Ref No : DVC-PSR/DR/2017/99

To : Deans of Colleges and Deanships
Director General, SQUH
Director, Preparatory Studies
Directors of Research Centers

Date : 11 April 2017

Subject : Research Funding Policy

After greetings,

Please find attached copy of the Research Funding Policy which was approved according to qarar no.163/2017. Kindly disseminate this to all staff and researchers for reference.

Best regards,

Dr. Yahya Al-Wahaibi
Dean of Research
قرار رئيس الجامعة رقم (٣٣/٢٠١٧)

باعتماد سياسة التمويل البحثي

استناداً إلى قانون جامعة السلطان قابوس واعتماد هيكل التنظيمي الصادرة بقرار رئيس الجامعة رقم (٢٣٢/٢٠٠٧)،
وإلى اللائحة التنفيذية لقانون جامعة السلطان قابوس الصادرة بقرار رئيس الجامعة رقم (٢٣٣/٢٠٠٩)،
وإلى قرار مجلس الجامعة الموفر رقم (٤٦/٢٠١٤-٢٠١٥) المتخذ في اجتماعه الأول للعام الأكاديمي ٢٠١٤/٢٠١٥ المنعقد بتاريخ ١٩ أكتوبر ٢٠١٤، بالموافقة على إعتماد سياسات الجامعة من قبل المجلس الأكاديمي،
وإلى توصية المجلس الأكاديمي رقم: (م/أ/١٢/١٧-٢٠١٥) المتخذة في الاجتماع الأول للعام الأكاديمي ٢٠١٥/٢٠١٣، المنعقد بتاريخ ٤ أكتوبر ٢٠١٣، بإعتماد سياسة التمويل البحثي،

وبناء على ما تقتضيه مصلحة العمل,

تتطوير

مادة (١): تعتمد "سياسة التمويل البحثي" وفقاً للمقترح المرافق.

مادة (٢): على المعينين بالأمر تنفيذ هذا القرار كل فيما يخصه.

د. علي بن سعود البيمان
رئيس الجامعة

صدر في: ٤٧ مارس ٢٠١٥
الموافقة: ٤٧ مارس ٢٠١٥٨
### Research Funding Policy

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1. **Policy Title**

   Research Funding Policy

2. **Definitions and Abbreviations**

   2.1 ADPSR: Assistant Dean for Postgraduate Studies and Research for a college
   2.2 Co-PI: Co-Principal Investigator
   2.3 CRC: College Research Committee
   2.4 CR: Research Consultancies and Services
   2.5 DC: Director of Centre for a research centre or the Language Centre
   2.6 DR: Deanship of Research
   2.7 DVC-PSR: Deputy Vice Chancellor for Postgraduate Studies and Research
   2.8 EG: External Grant
   2.9 HMTF Grant: His Majesty Trust Fund Grant
   2.10 HoD: Head of Department for an academic department in a college
   2.11 IG: Internal Grant
   2.12 LC: Language Center
   2.13 PI: Principal Investigator for a research project
   2.14 Postdoc: Postdoctoral Research Fellow
   2.15 Research Board: The Research Board of Sultan Qaboos University
   2.16 Research Regulations: University Research Regulations
   2.17 Research Unit: College, research center, SQUH, or Language Center
   2.18 RA: Research Assistant
   2.19 SQU: Sultan Qaboos University
   2.20 SR Grant: Strategic Research Grant, same as HMTF Grant
   2.21 TRC: The Research Council
   2.22 University: Sultan Qaboos University
   2.23 University Regulations: Sultan Qaboos University Bylaws
   2.24 VC: Vice Chancellor

3. **Policy Statement**

   SQU shall support and facilitate the acquisition, administration and management of internal, strategic, external and collaborative research grants as well as contracts for research consultancies and services.

4. **Policy Objectives**

   This policy defines the general principles and procedures related to the acquisition, management, administration and utilization of research funds. Detailed research funding criteria, procedures and responsibilities are available in the Research Regulations.
5. **General Principles**

5.1 All research funding activities at SQU shall serve the University's vision, mission and strategic directions.

5.2 All research funding activities at the University must be pre-approved and must be managed according to this research funding policy and associated Research Regulations.

5.3 The Deanship of Research is responsible for the administrative and financial oversight of all research funding activities at the University.

5.4 Research funding at the University shall be in the form of internal, strategic, collaborative and external research grants as well as research consultancies and services.

5.5 The Research Units of the University and their departments are responsible for encouraging and facilitating the acquisition and efficient use of research funds by their researchers.

5.6 Each University researcher is responsible for actively seeking the research funding needed for his/her individual and/or group research activities making use of the available research funding opportunities and facilities.

5.7 The researcher is responsible for the legal, safe, ethical and efficient use of the acquired research funds.

5.8 Contracted research staff (RAs, Postdocs, Consultants, Scholarship Students) shall be granted access to the University facilities as appropriate in accordance with the University Regulations and shall complete departure clearance procedures before final departure.

5.9 A funded research project associated with a Research Unit shall remain associated with that unit until its completion or termination.

5.10 Research funding shall be based on clearly defined quality assurance measures and mechanisms at all levels (department, unit, university).

5.11 The University shall encourage the involvement of students in funded research projects.

5.12 Research funding at the University shall encourage capacity building in research.

5.13 **Internal Grants (IG)**

5.13.1 The University shall allocate an annual budget for internal research grants (IG).

5.13.2 The University annual IG budget shall be distributed among the University Research Units according to defined IG distribution regulations.

5.13.3 The management of the Research Units' IG budgets shall be decentralized. Each unit shall manage its own budget according to general (University) IG regulations as well as internal (unit) IG regulations.

5.14 **Strategic (HMTF) Grants**

5.14.1 His Majesty Trust Fund grants shall be used to fund strategic research projects of importance to the Sultanate serving the needs of the national economy and local society.

5.14.2 The strategic grants are managed centrally with the involvement of the Research Board in the evaluation of the proposals, the VC and DVC-PSR in selecting the projects to be funded, and the Deanship of Research in managing the related administrative and financial operations.

5.15 **The Research Council (TRC) and External Grants (EG)**

5.15.1 The University shall facilitate for its researchers access to TRC research funding and other external research funding opportunities.

5.15.2 TRC grants and other external grants shall be governed by agreements signed between the University and the funding bodies. These agreements must be in line with the University Regulations.

5.16 **Collaborative (CL) Research Grants**

5.16.1 The University shall facilitate the establishment of collaborative research agreements with local, regional and international institutions.

5.16.2 Research projects jointly funded by SQU and other institutions shall be governed by agreements signed between the University and the collaborating institutions. These agreements must be in line with the University Regulations.

5.17 **Research Consultancies and Services (CR)**

5.17.1 The University shall facilitate providing research consultancies and services (CR) by the University researchers to government and private organizations.
5.17.2 CR projects shall be governed by contracts signed between the University and the funding organizations. These contracts must be in line with the University Regulations.
5.17.3 SQU personnel costs for CR projects shall be stated in the contract and must adhere to the Research Regulations.

6. **Scope of Application**

This policy applies to:

6.1 All University units hosting funded research activities.
6.2 All University staff and students engaged in funded research activities.

7. **Procedures**

The following are general procedures and criteria related to the acquisition, management, administration and utilization of research funds. Detailed research funding procedures and criteria are provided in the Research Regulations.

7.1 **Research Funding Procedures**

7.1.1 The Deanship of Research shall provide the University researchers with information about available internal and external research funding opportunities via its website.

7.1.2 The Deanship of Research shall communicate to researchers timely information about the submission and approval deadlines of the research grants via the ADPSRs/DCs.

7.1.3 The PI prepares a research funding proposal according to the format and criteria detailed in the Research Regulations and any additional requirements by the funding organization in case of external funding.

7.1.4 All research funding proposals must be endorsed by the PI’s Research Unit and department. By signing, the Head of the Department and the Dean/Director of the Research Unit confirm that the required investigators’ time, space, and any necessary facilities for conducting the proposed research project are available.

7.1.5 The application and approval for research funding must follow the detailed procedures outlined in the Research Regulations.

7.1.6 Upon approval of a funded research project, the Deanship of Research will assign the project a unique code and will facilitate its administrative and financial operations.

7.1.7 Rejected proposals will also be coded and archived by the Deanship of Research.

7.1.8 All administrative and financial operations related to the execution of funded research projects (research staff recruitments, research staff payments, conference attendance, travel, procurement, budget reallocations, budget transfers, budget top-ups, project extensions, etc.) must follow the procedures outlined in the Research Regulations.

7.1.9 The PIs of funded research projects must prepare and submit progress and final reports according to the procedures, formats and deadlines specified in the Research Regulations.

7.1.10 The processing and approval of progress and final reports will follow the procedures outlined in the Research Regulations.

7.2 **Research Funding Criteria and Conditions**

7.2.1 **Research Team**

7.2.1.1 Each IG, collaborative, and strategic project, as well as CR and EG if applicable, must have a Co-PI.

7.2.1.2 The Co-PI must act as PI during the periods of temporary unavailability of the PI after a written approval of the PI.
7.2.1.3 The Co-PI must take over as the new PI when the PI becomes permanently unavailable in which case a new Co-PI must be assigned.

7.2.1.4 A department/unit may grant its staff involved in funded research/consultancy projects release time from normal teaching duties as per the University Regulations.

7.2 Budgeting

7.2.2.1 The budget of a funded research project must adhere to the rules and caps detailed in the Research Regulations.

7.2.2.2 It is the PI’s responsibility to ensure that the requested budget is sufficient to cover the cost required to complete the project and achieve its objectives.

7.2.3 Managing Funded Research Projects

7.2.3.1 All operations related to the management of the research projects (research staff recruitments, research staff payments, conference attendance, travel, procurement, etc.) must adhere to the conditions and criteria outlined in the Research Regulations.

7.2.3.2 When employing research assistants, Omanis will be given priority. If a non-Omani research assistant needs to be contracted, reasons for not hiring an Omani should be provided.

7.2.3.3 An agreement must be signed prior to sub-contracting any organization or individual to do work for a funded research project according to the Research Regulations.

7.2.3.4 Budget reallocations, transfers, top-ups and project extensions must adhere to the conditions and criteria outlined in the Research Regulations.

7.2.3.5 All equipment purchased from research or consultancy funds are the property of the University. It should be labelled and inventoried as such at the time of purchase.

7.2.4 Reporting

7.2.4.1 The PI of a funded research project is responsible for the submission of all progress and final reports required by the Research Regulations as well as any additional reports required by the external funding organization in case of external funding as per the external funding agreement.

7.2.4.2 For multi-year projects, the release of a year’s budget (other than the first year) requires the approval of the progress report for the previous year.

7.2.5 Specific Rules for Internal Grants (IG)

7.2.5.1 Research Units must have internal guidelines for the management of the internal grants.

7.2.5.2 The unit’s CRC/RCC is responsible for conducting the review process for IG proposals.

7.2.5.3 Financial support for conference attendance is not allowed from internal grants except for conference registration fees.

7.2.6 Specific Rules for Strategic (HMTF) Grants

7.2.6.1 The project should be multidisciplinary and preferably involve inter-college/center collaboration.

7.2.6.2 The project should make an important contribution to the socio-economic development of the Sultanate.

7.2.6.3 The University shall solicit reviews for the strategic proposals from external reviewers and local stakeholders.

7.2.6.4 The University Research Board shall participate in the evaluation of a strategic proposal. The PI must give an oral presentation about the project proposal in front of the Research Board.

7.2.6.5 A committee chaired by the VC with the DVC-PSR and the Dean of Research as members shall make the final decisions regarding the selection of strategic proposals for funding and the allocated funds, based on the evaluations by the external reviewers, local stakeholders and the Research Board.
7.2.7 **Specific Rules for Collaborative (CL) Grants**

7.2.7.1 The Deanship of Research shall facilitate the establishment of collaborative research funding agreements between the University and other institutions.

7.2.7.2 The implementation of a collaborative research agreement shall follow the rules and procedures outlined in the Research Regulations.

7.2.8 **Specific Rules for External Grants (EG)**

7.2.8.1 The Deanship of Research is responsible for providing the University researchers with information about external research funding opportunities.

7.2.8.2 The Deanship of Research is responsible for facilitating the signing of external grant (EG) agreements between the University and external funding organizations.

7.2.8.3 The implementation of an external research grant agreement shall follow the rules and procedures outlined in the Research Regulations.

7.2.9 **Specific Rules for Research Consultancies and Services (CR)**

7.2.9.1 The PI is responsible for the initial informal discussion of the research consultancy or service activity with the sponsor.

7.2.9.2 For each research consultancy or service, the Deanship of Research shall facilitate the signing of a contract between the University and the sponsor prior to starting the work.

7.2.9.3 The payment of SQU personnel costs for CR projects shall be according to the Research Regulations.

7.2.9.4 The implementation of the research consultancy or service agreement shall follow the rules and procedures outlined in the Research Regulations.

8. **Related Policies**

8.1 *Research Ethics Policy (Once Approved)*

8.2 *Dissemination of Research Findings Policy (Once Approved)*

8.3 *Intellectual Property (IP) Policy*

8.4 *Staff Misconduct Policy (Once Approved)*

8.5 *Policy for Making Policies*

9. **Responsibility for Implementation**

The following officials and units are responsible for implementing this Research Funding Policy as per the detailed procedures outlined in the Research Regulations:

9.1 *Vice Chancellor*

9.2 *Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Postgraduate Studies and Research*

9.3 *Deans of Colleges*

9.4 *Assistant Deans for Postgraduate Studies and Research*

9.5 *Heads of Academic Departments*

9.6 *Directors of Research Centers*

9.7 *Deanship of Research*

9.8 *Principal Investigators*
10. **Review**

The policy is reviewed every 5 years.

11. **Key Risks**

The main risks associated with this policy are:

11.1 Insufficiency of internal research funds
11.2 Unavailability or discontinuation of external research funds
11.3 Unavailability of research support staff
11.4 Unavailability of research administrators and facilitators
11.5 Unavailability of research space
11.6 Inefficient administrative, legal, financial and technical procedures in concerned units
11.7 Inefficient use or misuse of funds

12. **References**

The development of this policy has, in a contextualized manner, benefited from the following documents:

12.1 Research Regulations
12.2 Researcher Guide

13. **Appendices**

13.1 Appendix I: Revision History Table.

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13.2 Appendix II: Research Regulations