**Deanship of Research**

**His Majesty Trust Fund for Directed Strategic Research Program (HMTF)**

**Definitions**

- Co-PI: Co-Principal Investigator
- CRC: College Research Committee
- DC: Director of the Centre
- DoR: Deanship of Research
- DVCPSR: Deputy Vice Chancellor for Postgraduate Studies and Research
- HoD: Head of Department
- PI: Principal Investigator
- RCC: Research Centers Committee
- SQU: Sultan Qaboos University
- SR: Strategic Research
- VC: Vice Chancellor

**Introduction**

The generous funds donated by His Majesty directed for country issues, multidisciplinary strategic research projects of importance to the Sultanate. The aim of such projects is to generate new knowledge and discoveries leading to substantial socio-economic benefits to the Omani society. Researchers are expected to obtain major results and identify anticipated direct benefits to prospective users. This type of research should generally go along with Oman Vision 2040.

**Program Objectives**

1. Consolidating leadership in key areas and discovering solutions to national challenges.
2. Focus on research areas that are strategic to the country and serve the community by helping them to provide solutions to their problems.
3. Promoting cross-cutting / multidisciplinary research.
4. Build capacity in cutting-edge research areas.
5. Build collaboration with government and private stockholders.

**Terms and Conditions**

- Proposals submitted must fall within the selected research areas.
- Full-time SQU faculty and researchers or equivalent PhD holder are eligible to apply for this research-funding scheme.
- The research team of the project should consist of at least three faculty members/ researchers (including the PI and Co-PI).
- The research team of the project should include at least one member from the government unit that provide the challenge.
- PI must have a track record of successful research with peer-reviewed journal publications; and experience in leading research teams and managing grants.
- The proposal should be developed in contribution with government unit that provide the challenge.
- PIs cannot have more than one HMTF project per cycle.
- PIs cannot apply for a new project until a previously HMTF awarded project is successfully completed.
- The proposal submitted in response to this fund program should have not been successfully funded by another funding program.
- The budgeting of the research project should follow the rules and caps detailed in the Research Regulations for Strategic research (SR) which are available on the Deanship of Research website.

**Areas of Research**

This grant seeks high quality proposals in the areas selected annually by Research Board based on the challenges provided by government units. Proposals may span one or more of the priority focus areas. Multidisciplinary and cutting-edge proposals are encouraged.

**Fund**

This grant call will have one submission cycle in September per year. There is no cap for the requested fund but must adhere to the conditions and criteria outlined in the research grant guideline for SR. The funding for the next year will be subjected to satisfactory performance of the first year, assessed through submission of an annual report and a peer-review process.

**Duration of Projects**

The duration of the project must be 2-3 years commencing on 1st September.

**Managing the Fund**

The Deanship of Research is responsible for the administrative and financial oversight of all the funding activities. All operations related to the management of the research projects (research staff recruitment, research staff payments, conference attendance, travel, procurement, *etc.*) must adhere to the conditions and criteria outlined in the research regulations for strategic research (SR).

**Application process**

- The Deanship of Research will announce to SQU investigators to apply through the electronic Research Management System (RMS) during 1 September to 30 October. A list of national challenges will be included in the announcement.
- Submitted proposals should be approved by HoD/ DC before evaluated and approved by the College Research Committee (CRC) or by the Research Centers' Research Committee (RCC).
- The Chair of the CRC/RCC endorses the recommendations and sends only the approved applications to the Deanship of Research.
- The Deanship of Research shall coordinate the review process with external reviewers and local stakeholders.
- All applications will be evaluated by an evaluation committee formed by the Research Board.
- Evaluation committee will submit their recommendations and rank proposals to the DVCPSR.
- The DVCPSR shall coordinate with VC and Dean of Research to select the approved proposals.
- The DVCPSR will announce the approved proposals on the University Day.
- PI may be requested to modify the proposal and submit it again to the Deanship of Research before activating the project budget.
- 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.

**Application Review Criteria**

- Each submitted proposal is to be reviewed by CRC/RCC before submission to DoR.
- Upon submission of a proposal through the RMS, DoR will endeavor to proceed with all checks, screenings and reviews.
- Each proposal will be screened that meet above terms and conditions. Any proposal not meeting the terms and conditions will be not sent out for review.
- Eligible proposals will be sent for external peer reviews.
- The evaluation committee formed by the Research Board will evaluate and rank the proposals based on the peer reviews. Recommended proposals will be ranked based on the following criteria:
  - Importance to Oman (20%)
  - Originality (20%)
  - Expected Impact (20%)
  - Work Plan (20%)
  - Building Capacity (10%)
  - Budget (10%)

The proposals Pre-Award lifecycle for this fund is provided hereunder: