fund Policy”. • To extend the potential applicants of the Research Seed Fund from ASU faculty members with PhDs to all ASU staff and students. • To add the following eligibility criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ASU staff applicants must be full time staff who have published a minimum of two journal papers of which one should be indexed in Scopus, WoS or included in the ASU Approved List of Arabic Journals. The application must include a principal investigator and a co-principal investigator who both satisfy the aforementioned eligibility criteria. ○ ASU student applicants must be in a group of at least two with minimum CGPAs of 2.3. The student applicants must have completed at least 50% of the credit hours of their programs of study and must be supervised by an 	January, 2021

		<p>ASU faculty mentor. The student applicants can be undergraduate students studying for Bachelor's degrees or graduate students studying for Master's degrees. Students studying for Diplomas are not eligible to apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine the maximum amount of the RSF grant as OMR 1,000 and OMR 400 for ASU staff and students, respectively. • To add the requirement of submitting a Turnitin report along with the RSF application form being submitted. • To add the requirement of the research deliverables of the funded projects which are to publish at least one journal paper and one conference proceeding paper for staff investigators and at least one conference proceeding paper for student investigators. • To add a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) flowchart as an integral part of the policy. • Other terminological changes have been made to reflect the recent changes such as DVCAAR instead of DVC and RGSO instead of UREC for handling procedural operations. 	
4.	University Research and Enterprise Committee (UREC)	<p>Policy Name: Internal Research Grant Policy</p> <p>Type of Review: Substantive</p> <p>Amendments:</p> <p>The purpose of/amendments made to the policy are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The title of the Policy has been changed from "Research Seed Fund Policy" to "Internal Research Grant Policy". • The previous Research Seed Fund program with a maximum budget of OMR 1,000 has not been successful enough. 	Month, 2023

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The new Internal Research Grant (IRG) program is proposed with a budget of OMR 5,000 garneted based on competition among applicants.• Unlike the previous program, the new IRG program encourages national and international collaboration, hence joint publications and citations are expected.• Unlike the previous program, the new IRG program has call for submission and not to be open throughout the year.• Unlike the previous program, the new IRG program has evaluation criteria which include rubrics for the “Excellence” and “Institutional-Defined Criteria (IDC)”; 50% each.• Unlike the previous program, the new IRG program has a well-detailed procedure for processing submitted application forms.• Unlike the previous program, details relating to project management, completion and assessment are included.	
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