



UNIVERSITY of  
RWANDA

## GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING RESEARCH PROJECTS

Organ	Date of Approval
Senior Management Council	09 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
Senate Meeting	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2020

### Introduction

The University of Rwanda (UR) has purposed to become research led not only for the intention of improving teaching, but also to make the university more relevant through the identification of potential opportunities and also responding to the country's challenges. As such, UR has strategically put in place a long-term plan that will mobilize funds in order to support research undertakings. Thus, the need to have guidelines that will ensure transparency and equitable disbursement to the applicants cannot be overemphasized.

The present guidelines describe not only the criteria for selecting eligible projects to receive competitive grants, but also the minimum information and requirements that should appear in a call for research proposals, as well as other useful/supporting information. The following entails the procedures that will be followed in the process.

#### 1. Competitiveness

- The process should be competitive; there should be no-discrimination among applicants, provided that they meet eligibility criteria.
- However, there should be a special category for female applicant to encourage and to increase the number of female participating in research activities.
- A project proposal can be submitted to only one category of grants, and a researcher cannot be a PI in more than one proposal during the same period.

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## 2. Project team and leadership

- A research project to be submitted in the context of the present guidelines must be led by a Principal Investigator (PI) and must have a Co- Principal Investigator (Co-PI).
- The project should have a team implementing the project of not less than 5 individuals. Maximum team members is decided by the project leadership.
- That means that there should be no projects intended to be implemented by one individual; such research projects should be not eligible.

## 3. Areas of support

All areas are considered, provided that the project is relevance to the National Development Agenda and contributes to the country's priorities as described below.

## 4. Eligibility for funding

### 4.1. Administrative criteria

- i) A PI must be a holder of a PhD degree, and where the PI does not have a PhD degree but has a Master's degree, the Co-Investigator (Co-I) must have a PhD degree.
- ii) The PI must have a proven evidence of research activeness based on research publications.
- iii) If the PI or Co-PI come from a school that runs postgraduate programs, each research team must include at least one postgraduate student. For PIs or Co-PIs with multidisciplinary projects, the research teams should include students from the concerned schools.
- iv) Whenever possible, each research team must include both female and male (30% ratio for female should be respected, wherever possible).
- v) During submission, it should be demonstrated that the project was jointly developed with the contribution of all members of the team by providing a written confirmation from all team members, and their commitment to participate in the project implementation.
- vi) Whenever necessary, the project should include research team members from the public and private sectors (NB: reviewers may recommend to include them, if they are not included while the project nature requires it).
- vii) The research proposal should be aligned with at least one of the UR Research Clusters that address the national priority needs and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This includes the need for generating new knowledge (both fundamental and applied) preferably using multidisciplinary approach.

#### 4.2. Technical criteria

- i. The project team has the practical capability/competence to deliver the project. Evidence of team capability is for example a proof of having delivered national or international research projects, externally or internally funded (by UR). For those applying for the first time, qualifications of the PI, Co-PI and team members can prove the capability of the team to deliver (i.e. the research project area(s) should be reflected in the area(s) of the majority, if not all, of the project team.
- ii. Reasons for the project proposal clearly justified.
- iii. The project proposal supported by extant literatures.
- iv. The objectives/targets, indicators and milestones are realistic and measurable.
- v. A Clear methodology
- vi. A Clear activity plan signed by all team research members.
- vii. The need for funding is clearly demonstrated.
- viii. There is value for money, i.e. the balance of proposed costs and UR support vs the outcomes sought (e.g. in comparison with other initiatives for example) (Reviewers will assess this).
- ix. The proposed project demonstrates high degree of local *appropriateness* in terms of its intervention and its delivery method. There should be a clear explanation of the envisaged managerial implications/policy brief.
- x. The intended project output is “environmentally friendly” (will not negatively affect the environment).

#### 5. Non-eligibility:

- i) A PI who has an ongoing research project or abandoned research project funded through UR is not eligible. This also applies to a PI who have poor records of not delivering projects funded by other sources outside UR, when this information is known/available (University Research Directorate should look for this information for all applicants).
- ii) Research projects submitted from non-UR staff are not eligible. However, UR academic staff can include in the project team members from other partner institutions.
- iii) Not meeting one of the above eligibility criteria.

#### 6. Budget items

The budget can include but not limited to the following broad areas of research activities:

- i) **Purchase of minor equipment and consumables** (e.g chemicals and reagents, stationery and other necessary gear).

**NB:** Acquired minor equipment and consumable will be declared upon acquisition to the HoD with copies to College DRI and University Research

Directorate, and remaining consumables such as lab equipment, reagents and chemicals will remain the University property upon completion of the project. Practically, they will be handed over to the HoD, who will be responsible of making sure that they are recorded among University property and placed in the appropriate location/ user Unit, for example in the laboratory.

- ii) **Data collection and analysis:** Laboratory and/or field work, data access and analysis etc.
- iii) **Preparatory meetings** with the stakeholders meant to build rapport and enhance ownership, which is a foundation for research uptake.
- iv) **Research dissemination:**, production of brochures, feedback to the stakeholders' events, meetings with stakeholders for managerial implications/policy brief, etc.
- v) **Capacity building:** Participate in specialised training

## 7. Ceiling per project category

- The natural and applied science-based projects will be funded to a maximum of Rwf 18,000,000,
- Humanities and Social Science based projects will be funded to a maximum of Rwf 12,000,000.
- Interdisciplinary project requiring combination of more than 1 discipline will be funded to a maximum of Rwf 21,000,000. As illustrative example of inter-disciplinary project; a project addressing issues related to “under-nutrition” can involve researchers from several disciplines such as agriculture, medicine, social sciences and economics; etc. A project simply involving members from more than 1 school/college is not necessarily “inter-disciplinary”. *Inter-disciplinarity is judged based on the scientific disciplines involved in the project and necessary for the project to deliver expected outcome. NOT on the number of different schools involved.*

## 8. Call for proposals

The call shall specify the following, but not limited to:

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*a) Template format*

All applications must follow the format given in proposal template provided by the University of Rwanda. The template will be based on the above eligibility criteria (administrative and technical), and will indicate the number of words (maximum) for each section to be developed by the applicant.

*b) Deadline for submission of proposals*

*c) Selection process*

*d) Timeline*

Timeline will indicate the flow of events from the launch of the call until announcement of the selected proposals and the tentative start of the project implementation

*e) Contact person*

The contact person and his/her contact details in case applicants want to have further information or clarifications.

*f) How to apply*

- All research team members will sign on the research proposal (i.e; put initials on all pages and signatures on the last page) to prove that they consent to the contents therein.
- Submission should be through a formal letter of the PI addressed to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research (DVC-AAR), along with endorsements (through) of the School Dean, and College Principal with copy to College Directorate of Research and Innovation, and PI's Head of Department. Proposals will be channeled to the University Research Directorate.

*NB: Academic staff are encouraged to first discuss their project proposals at Department level as a normal practice.*

- Other means of submission may be adopted (e.g. electronic submission) provided that they are approved by the DVC-AAR.

## **9. Project assessment**

- Within one week after receiving the project proposals the University Research Director will formally submit the report of applications received to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research (DVC-AAR).
- The Deputy Vice Chancellor will set up an ad-hoc "Review Committee" composed of between five and ten Members, assigned to review the proposals.

- In case the funds come from partner organizations or involve partnering with other universities/institutions, representatives of partner organizations or/and partner universities/institutions shall be part of the Committee, where possible.
- The Review Committee will first elect a Chair in its first meeting. The UR Research Director shall be the Secretary to take the minutes.
- The Review Committee shall evaluate the eligibility of the proposal(s) and determine whether they qualify for seed funding. The Committee will review the proposals according to the criteria put in place by the University. All the Review Committee members will sign on all approved project proposals and the minutes both of which will be archived by the concerned for future administrative use.

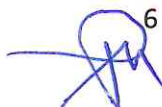
## 10. Feedback to applicants

One week after the assessment and selection process, the UR Research Director will submit the minutes of the selection meeting of the Review Committee to the DVC-AAR, and will request him/her to issue “Feedback Letters” to all the applicants about the status of their applications (e.g. successful and unsuccessful applicants; successful ones will receive “Offer Letters”).

***NB: Workshop for grant winners: PIs whose project proposals will be successful will be required to attend training aimed at imparting grant management skills to the participants.***

## 11. Other practical matters

- 1) ***Ceasing to be PI/Co-Investigator/Research Team Member:*** The following will be circumstances under which PI/Co-Investigator/Research Team Member ceases to be a member: by death, by dismissal from UR services, becoming incapacitated, resignation from UR services, seconded to another organization, appointment to another position outside the University of Rwanda etc. The University’s Directorate of research in consultation with the DVC-AAR will assess other cases that may arise.
- 2) ***Replacement of PI/Co-Investigator/Research team member:*** If for any unavoidable circumstances, the PI or Co-Investigator or a Research team member is affected by any of the above circumstances, within three days the concerned Head of Department in consultation with the remaining team members, will formally inform the College Director of Research and Innovation after which the HoD will convene Department Council for selecting a replacement. The minutes will be sent to the College DRI who will endorse them and the new PI will submit the same (before seven days) to the UR-DRI with a copy to the Dean and the College Principal. Whenever possible, the gender balance should be maintained in the process.

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**3) Research contract**

Implementation of research projects shall be backed by a contract signed between UR and the PI. The contract will determine modalities of project implementation, and budget disbursement, and how it should be managed and reported.

**Signed:**



**Dr. Papias Musafiri Malimba  
Acting Vice Chancellor**