



The Policy of Research Grants at the Arab Open University

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Article 1: Title

This document shall be called: “The Policy of Research Grants at the Arab Open University.”

Article 2: Definitions

Unless the context indicates otherwise, the following words and expressions shall have the meanings specified hereunder:

The University	The Arab Open University
The Director	The Director of an Arab Open University branch or campus
The Branch	An Arab Open University branch or campus

Article 3: Glossary of Terms

University / AOU	The Arab Open University
Branch	An Arab Open University branch or campus
BRDC	Branch Research Development Committees
CRSR	Central Regulatory for Scientific Research
CRO	Central Research Office
Dean	Dean of a faculty at the Arab Open University
HQ	Headquarters of the Arab Open University
RFA	Research Funding Administrator

Article 4: Grants

In the order in which they are presented, they are:

ARG	Applied Research Grant
SG	Small Projects Grant
CICF	Community and Industry Cooperation Fund
NNSG	New and Novice Staff Grant
IRG	Institutional Research Grant
REA	Research Excellence Award
SCG	Seminars and Conferences Grant

Article 5: Policy of Research Grants

Policy Objectives:

This policy aims to establish the administrative system governing the funding of research at AOU. This system applies to all research activities that require internal or external resources, carried out by the various University members; students, individuals, teams, or in cooperation with others outside the University.

A) Research Funding Objectives and Main Types

1) Objectives:

- Contribute to increasing knowledge through high quality research that is in line with AOU's mission and strategies.
- Increase cooperation with the local community, government, industry, higher education institutions and researches, in order to identify economic and social problems, and develop solutions for them.
- Develop students' abilities and enhance their learning experience by increasing faculty members' expertise, knowledge and skills.

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- Attract and employ distinguished faculty members.

2) Main types:

- *Internal Research Grant:* it is derived from the University budget, commensurate with income.
- *External Funding:* it can be in the form of a research grant, a commission for research, or a grant for scientific research.
- *Research Grant:* funding for self-research on the principle of competition, which requires periodic reporting and may put some restrictions on the use of funding, but it will have no legal implications during the implementation process.
- *Research Commission/Agreement:* funding is provided under a binding legal agreement that spells out the terms and direction of the research, the timetable, the financial system, and the right to dispose of the research results, etc.
- *Research Donation:* it is granted for a specific purpose, but it does not usually include periodic reports and is not tied to a specific timetable. There are also no restrictions on how to use the funding/support.

B) Management of Research Funding

There are three agencies responsible for managing research funding:

- The Central Research Office, CRO
- The Branch Research Development Committees, BRDC
- The Central Regulatory for Scientific Research, CRSR

The following section summarizes these entities' tasks in managing internal grants and external funding. The other functions and tasks are listed in the ***"Arab Open University Research Policy"***, while the detailed principles and procedures for managing the internal and external grants are listed in the ***"Research Grants Management Manual."***

1) The Central Research Office (CRO)

The primary responsibility of the CRO is to assist in the management of internal grants and external funding before and after the grant, whereas the functions of the office are as follows:

- To use the office as a source of information storage for internal and external grants.
- To advertise, receive, study, and ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of centrally administered internal grants.
- To work with the central regulatory for scientific research and research development committees in the branches and update the external funding donors list.
- To manage the electronic portal for research, which includes updating internal and external financing information as well as centrally managed funding applications information.
- To assist in the preparation of external funding projects and provide training in project writing skills in collaboration with the branch funding administrators.
- To ensure that projects submitted to external funding comply with all the legal and administrative requirements in cooperation with other relevant entities to the University, as well as in grant management and in the preparation of final reports (for further details, see the Management Guidelines for Research Grants and Contracts).

2) The Branch Research Development Committee (BRDC)

The committee does the following for research funding:

- Organizes faculty members' specialized training in project writing.
- Trains some faculty members as research funding administrators to empower them to identify opportunities for internal and external funding available to potential applicants, and to prepare preliminary and final research funding projects. This is done in collaboration with the central regulars for research development.
- Receives, reviews, accepts, rejects or modifies the internal grant applications managed by the branch within the limits of the allocated

budget, in accordance with the University laws and regulations as well as the conditions stipulated in the invitation to submit applications.

- Encourages and supports faculty members in the search for external sources of funding. It also prepares and updates a register of funding agencies and programmes, especially in the country branch.
- Monitors the progress and completion of locally and externally supported research when due, in accordance with the conditions and expectations attached to the grant offer.

3) The Central Regulatory for Scientific Research (CRSR)

The regulatory does the following for research funding:

- Receives, reviews, accepts, rejects or modifies the applications for research grants within the limits of the specified budget, in accordance with the University priorities and laws as well as the conditions stipulated in the invitation to submit applications.
- Establishes and updates a central register for regional and global research funding agencies and programmes.
- Encourages and supports applications among branches and colleges for external funding purposes.
- Evaluates and selects branch requests for seminars and conferences based on the priorities of the University and within the available budget.

Article 6: Internal Research Grants

A) Framework and General Principles

1) Priority:

There are four types of research:

- Purely basic research
- Essential strategic research
- Applied research
- Experimental development research

While all the aforementioned research types are worthy of support and funding, the research grants at AOU are primarily aimed at applied research. This priority stems from the University's mission and its efforts and contribution to the development of knowledge that supports economic and social development (in general).

2) Equal Opportunities:

- The various types of grants aim at achieving multiple purposes, but all types of research grants are evaluated in a competitive manner. The grants are announced periodically (4 times a year in September, December, March and June) through the research electronic portal, and via electronic mail sent to the persons concerned. This process is subject to a transparent evaluation system, in accordance to the selection criteria in the Research Grants Management Manual.
- A full-time faculty member may apply for a research grant, if his/her contract period covers the period of their research grant and/or he/she is expected to renew their contract. Some full-time administrative staff may also apply for a research grant if the project is linked to their current or future job, only after ascertaining that the aforementioned contractual conditions apply to them.

3) Research Results Dissemination:

When presenting research grants to those eligible, the grantees are expected to produce high-level, publishable researches. During the evaluation process, the competent committee will carefully examine the possibility of publishing the results. Those unable to publish researches under which they have received grants cannot receive internal funding, as stipulated in the grant agreement.

B) Approval of the Grant and Budget

- AOU provides a branch-level budget and a central budget to support research projects. The research development committees in the branches receive, review, select and fund the projects with no more than US \$10,000.
- Projects costing more than US \$10,000 are transferred to the Central Committee for Scientific Research through specific channels (see the Research Grants and Contract Management Manual). All projects with multi-branch initiatives are under the umbrella of the CRSR.
- The central and branch budgets must determine the proportion of the budget to be allocated to each type of research grant programme in advance. For budgetary purposes, two types may be combined with a maximum of one budget line, while ensuring some flexibility. Under certain conditions defined in the outline of the budget, and based on logical justification, financial allocations of a certain kind may be transferred from a type of research grant to another.

A) Types of Internal Grants

Internal grants aim to develop and support research activities for faculty members in order to increase knowledge and emphasize the importance of research in social and economic development. Toward this end, multiple types of research support programmes are allocated, each of which achieves a specific goal.

1) Applied Research Grant (ARG)

- ARG aims to link the University with the industrial sector and the local community. This type of grant can finance projects that have not succeeded in obtaining external funding. Commonly supported project goals include finding solutions to social and economic problems, and raising the level of scientific research at the University.
- All faculty members are eligible to apply for an applied research grant, and researches can be done by a group of faculty members for a grant of no more than US \$15,000.

- Projects involving a group of branches may receive support from HQ and/or a joint contribution from the branches that are a part of the project.

2) Small Project Grant (SG)

It is possible to apply for an SG to gather the necessary information required to prepare projects for obtaining external support. These grants can be considered if the project has a strong opportunity to obtain additional support in research areas that are priorities for the University. The grant can be up to US \$5,000.

3) Community and Industry Cooperation Fund (CICF)

- This fund supports new or existing research initiatives that can increase or initiate research collaboration with the local community and/or industrial sector.
- The fund relies on joint financing and may include joint researches. External funding contributes at least 50% of the cash subsidy from the cost of the project.
- Projects funded by the fund must be innovative and find new solutions. Projects based on traditional and previously known solutions are not covered by such funding.
- The CICF includes projects that have either received a previous grant or not. In such cases, the judgment will be made by experts in the industrial sector.

4) Novice and New Staff Grant (NNSG)

- This grant is allocated for two purposes:
 - To encourage the members of the teaching staff at the beginning of the career ladder (below the rank of Assistant Professor) to advance their career development.
 - To support members of the academic body regardless of their ranks, in order to carry out research projects linked to the priorities of the University.

- This grant amounts to US \$3,000 for individual projects and US \$5,000 for joint ventures (provided that the recipients are both novice and/or new faculty members).

5) Institutional Research Grant (IRG)

- This grant aims to support projects that evaluate the performance of the University or branch in a particular field or areas and/or projects that try to find new ways to achieve excellence at the University or one of its branches.
- Initiatives for such projects can come from HQ, a branch, or a faculty member (or a group of them).
- When the project relates to only one branch, the funding process is requested from the branch, which in turn requests funding and support from HQ. In general, IRGs can be supported at any time, depending on funding availability.

6) Research Excellence Award (REA)

- The REA is not only a recognition of outstanding faculty contributions, but also a support of their current and future research activities. It is awarded annually to faculty members in each faculty and is not associated with a particular research (but it is dedicated to research activity as a whole).
- The nomination for this award comes at the end of December of each year by the College Dean, which depends on a College Committee. The evaluation is carried out by the Central Committee for Scientific Research, which can resort to requesting assistance from outside the University. The award can be withheld if there are no suitable candidates in college. The award is worth US \$3,000.

7) Seminars and Conferences Grant (SCG)

- The University encourages organizing research and conference seminars aimed at enhancing research excellence in aspects of interest to the branch and/or the University.
- The priority of support is for seminars and conferences that lead to the publication of these research materials in the form of papers, studies or

books. The organizers of these events can seek external sources of funding and sponsorship. Such external support indicates the importance of the subject.

- A series of seminars can receive up to US \$2,500 support, whereas conference support can reach US \$5,000. This does not include regional or international conferences that are centrally organized, because these budgets are provided by the central budget.
- Faculty members intending to present papers at conferences outside the University can apply for this programme. The papers must be of a high level, and should have a great opportunity to be published. The maximum budget for participation in conferences US \$2,000.

Article 7: External Funding

- The University encourages and supports applications seeking external funding. Lists of agencies and institutions that provide external funding and programmes are regularly updated. SG, CICF, and funding matching programmes all aim to increase access to external funding.
- Faculty members should be continuously trained to develop their skills in writing research projects. They can receive assistance in project preparation by research funding administrators and the CRO. The CRO, the BRDC and the CRSR may assist in the negotiation process with the funding agencies and partners, in addition to their described roles in Article 5, Clause B.
- Those with external funding may apply for exemption from teaching or administrative duties in whole or in part for a certain period if they receive support that covers their salary in whole or in part.

Article 8: Publication Support

- At the request of some publishing houses, it is possible for the CRSR to review applications for publication of books that are the product of seminars or

conferences organized by faculty members, whether in branches or centrally.

- These publishing houses must have a high regional or global reputation, and the published material should be of high value that increases knowledge and strengthens the University's reputation. The University should be involved in this evaluation process in addition to external arbitrators to ascertain the validity of the research material for publication. As for the amount of support provided for qualifying research, each case is discussed separately.

Article 9: Research Electronic Portal (E-Portal)

- The e-portal is a repository of all data related to research at AOU. For research grants and contracts, this portal contains all data related to research internal funding, including invitation to apply, a list of external funding agencies alongside their programmes, advertisements, policies and procedures, as well as committees/offices and staff related to the administration of research grants in AOU, in addition to a list of projects that have been funded in the past or are currently being funded. Among other things, there is also electronic training in the writing of research projects.
- The e-portal facilitates the process of applying for internal grants. Applicants can follow the steps of their applications electronically. The portal also allows the submission of reports that indicate progress in the research project, as required.
- The e-portal also includes a research container (database) of faculty members' researches and studies. This database is linked to the University's e-library and the Google search engine.

Article 10: General Provisions

- A) The current bylaws herein shall override any previous bylaws relating to or having the same title or subject matter.

- A) University Directors are responsible for implementing the decisions issued under these regulations.
- B) The University Council shall decide in cases where no provision is made in these regulations.