



AY 2019-20
Guidelines for
Approved
TRC
Projects



Department of Research

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Table of Content

1.	Guidelines for Purchasing any Item	1
2.	Guidelines for Hiring Research Assistants (RAs)/Technicians	2
3.	Guidelines for Submitting Reports to the Department of Research	3
4.	Guidelines for Submitting Reports to TRC	4
4.1	Progress Reports	4
4.2	Final Reports	5
5.	Guidelines for Project Management by TRC	6
5.1	Budget Adjustments	6
5.2	Replacing Project Team Members or Research Institution	6
5.3	Changing the Project Plan	7
5.4	Extension	7
5.5	Termination and Suspension	7
5.6	Ethics, Confidentiality and Disclosure	7
6.	References	7
	APPENDIX-A	8
	APPENDIX-B	11

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This document provides detailed guidelines for the research projects approved by The Research Council (TRC) under Block Funding Program (BFP). This includes the Research Grant (RG) projects, Graduate Research Grant (GRG) projects and the Undergraduate Research Grant (URG) projects.

1. Guidelines for Purchasing any Item

For purchasing any item as mentioned in the approved budget specified in the Grant Agreement or on RIMS for the respective TRC funded BFP project, following procedure shall be followed:

For Research Grant (RG):

1. The Principal Investigator (PI) should write a memo detailing the item(s) required. He/She should also specify the budget category and the total amount required for purchasing the item(s). Following documents should be attached with the memo:
 - a. University's purchase order form with details of items required signed by the PI.
 - b. The purchase order should contain the grant code provided by TRC.
 - c. One quotation for the requested items.
 - d. Copy of **approved budget** from RIMS/Grant Agreement highlighting the category and the item requested.
2. The above request should be forwarded to the Department of Research (DR) for further processing.
3. The DR after reviewing the request shall forward it to the Department of Finance or CNC depending on the item(s) requested. Note that:
 - a. As per TRC's policy, if the specifications of the requested item(s) match with the equipment already available in DU managed TRC Inventory, it shall be utilized first before purchasing any new item(s).
 - b. In case the requested item(s) is available in the equipment inventory, the item(s) shall be released by the CNC as per request forwarded by the DR with required specifications. Else, the purchase request will be forwarded to the Department of Finance for further processing.
4. The PI can request for petty cash not exceeding 50 R.O/order by writing a memo. Duly signed receipts shall be submitted for all purchases.
5. Quotation is not required for purchasing any stationary item(s).
6. Original receipts should be submitted to the Department of Finance. The research team shall keep a copy of all receipts and the purchase requests.
7. The PI shall ensure that all receipts are uploaded via RIMS while submitting the progress and final reports.

For Graduate Research Grant (GRG) or Undergraduate Research Grant (URG):

1. The team leader of the project should write a memo detailing the item(s) required. He/She should also specify the budget category and the total amount required for purchasing the item(s). Following documents should be attached with the memo:
 - a. University's purchase order form with details of items required signed by the team leader and the faculty mentor.
 - b. The purchase order should contain the grant code provided by TRC.
 - c. One quotation for the requested items.
 - d. Copy of **approved budget** from RIMS/Grant Agreement highlighting the category and the item requested.
2. The above request should be forwarded to the Department of Research (DR) for further processing.
3. The DR after reviewing the request shall forward it to the Department of Finance or CNC depending on the item(s) requested. Note that:
 - c. As per TRC's policy, if the specifications of the requested item(s) match with the equipment already available in DU managed TRC Inventory, it shall be utilized first before purchasing any new item(s).
 - d. In case the requested item(s) is available in the equipment inventory, the item(s) shall be released by the CNC as per request forwarded by the DR with required specifications. Else, the purchase request will be forwarded to the Department of Finance for further processing.
4. The team leader can request for petty cash not exceeding 50 R.O/order by writing a memo. Duly signed receipts shall be submitted for all purchases.
5. Quotation is not required for purchasing any stationary item(s).
6. Original receipts should be submitted to the Department of Finance. The research team shall keep a copy of all receipts and the purchase requests.
7. The team leader shall ensure that all receipts are uploaded via RIMS while submitting the progress and final reports.

2. Guidelines for Hiring Research Assistants (RAs)/Technicians

For hiring RAs or technicians for your TRC funded BFP project, priority should be given to DU graduates or Undergraduate students (preferably Omani) as per requirements of the project. The research team should ensure that the hiring is done as specified in the approved BFP project uploaded on RIMS. Following procedure should be followed:

1. Prepare an Advertisement as per requirements specified in the TRC approved project proposal uploaded on RIMS. The PI should mention his/her University's email ID in the advertisement for receiving CVs.

2. Send the Advertisement to the Department of Research through College Dean. The Department after review and approval will forward to the Department of Human Resource to publish on DU website.
3. After receiving CVs the PI should arrange interview for the applicants after approval of the College Dean.
4. The panel should include members of the research team (PI, Co-PI, Co-I), the Dean and/or Assist Dean (as panel chair).
5. The memo detailing the selection of most favourable candidate along with the contract (appendix-A) and the details of the other three shortlisted candidates shall be sent to the Department of Research. The Department will forward the request for Vice chancellors' approval.
6. Note that the contract can be moulded as per project requirements. The PI should take approval of the Department of Research for any changes made due to legal implications.
7. The contract should be signed by the candidate only after approval by the Vice Chancellor.
8. For releasing the salary, the memo (Appendix-B) shall be written by the PI to the DR specifying the amount as per no. of working hours and the bank details of RA/technician.
9. The DR after reviewing the request shall forward it to the Department of Finance for further processing.

3. Guidelines for Submitting Reports to the Department of Research

The research team shall submit quarterly reports, a progress report and a final report to the Department of Research as per schedule in Table 1 as per the approved Call. A copy of all reports shall also be sent to the respective College Dean/Assist. Dean. The reports should include following:

1. Details of progress made in achieving the objectives and plans specified in the approved research proposal.
2. List of actual outcomes.
3. Results obtained.
4. Problems or difficulties encountered.
5. Expenditures including financial expenditure reporting, detailing outlays by budget category and describing any significant pre-authorized deviations from anticipated expenditures.
6. Any departures from the original objectives of the approved proposal and proposed changes for the next reporting period.
7. A list of all staff involved/hired for the project, details of work done by each research team member and institutional affiliations.
8. Publications, as attachments, if any.

Submission Schedule	
For Call 2018	
Date	Details
Year 1	
31 December 2019	First Quarterly Report
31 March 2020	Second Quarterly Report
30 June 2020	Third Quarterly Report
31 July 2020	Progress Report (to be submitted to DR & uploaded on RIMS)
Year 2	
31 December 2020	First Quarterly Report
31 March 2021	Second Quarterly Report
30 June 2021	Third Quarterly Report
31 July 2021	Final Report (to be submitted to DR & uploaded on RIMS)
For Call 2019	
Date	Details
Year 1	
31 March 2020	First Quarterly Report
30 June 2020	Second Quarterly Report
31 September 2020	Third Quarterly Report
31 December 2020	Progress Report (to be submitted to DR & uploaded on RIMS)
Year 2	
31 March 2021	First Quarterly Report
30 June 2021	Second Quarterly Report
31 September 2021	Third Quarterly Report
31 December 2021	Final Report (to be submitted to DR & uploaded on RIMS)

4. Guidelines for Submitting Reports to TRC

The Principal Investigators (PIs) must communicate and send the Progress and Final report through RIMS to TRC. The reports are first submitted to the Research Focal Point (RFP) who after reviewing will forward to The Research Council (TRC).

4.1 Progress Reports

Progress reports are submitted at the end of first year from commencement date. It should be reviewed by RFP and submitted to TRC to be reviewed by the TRC Sector head. The reports should be submitted as per following guidelines:

1. Starting from the project commencement date, a progress report is to be submitted at the end of first year if the project period is more than one year. For the projects with a duration of one year only, PI should submit a final report at the end of the project through RIMS
2. Progress reports must be prepared using the published progress report format issued by TRC, as specified in the RIMS.

3. This report should highlight:
 9. Progress made in achieving the objectives and plans specified in the approved research proposal.
 10. List of actual outcomes
 11. Results obtained.
 12. Problems or difficulties encountered.
 13. Expenditures including financial expenditure reporting, detailing outlays by budget category and describing any significant pre-authorized deviations from anticipated expenditures.
 14. Any departures from the original objectives of the approved proposal and proposed changes for the next reporting period.
 15. A list of all staff involved in the project, with their categories and institutional affiliations.
 16. Publications, as attachments, if any.
4. PIs may enter contributions from other parties involved in the project.
5. Information on these reports is used to determine whether the project has achieved satisfactory outcomes for this reporting period and for post-grant reporting.
6. The reports are evaluated by Institutional Internal Evaluation Committee. PIs are notified through RFP in RIMS for the acceptance of the report.
7. RFP must submit a comprehensive annual technical report via RIMS to TRC highlighting the level of achievements against the agreed upon Output Performance Indicators and purchased equipment. The report should also include justifications on the lack of achievements, where applicable.
8. Delays in submitting the reports will result in a reduction in the level of funding for the next cycle.
9. PIs must update their financial expenditures on a regular basis. Furthermore, TRC may conduct periodic audits to ensure its resources are used as per the "Grant Agreement". In conjunction with progress reporting requirements.
(BFP Guidelines, 2018)

4.2 Final Reports

The final scientific report must be sent along with the final statement of expenditure to IRFP. The report contents include two sections. The first is in the form of a thesis and provides technical details undertaken in the research. This shall be made available to the public for future use. In case the PI/team leader wishes to withhold some information from public access, he/she needs to inform IRFP in writing highlighting the reasons behind such request. The second section contains the followings:

1. Progress made in achieving the objectives and plans specified in the approved research proposal.
2. Project actual outcomes and impact.

3. Project Contribution to Capacity Building
 - a. Development of human capital.
 - b. Development of research infrastructures, including equipment.
4. Project outreach activities.
5. Problems or difficulties encountered.
6. Expenditures including financial expenditure reporting, detailing outlays by budget category.
7. Any deviations from the original objectives of the approved proposal.
(BFP Guidelines, 2018)

5. Guidelines for Project Management by TRC

5.1 Budget Adjustments

TRC provides flexibility for PI/team leader to transfer and allocate funds across expenditure categories within the research project without exceeding the agreed caps.

1. PI/team leader may undertake budget movement across expenditure categories (except for local travel, administration costs, disseminations) within the same year or within the project period.
2. Movement of funds between projects per program per call is allowed without exceeding the cap of the project (e.g. RG cap is OMR 20,000 per project).
(BFP Guidelines, 2018)

5.2 Replacing Project Team Members or Research Institution

Acknowledging the arising of unforeseen circumstances such as retirement, resignation or death, TRC allows for replacing the research team and applies the following guidelines in this respect:

1. Replacement of team members is under responsibility of University and must meet the eligibility criteria for the position
2. PI and Co-PI must be from the same institution for RG projects.
3. Replacement of the current PI/team leader or any other research team members must be done via RIMS through the RFP, accompanied by the curriculum vitae (CV) of the proposed member.
4. In case of the PI's departure or inability, it is the University's responsibility to make sure that the Co-PI/other team member leads the project. In the case where both the PI and the Co-PI depart or unable to lead the project, it is the sole responsibility of the University to find a replacement.
5. Changing research institution is not allowed.
(BFP Guidelines, 2018)

5.3 Changing the Project Plan

The PI/team leader is expected to carry out the project as described in the research “Grant Agreement”. However, it is possible to adjust the scientific strategy and allocate or re-allocate expenditure (e.g. regarding staff, equipment, and consumables), provided the research performed is still in line with the original scientific objectives. In case of significant changes, the Principal Investigator shall notify TRC (BFP Guidelines, 2018).

5.4 Extension

The University may extend the project duration and notify TRC through RIMS. However, the extensions shall not entail the utilization of unused funds of the extended project. These funds must be returned to TRC at the end of the funding cycle. In addition, the extensions will negatively impact the level of the funds allocated to the RI in next calls (BFP Guidelines, 2018).

5.5 Termination and Suspension

University may terminate any project and notify TRC through RIMS. If the project is terminated; the University shall take all necessary steps and shall keep all necessary documents for future TRC auditing. In case of termination, the unused budget may be used for another project under the same program or returned back to TRC at the end of funding cycle. TRC may immediately terminate this Agreement by written Notice to the University if:

1. The University is in breach of any of its obligations arising from this Agreement and fails to remedy such breach (if remediable) within thirty (30) days of receipt of written notice from TRC requiring such remedy; or
2. The University becomes insolvent or bankrupt, or is in the process of a winding up or other process of dissolution, except a voluntary dissolution for the purpose of reorganization; or
3. Upon termination, TRC shall have no further liability to the University arising from this agreement and, in particular, shall have no liability to make any further payment to the University for any work performed by the University after the date of termination stated in the termination notice (BFP Guidelines, 2018).

5.6 Ethics, Confidentiality and Disclosure

Throughout the entire process from the proposal stage to project closure, all necessary steps must be taken so that policies pertaining to ethics, intellectual property, security and copyright are respected (BFP Guidelines, 2018).

For more details, please refer to BFP guidelines.

6. References

Block Funding Program Guidelines. (2018). BFP Guidelines issued by The Research Council, Muscat, November, 2018

APPENDIX-A



Contract of Employment

as

Research Assistant/Technician

To

Please enter Name

For

Please enter Project title

(The Research Council Funded Project)

Date

[Click here to enter a date.](#)

1. Research Project:

2. Principal Investigator:

3. Department/ Laboratory:

4. Grant Agreement No.:

5. Duration and remuneration

- a. You shall be employed as a **Research Assistant (RA) in the Department of** .
- b. Your employment with Dhofar University shall be as Research Assistant/technician will only be as per requirements of aforementioned TRC funded project.
- c. Your appointment shall be for the period of starting from **1/1/2019** till **3/16/2019**
- d. RA remunerations for this period will be:
 - RO /hour
- e. Dhofar University (DU) will entitle you to health insurance (for Non-Omanis only on DU visa).
- f. You will not be entitled to any additional benefit or allowance of any kind (end of service indemnity, transportation allowance, etc.) other than your remuneration (specified in point d and e) and the health insurance for the above noted period (point c).
- g. It is to be noted that the termination of this contract of employment may be initiated by either parties giving one-month notice, except in the case of termination for cause.
- h. This letter of appointment annuls and replaces any previous agreement between you and Dhofar University, be it written or verbal.

6. Working hours

In this appointment, the working hours are the regular working hours for all non-academic personal of Dhofar University. However, as the employment relationship is one of engaging you for the performance of specific services, there will be a great deal of flexibility exercised in the time and place of the performance of these services.

7. Probation

The appointment is subject to a probationary period of three (3) months. During the probationary period, you shall subject to conditions for probation. At the conclusion of the probationary period, the principal investigator will recommend the extension or the termination of the contract.

8. Duties

- You are expected to abide by the laws of the Sultanate of Oman and by the rules and regulations of TRC and DU.
- The University will own all intellectual property, including technical information, know-how, copyrights, models, specifications, prototypes, inventions and software created during or after the project (related to the project only). The university may assign its

interest in Intellectual Property according to the University's applicable policies and procedures.

- You are not permitted to disclose confidential information and results obtained in the course of the project to other parties.

9. Undertaking by Employee:

I have read the terms and conditions of this appointment and I agree to abide by all the rules and regulations as mentioned above in the contract.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

To be signed by:

Principal Investigator

Name:

Department:

College:

Dhofar University,

P.O.Box: 2609, Code 211,

Salalah,

Sultanate of Oman.

Vice Chancellor

Dr. Hassan Kashoob

Dhofar University,

P.O.Box: 2609, Code 211,

Salalah,

Sultanate of Oman.

Sultanate of Oman.

APPENDIX-B

Memo for Salary of RA/Technician

To: Click here to enter text.

From: Click here to enter text.

Cc: From: Click here to enter text.

Date: Click here to enter a date.

TRC Agreement No. Click here to enter text.

Subject: Salary Payment of TRC Researcher

This is to state that Click here to enter Name has fulfilled all his/her assigned responsibilities for the month of Click here to enter Month. He/She has worked for Click here to enter no. of working hrs working hours as specified in the contract. Kindly process his/her salary to account number Click here to enter account number as per TRC contract.

Regards,

Principal Investigator