Policy of Research Grants at the Arab Open University

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Contents

Article (1): Title

The regulations in this document are called the " Policy of Research Grants at the Arab Open University".

Article (2): Definitions

The following words and terms, wherever stated in this Regulation, shall have the following meanings:

The University	The Arab Open University
The Branch	The University in the country of the branch
The Director	The director of the university in the country of the branch

Article (3): Glossary of Terms

AOU, University	The Arab Open University
Branch	The University in the country of the branch
BRDC	Branch Research Development Committees
CRSR	Central Regulatory for Scientific Research
CRO	Central Research Office
Dean	Dean of Faculty at the Arab Open University
H.Q	Headquarters of the Arab Open University
RFA	Research Funding Administrator

Article (4): Grants (in the order in which they are presented).

ARG	Applied Research Grants
SG	Small Projects Grants
CICF	Community and Industry Cooperation Fund

NNSG	New and Novice Staff Grants
IRG	Institutional Research Grants
REA	Research Excellence Award
SCG	Seminars and Conferences Grants

Article (5): Policy of Research Grants at the Arab Open University

Objectives of the Policy:

This policy aims to establish the administrative system governing the funding of research at the Arab Open University. This system applies to all research activities carried out by university members - individuals, teams, or in cooperation with others outside the university, as well as students - which require internal or external resources.

A. Main types of research funding and objectives:

1. Objectives of Research Funding:

– To contribute to increasing knowledge through high quality research and aligned with the Arab Open University's mission and strategies.

– To increase cooperation with the local community, government, industry, higher education institutions and researches, to identify economic and social problems and develop solutions for them.

– To increase the knowledge of faculty members, thus contributing to the development of learning experiences and abilities of students.

– To attract and employ distinguished faculty members.

2. Main types of research funding:
Researchers at AOU can benefit from two main types of research funding:

– **Internal Research Grants:** which come from the university budget and commensurate with the income.

– **External Funding:** which can be in the form of a research grant, a commission for research, or a grant for scientific research.

– **Research Grant:** it includes 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, the right to dispose of the research results, etc.

– **Research Grant:** it is granted for a specific purpose, but does not usually include the writing of periodic reports, is not tied to a specific period of time, and without restrictions on how to use support / funding.

B. Management of Research Funding:

There are three agencies responsible for managing research funding:
- Central Research Office,
- Research Development Committees in the Branch,
- The Central Regulatory for Scientific Research

The following section summarizes the task of each of these entities 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 included in the "**Research Grants Management Manual**".

1. Research Central Office

With regard to research funding, the primary responsibility of the Central Research Office is to assist in the management of internal grants and external funding before and after the grant.

The functions of this office are as follows:
- To use the Central Research 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 lists of external funding donors.

- To manage the electronic portal for research, which includes many aspects, including updating of internal and external financing information, and information on centrally managed funding applications.

- To assist in the preparation of external funding projects and training in project writing skills, in cooperation with the branch funding administrators.

- To ensure that projects submitted to external funding comply with all legal and administrative requirements in cooperation with other relevant entities at the university, as well as in grant management and in the preparation of final reports (for details, see the Management Guidelines for Research Grants and Contracts).

2. Research Development Committee in the Branch

For research funding, the Research Development Committee of the Branch does the following:

- Organizes the training of project writing for faculty members.

- The committee, in collaboration with the Central Regulatory for Research Development, trains some faculty members as research funding administrators

to assist them in identifying opportunities for internal and external funding available to potential applicants and in the preparation of preliminary and final research funding projects.

–   Receives, reviews, accepts, rejects or modifies the internal grant applications administered by the branch in accordance with the conditions stipulated in the invitation to submit applications, within the limits of the allocated budget, in accordance with the laws and regulations of the University.

–   Encourages and supports faculty members in the search for external sources of funding, prepares and updates a register of funding agencies and programmes, especially in the country of the branch.

–   Monitors the progress and completion of locally and externally supported research on time, in accordance with the conditions and expectations attached to the grant offer.

3.   **Central Regulatory for Scientific Research**
     For research funding, the Central Regulatory for Scientific Research does the following:
     –   Receives, reviews, accepts, rejects or modifies applications for research grants, in accordance with the conditions set out in the invitation to submit applications, within the limits of the specified budget, in accordance with the priorities and laws of the University.

     –   Establishes and updates a central register of 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:
     –   Pure basic researches
     –   Basic strategic researches
     –   Applied Researches
     –   Experimental development researches

While all types of research mentioned above are worthy of support and funding, the research grants in the Arab Open University aimed at <u>applied researches in the first place</u>; this priority comes from the University's mission and its efforts and its

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 (four times a year in September, December, March and June) through the Research Electronic Portal, and through e-mail sent to the persons concerned. This process is subject to a transparent evaluation system according to the selection criteria contained in the Research Grants Management Manual.

   – A full-time faculty member – whose contract period covers the period of his / her research grant and / or is expected to renew his / her contract - may apply for a research grant. Some full-time administrative staff may apply for this purpose if the project is linked to their current or future job (after ascertaining that the contractual conditions of the above referred to apply to them).

3. **Dissemination of Research Results:**
   In granting research grants to those who are 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. For those who cannot publish their researches under which they have received research grants, as explained in the grant agreement, then they cannot receive internal funding.

B. **Approval of the Grant and Budget:**

   – The Arab Open University 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 no more than (USD $ 10,000).

   – Projects of more than USD $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 under the umbrella of the Central Regulatory for Scientific Research.

   – The central and branch budgets must in advance determine the proportion of the budget to be allocated to each type of research grant programme. 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 some kind may be transferred from a type of research grants to another.

C. **Types of Internal Grants:**

The 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. Towards this end, multiple types of research support programmes are allocated, each of which achieves a specific goal.

1. Applied Research Grants:
   - The applied research grants aim to link the university with the industrial sector and the local community. This type of grants can finance projects that have not succeeded in obtaining external funding, in addition to finding solutions to social and economic problems, as well as raising the level of scientific research at the university.

   - All faculty members are eligible to apply for applied research grants, and researches can be done by a group of faculty members for a grant of no more than USD $15,000.

   - Projects involving a group of branches may receive support from headquarters and / or a joint contribution from the project-based branches.

2. **Small Project Grants**

   It is possible to apply for a Small Project Grant to gather information necessary to prepare projects to obtain external support. These grants can be considered if the project has a strong opportunity to obtain additional support in research areas that are priorities of the University, and the grant can be up to (USD $5,000).

3. **Cooperation Fund between the Local Community and the Industrial Sector:**
   - This fund supports new or existing research initiatives to initiate or increase 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. For those projects based on traditional and previously known solutions, they would not be covered by such funding.

   - The Cooperation Fund between the Local Community and the Industrial Sector includes under its umbrella projects that have received or have not received a previous grant. In such cases, the judgment will be made by experts in the industrial sector.

4. **Novice and New Staff Grants**

   - This grant is allocated for two purposes:

- o **The first purpose:** to encourage the members of the teaching staff at the beginning of the career ladder (below the rank of Assistant Professor) in order to advance their career development.

- o **The second purpose:** 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 USD $3,000 for individual projects and USD $5,000 for joint ventures (provided that the recipients are both novice and / or new faculty members).

5. **Institutional Research Grants:**

- 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 the headquarters of the University, 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 that requests the funding and support from the headquarters. In general, institutional research grants can be supported at any time, depending on availability of funding.

6. **Research Excellence Award:**

- The Research Excellence Award is not only a recognition of outstanding faculty contributions, but also to support their current and future research activities. This award is awarded annually to faculty members in each faculty and is not associated with a particular research (but is dedicated to research activity as a whole).

- The nomination for this award comes at the end of December of each year by the Dean of the College, which depends on a committee from the college, and the evaluation is carried out by the Central Committee for Scientific Research, which can resort to the request for assistance from outside the University. The award can be withheld if there is no suitable candidate in a college, and the award is worth of (USD $3,000).

7. **Seminars and Conferences Grants:**
   - The University encourages organising 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, and 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 (USD \$2,500) support. Conference support can reach (USD \$5,000). This does not include regional or international conferences that are centrally organized, with their budget coming from the central budget.

− Faculty members who intend to present papers at conferences outside the University can apply for this programme. Papers must be of a high level and have a great opportunity to be published, with a maximum budget for participation in conferences (USD \$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. The small grants progmamme aims to increase access to external funding, as well as to the matching funding programmes, and the Cooperation Fund between the Local Community and Industry.

− Faculty members should be continuously trained to develop their skills in writing research projects and can receive assistance in project preparation by research funding administrators and by the Central Research Office. The Central Research Office, the Research Development Committees of the branch and the Central Regulatory for Scientific Research may assist in the negotiation process with the funding agencies and partners, in addition to their roles as described in Article 5 (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:

− It is possible that the Central Regulatory for Scientific Research will review applications for the publication of books that are the product of seminars or conferences organized by faculty members in branches or centrally, at the request of some publishing houses.

− These publishing houses must have a high regional or global reputation, and the published material should be of high value to increase knowledge and strengthen the University's reputation. The university should involve in this evaluation process 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

− The Research Electronic Portal is a repository of all data related to research at the Arab Open University. For research grants and contracts, this portal contains all data related to internal funding for research, including invitation to apply, as well as a list of external funding agencies for research, its programmes, advertisements, policies and procedures, as well as for committees / offices and staff related to the administration of research grants in the Arab Open University, in addition to electronic training in the writing of research projects and a list of projects that have been funded in the past and at the present time, etc.

− The portal facilitates the process of applying electronically for internal grants. Applicants can follow the decision steps of their applications electronically. The portal also allows the submission of reports that indicate the progress of the research project as required.

− The portal also includes a research container that includes research and studies of faculty members. The research container is linked to the university's electronic library and the search engine (Google).

Article (10): General Provisions

− This policy repeals all the previous policies concerning "Research Grants Policy in the Arab Open University."

− University Directors are responsible for implementing the decisions issued under these regulations.

− The University Council shall decide in cases where no provision is made in these Regulations.