



Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)
Deanship of Research

International Co-Funding Program

Introduction

The International Co-funding Program (ICFP) aims at promoting strategic, multi-disciplinary collaborative research conducted by the university's faculty, staff, and postgraduate students with international researchers. In addition to its strategic benefits, it establishes a framework for international collaboration that provides SQU researchers access for collaboration with their international counterparts. The main concept of the co-funding program is the facilitation of international collaboration with internationally recognized institution and researchers. This program will offer numerous benefits to the university and Oman, including the promotion of research calibre and capacity building, increasing the university's research output and intellectual property, and building strong international networks with research-focused institutions, which will directly contribute to SQU's internationalization and global standing.

Program Objectives

- To provide access to international collaboration for SQU researchers.
- To promote synergizing SQU's research with global trends.
- To build ties between SQU and internationally-recognized researchers and institutions.
- To build SQU's in-house capacity in research and innovation.
- To uplift SQU's standing in internationally-recognized research output and impact indices such as Scopus and Web of Science.
- To enhance SQU's international reputation and recognition through collaborative research.

Initiating Collaboration

Initiating a collaborative project under this program starts with the mutual understanding between the SQU principal investigator (PI) and the international counterpart. The PI from SQU submits the final proposal at SQU. In addition to the proposal, the collaborative research commitment agreement must be submitted in which the international collaborating institution states its commitment to contributing

matching funding amounts upon approval. It also declares that it has already reviewed and accepted the research proposal or that it delegates the review process to SQU. The application form must be signed and stamped by the Dean of Research (or equivalent) at the collaborating institution.

Application process

Applying to the program is open annually and according to the following sequence:

1. SQU calls for submitting research proposals to its faculty members and international institutions. The call outlines the application process, required forms, submission deadline and the required application materials.
2. The PI from SQU submits the application materials (proposal, CVs and commitment agreement) through the electronic Research Management System (RMS) at SQU.
3. Submitted proposals are evaluated and approved by the College Research Committee (CRC) or by the Research Centers' Research Committee (RCC) before passing them on to the Deanship of Research.
4. All applications meeting the terms and conditions of this program will be sent by the Deanship of Research to external peer reviewers.
5. Upon receiving the external reviewers' feedback, all applications will be evaluated by an evaluation committee formed by the Deanship of Research.
6. The Deanship of Research will communicate with the collaborative institutions for final decision.
7. The Evaluation Committee will submit its recommendations to the DVC-PSR for final approval.
8. The Deanship of Research will develop a research contract between SQU and the collaborating institution for each successful proposal.
9. The final approved proposal shall be assigned a code by the Deanship of Research and the Deanship will send an approval letter to the PI to commence the project.

Terms and Conditions

Initial acceptance of the application must comply with the following terms and conditions:

- The submitted proposal must clearly state the added value for funding from the International Co- Funding Program at SQU.
- The final decision for funding is reserved by SQU and the funding institution.

- The Principal Investigator PI at SQU must be a full-time faculty member and a PhD holder or equivalent.
- The principal investigator at the collaborating institution must be full-time and a PhD holder.
- The research team at SQU must include full-time researchers as a Co-PI.
- PIs cannot have more than one project per cycle.
- PIs cannot apply for a new project until a previously awarded project is completed.
- Proposals submitted to this program should have not been submitted to or already funded by another funding source.

Fund

The requested fund must be in accordance with the following regulations:

- a. The fund is to be provided equally by SQU and the collaborating institution (A maximum of OMR 30,000 (~US\$ 77,720.0) each).
- b. The budget may not include the following categories:
 - Consultant's fees.
 - Research visit for the team from collaborating institute.
- c. The maximum allocation for overseas travel and conference attendance should not exceed OMR 3,000 for the whole project.
- d. Research assistance costs are covered by the share of the institution where the RA is working, and the RA contract will be according to the regulations of that institution.
- e. Equipment, software and materials paid for from SQU share will be the property of SQU.

Duration of Projects

The duration of the project must be 2- 3 years. Extension allowed for maximum one year and upon collaborating institution approval.

Proposal Submission Period

January to August every year.

Application Review Criteria

Upon receiving the proposals from external peer reviewers, the evaluation committee formed by the Deanship of Research will meet for final evaluation of the proposals based on the peer reviews. Recommended proposals will be ranked based on the following criteria:

Criteria		Score weight
Intellectual merit and originality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to advance knowledge The original contribution to the area of study 	20%
Expected Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected number of refereed publications from the proposal's results Expected number of Intellectual Properties (IPs) to be created/ obtained 	10%
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methodology Work Plan Budget Visibility 	20%
Significance to Oman and SQU Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the project can serve Oman and the society 	10%
Multidisciplinary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving other disciplines 	10%
Building Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of young Omani researchers, support staff, undergraduate, postgraduate, technician, post doctorate fellows in the research project 	10%
Research Team Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PI's research competency and relevance to the field of proposed project. Research Team Profile 	20%

Projects follow-up and reporting

- An Annual progress report is required at the end of each year of the project life cycle and a final report is required at the end of the project.
- The reports should be submitted to SQU and the collaborative institution.
- The reports should contain details of the project's research achievements during the funding period, the milestones reached, research outputs, and the way the budget has been spent.
- The reports should be submitted through the HoD/Director of the Center and should be approved by the CRC or the RCC.
- The reports should then be checked by the Deanship of Research which shall contact researchers if any information is missing or to clarify any areas of uncertainty before submitting them for final approval by both institutions.
- Failure to submit a report will negatively influence the researcher's chances of accessing research funding in the future.

Intellectual property

The intellectual property of any work, including patents, resulting from the project will be equally shared by SQU/its research team and the international team/its institution. The division of any intellectual property and/or royalties between the team and its institution will follow the regulations of that institution.

Inquiries

For any inquiry regarding this document and the proposal submission process, please send an email to dor@squ.edu.om or research.admindep@squ.edu.om

International Research Co-Funding Program Commitment Agreement

To: Deanship of Research
Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)
Sultanate of Oman

Please be informed that we confirm our commitment to the co-funding research proposal mentioned below with an amount of 50% of the proposed total budget under the conditions of this agreement. We also confirm that:

- ☐ We have reviewed and accepted the research proposal for funding.
- ☐ We delegate the review process to Sultan Qaboos University (SQU).

Name of the collaborative institution (Col-Institution):

Address of the Col-Institution:

Title of the co-funding research proposal:

Name of principal investigator from SQU (SQU-PI):

Name of principal investigator from Col-Institution (Col-PI):

Amount of fund (50% of the project's total budget in US\$):

Duration of the project (Years)

Conditions:

- The final decision for funding is reserved by both co-funding institutions.
 - The SQU-PI must be a full time PhD holder faculty/researcher.
 - The Col-PI must be full-time and a PhD holder.
 - The submitted proposal should not be submitted to or already funded by any another funding source.
 - The submitted proposal's budget should be developed according to the research rules and regulations of the funding institutions.
 - The intellectual property of any work, including patents, resulting from the project will be equally shared by both research teams from SQU and the collaborative institution. The division of any intellectual property and/or royalties between the team and its institution will follow the regulations of that institution.
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Signatory Name (Dean of Research or equivalent):

Signature:

Stamp:

Date:
