

# 2025-2027 GUIDELINES FOR APPROVED PROJECTS

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# 1. Preamble

Research is an integral part of any academician's career growth and one has to make continuous endeavour to 'create knowledge' i.e. to do research. The faculty is expected to make such endeavours to keep a balance between teaching and the research.

Dhofar University was established in 2004 and since then it is serving the community through exemplary education, research and community outreach. DU recognizes research as one of the main pillars of academic excellence as explicitly mentioned in its mission statement. All efforts are being made to encourage research among its faculty members and to create a conducive environment for credible research. In its strategic plan DU has envisaged to create a hub of research activity beneficial to the region. To achieve this, DU established a Department of Research (DR) that works under direct supervision of the Deputy Vice Chancellor. It strives to create a favourable research environment within DU by encouraging, facilitating and promoting all research activities across the University. The DR works on three major principles i.e. engagement, innovation and impact. Dhofar University Research Center focuses on niche areas of Research of regional importance, dealt with in different Research units and develop strategically important local and national topics. For more details, please refer to [www.du.edu.om/research](http://www.du.edu.om/research).

## 2. Research and Innovation Authority (RIA)

The Research and Innovation Authority (RIA) is the governmental body in the Sultanate of Oman responsible for supervising high education institutes, the development of high education policies, research & innovation in the Sultanate. It's vision is to create an innovation ecology that is responsive to local needs and international trends, fosters social harmony, and leads to creativity and excellence. The RIA serves as a focal point and hub dedicated to promoting and supporting research, scientific enquiry, and innovation in the Sultanate of Oman. RIA provides research funds for faculty, staff and students through various research grants. It manages funded projects externally only. The Department of Research at DU through RIA Research Focal Point manages the grant internally and ensures that the faculty, staff and students who receive research funds abide by RIA's policies, rules and regulations for that particular research grant. (Source: RIA Website: <https://orp.moheri.gov.om/>)

### 2.1 Research Programs offered by RIA

Following are the research programs set by RIA in light of Oman Vision 2040, the national plans and strategies of various sectors in the country, and an understanding of the successful experiences witnessed across the globe:

- 1) Block Funding Program (BFP): Includes Research Grant (RG), Graduate Research Grant (GRG) and Undergraduate Research Grant (URG)
- 2) Strategic Research Grant Program (SRG)
- 3) The Publication Support Program

- 4) The Institute of Advanced Technology Integration (IATI)
- 5) Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Center (Mawarid)
- 6) Research Collaboration with Sultan Qaboos Scientific Chairs
- 7) Capacity Building Programs:
  - i. The National Research Award
  - ii. The Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings
  - iii. London International Youth Science Forum (LIYSF)
  - iv. Upgrade Program
  - v. The Falling Walls Lab Competition

### 2.1.1 Block Funding Program

As per its mission to promote quality research in Oman, RIA recently initiated “Block Funding Program”, wherein at the beginning of an academic year, a fund will be allocated for each Higher Education Institution (HEI) in the Sultanate depending on their research performance during the previous year. BFP Includes Research Grant (RG), Graduate Research Grant (GRG) and Undergraduate Grant (UG).

The RG is for academic staff with a PhD degree, having a maximum cap of 20,000 R.O. For GRG Post graduate students, academic and non-academic staff with post graduate degree or Bachelor’s degree with three years of experience, can apply for a maximum of 3,000 R.O. UG is for undergraduate students who have completed at least 3 semesters of their bachelor’s degree with a maximum cap of 1500 OMR.

The applications for RG, GRG or UG can be submitted in one of the following research areas:

- Energy and Industry
- Information and Communications Technologies
- Environmental and Biological Resources
- Health and Social Services
- Education and Human Resources
- Culture, Basic and Social Sciences

The call for the applications begins at the start of each academic year. After going through a strict evaluation process as set by RIA, the applications are submitted from each institution for RIA’s review by the 30<sup>th</sup> May each year. The interested faculty members should follow the call deadlines as announced by the Department of Research each year.

### 2.1.2 Strategic Research Grant Program

The Strategic Research Projects Program is a national program directed at the government sector, based on the strategic directions of government institutions, by focusing on national priorities in various scientific, social, economic and cultural fields, in line with Oman Vision 2040.

#### **Objectives:**

- Finding scientific and applied solutions to the priorities and challenges facing government institutions through proposals for competitive research projects.

- Contributing to achieving the goals of sustainable development.
- Promoting research excellence and building national capabilities in research and innovation fields.
- Enhancing constructive cooperation between the parties to the research system (governmental, academic and private sectors) in order to transfer knowledge.
- Contributing to building a strong knowledge-based economy, which leads to strengthening and diversifying sources of income, and creating job opportunities.

#### **General conditions of the program:**

- The competent authority should have a strong desire to manage strategic research projects and adopt their outputs.
- The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation undertakes the contribution of a maximum of 50% of the cost of one project, and in an amount not exceeding OMR 50,000 for each research project approved.
- The main partner (the concerned ministry) and the research entities that implement the research projects are responsible for covering the remaining cost of the project and providing the necessary support.
- A management committee of the program is formed, and it includes at least five members, who are competent in scientific, practical and professional fields.
- An institutional research contact point is appointed to organize and follow up the work implementation with the Ministry.
- Financial and technical contact points are assigned.

#### **Entities implementing the studies and research:**

- Governmental institutions
- Universities, colleges and research centers (governmental and private)
- International research institutions participating as research associates or consultants only) provided that there is cooperation with a local entity within the Sultanate.

### **2.1.3 The Publication Support Program**

The Publication Support Program is a program concerned with supporting the publication of research papers in the best classified journals, most prestigious peer-reviewed periodicals and highest-rated specialized databases. The program aims to:

- Increasing the number of outstanding research in classified and peer-reviewed journals.
- Supporting local and global cooperation and partnerships between research institutions.
- Improving the quality of research and its outputs.
- Advancing the Sultanate of Oman's position in the Global Innovation Index.
- Raising the global ranking of universities in the Sultanate.
- Contributing to building a knowledge-based economy.

The program provides a maximum of OMR 700 for the publishing fees per research paper.

#### 2.1.4 The Institute of Advanced Technology Integration - EJAAD

The Institute of Advanced Technology Integration (IATI), represented by EJAAD, is based on bridging the gap between the industrial and academic sectors, with the aim of forming an effective research and development partnership and creating a stimulating research environment for research experts and academics, in order to build an Omani knowledge-based economy. EJAAD focuses on applied research and commercializing research outputs (at technology readiness levels from 4-9) by conducting applied research in priority sectors for economic development in the Sultanate and developing research into new technologies and innovative products that lead to meeting market needs and address current and future challenges. EJAAD continues to grow and prosper with the support of the participating members of the academic and industrial institutions and the members of the steering and administrative committee. EJAAD aims to help in raising the Sultanate of Oman's ranking in the Global Innovation Index and the Global Competitiveness Index, and develop research into new technologies and innovative product. EJAAD also works as an intermediary between the industry and business sector on one hand, and the academic sector on the other hand. (For more information please visit Ejaad website at <https://orp.moheri.gov.om/ejaad/>)

#### 2.1.5 Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Center

Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Center (Mawarid) was established in 2012 to promote sustainable use and awareness of the importance of the genetic diversity inherent in animals, plants and microorganisms in Oman as a natural and heritage resource through education, research and innovation. Mawarid seeks to be a cooperative regional center and reference for all activities of animal and plant genetic resources. The center carries out many activities in the field of preserving genetic resources, whether through studying and inventorying Omani genetic resources, restoring and developing Omani seeds, establishing gene banks, conducting research studies, and establishing databases related to genetic resources. The center also works to spread awareness through many activities, such as the Science Café, the Treasures of Oman exhibition, and through various media. Innovation category: Includes innovations and Young innovators

#### 2.1.6 Research Collaboration Program with Sultan Qaboos Scientific Chairs

The Research Collaboration Program with Sultan Qaboos Scientific Chairs was launched by the Ministry to enhance the value and impact of these chairs in supporting research teams and innovators. The program offers dedicated research grants for project implementation through joint funding between the Ministry and the researchers' home institutions, with additional financial or in-kind contributions from the Sultan Qaboos Scientific Chairs.

##### **Program Objectives:**

- Promote Omani culture and highlight its civilizational role in advancing human knowledge.

- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration with cultural and scientific institutions worldwide.
- Foster scientific and cultural exchange, enhancing cooperation among international institutions.
- Consolidate shared principles and values, while promoting understanding, coexistence, and global peace.
- Support diverse studies and research across multiple disciplines.

#### **Program Fields:**

- International relations, Middle Eastern studies, and shared values.
- Arabic and Islamic studies.
- Mathematics
- Information Technology, Communication and AI.
- Water and desert aquaculture.

#### **Eligibility Criteria:**

- The Principal Investigator (PI) must be affiliated with the applying institution at the time of submission and remain so until the contract is signed.
- The PI must hold a PhD (or equivalent) and have expertise relevant to the collaborating scientific chair.
- The PI must not be a member of the research committee or serve as an institutional liaison.
- The PI may only apply for another grant under this program after successfully completing any previously funded project.

### **2.1.7 Capacity Building Programs - The National Research Award**

The Annual Research Forum is an annual gathering for scientists, researchers, academics, decision makers, officials and others. The forum provides an opportunity for researchers and those interested in the same disciplines to see the latest developments and exchange knowledge and experiences. The Annual Research Forum includes simultaneous scientific sessions and an accompanying exhibition of scientific posters of the winning research projects of the National Research Award funded by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. The winners of the National Research Award are announced during the forum. The National Research Award aims to encourage researchers to conduct research of high quality and national importance, and to qualify national cadres capable of competing in the research field. The National Research Award is divided into two categories:

- Category I: Best published research led by a PhD holder or equivalent (Senior Specialist or higher in the medical field)
- Category II: Best published research led by a young researcher (a non-PhD holder)

The National Research Award has six research fields, including:

- Education and Human Resources

- Information and Communication Technologies
- Health and Social Services
- Cultural, Social, and Basic Sciences
- Energy and Industry
- Environmental and Biological Resources

#### 2.1.8 Capacity Building Programs - The Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings

The Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings is an international forum held annually in Germany in which young researchers from various countries of the world participate. The theme of the Lindau Meetings generally focus on one of the following fields: medicine and physiology, chemistry or physics. The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation annually provides opportunities for emerging researchers to participate in the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings, which are held in the first half of each year in Lindau, Germany. The Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings aims to build the capabilities of Omani researchers, transfer knowledge and exchange experiences, and refine the scientific and research skills of the Omani youth. It also provides the Omani youth the opportunity to get acquainted with Nobel Laureates closely and to know the latest scientific developments, as well as creating partnerships and links with scientists from different countries of the world. (For more information, please visit the LIYSF Website at <https://www.lindau-nobel.org/>)

#### 2.1.9 Capacity Building Programs - London International Youth Science Forum

The London International Youth Science Forum includes the participation of a large group of students in scientific disciplines from various countries of the world annually at Imperial College in London. This forum includes scientific lectures from leading scientists around the world, in addition to organizing visits to scientific areas, research institutions and industrial areas, and visits to prestigious research institutions in London, such as the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge. (For more information, please visit the LIYSF Website at <https://www.liysf.org.uk/>)

#### 2.1.10 Capacity Building Programs - Upgrade Program

Upgrade Program is considered as one of the most important capacity-building programs directed to students in higher education institutions. The program seeks to transform graduation projects of undergraduate students in the final year into emerging companies based on innovation, capable of growing at a sustainable pace through a series of financial, advisory, and technical support from the program partners. (For more details on RIA Research Programs please visit RIA Website: <https://orp.moheri.gov.om/>)

#### 2.1.11 Capacity Building Programs - The Falling Walls Lab Competition

The Falling Walls Lab Competition in the Sultanate of Oman is a local version of the international Falling Walls Lab competition in which students, entrepreneurs, early-career researchers and academics of all disciplines present their ideas in front of a jury to solve problems and eliminate barriers. The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation

organizes this competition in cooperation with the German non-profit Falling Walls Foundation. The winners of this competition qualify to participate in the international version of the competition, which is held in Berlin, Germany every year. For more details regarding the program visit <https://falling-walls.com/science-summit>

### 3. Dhofar University Research Grant

Dhofar University Research Grant (DURG) is intended to support the academic research work of the DU faculty that is expected to yield innovative results or findings consistent with the university research and educational objectives. DURG are awarded to support collaborative/group research projects. The project budget should not exceed 1500 R.O. The number of funded projects will depend on the total allocated budget for DURG each year, however, it is expected that each College and CPS succeeds in getting one grant each. (For more details, please refer to DU R&D Guidelines for AY 2025-27).

#### 3.1 Guidelines for Internally Funded Projects

This document provides detailed guidelines for the research projects approved for funding by Research and Innovation Authority, Dhofar University or any external funding body.

##### 3.1.1 Guidelines for Purchasing any Item

For purchasing any item as mentioned in the approved budget specified in the Grant Agreement for externally funded project or DU funded Research Grant project, following procedure shall be followed:

1. The Principal Investigator (PI) shall submit the purchase request through Research Management System. He/She should also specify the budget category and the total amount required for purchasing the item(s) along with Memo/justification. Three Quotations for the requested items (for budget reference purpose only) Should be attached along with the request.
2. All purchases must be done through the Department of Procurement. The PI has no right to interfere in the purchasing process and only has the right to determine the specifications of the device.
3. It is also not permitted to purchase devices that have not been approved in the research proposal.
4. The purchase request should be forwarded to the Department of Research (DR) for further processing.
5. The DR after approval shall forward it to the Department of Finance that after approving will forward to the Department of Procurement. Note that, as per University's policy, if the specifications of the requested item(s) match with the equipment already available in DU managed equipment Inventory, it shall be utilized first before purchasing any new item(s).
6. For items to be purchased online or supplies to be purchased from local market for e.g. stationary, books, softwares, subscriptions, journals, licenses etc PI should submit the

purchase request as per clause 4.1(1). After approval from DR and the Department of Finance, the PI can purchase the required item in coordination with the Department of Purchase only.

7. Buying tools and equipment that are regarded as a component of an academic institution's infrastructure such as labs, PCs, printers, office supplies, Internet access, and the like is prohibited. Moreover, purchasing tablets and smartphones is prohibited.
8. For purchasing the tickets for local travel, please follow the steps as of clause 4.1(5). The tickets should be purchased from University trusted ticketing agency or direct from the airline.
9. The budget approved for administrative category shall be used for direct expenses only for e.g. for petrol to attend meetings outside the city etc and cannot be used for non-eligible expenses such as food, electricity/water bills/travel expenses of team members outside Oman etc.
10. All items purchased shall be registered with University store which will label the material/equipment with DU Logo. The laboratory consumables shall be registered in laboratory inventory maintained by each College once received by the PI from the University Store. The PI shall maintain the log of equipment usage (Appendix-D).
11. Original receipts/invoice must be submitted to the Department of Finance within two weeks of purchasing the item.
12. The PI shall ensure that all receipts are uploaded on RMS while submitting the progress, final and audit reports.
13. After the project completion, the research team shall submit a complete inventory report detailing the item specifications as in Appendix-E. The DURG Focal Point in the Department of Research will submit the final list after approval to the University Store and will subsequently notify the PI to submit all items to the store.
14. The store will request CNC to inspect the electronic equipments and will keep them in their inventory. The laboratory items shall be handed over to Colleges after approval of College Dean.
15. All items purchased under DURG can only be used for other research projects once project is completed. The DR shall update the inventory upon project completion along with the University store and circulate it to the Colleges.
16. The item usage shall be maintained in a log book along with quantity by the University Store.
17. All required items must be purchased at least two (2) weeks before the close of the funding year. Purchase requests submitted within the final two weeks of the funding year will not be accepted.

## 3.2 Guidelines for Hiring Research Assistants (RAs) and Processing Salary

For hiring RAs or technicians for your DURG project, priority should be given to DU Omani graduate or Undergraduate students as per requirements of the project. The research team

should ensure that the hiring is done as specified in the approved DURG project approved in RMS. Following procedure should be followed:

1. Prepare an Advertisement as per requirements specified in the approved project proposal uploaded on RMS.
2. Submit the “Request for Hiring” on RMS along with necessary details and documents mentioned in the portal.
3. The DURG Focal point after review and approval will forward the request through RMS to the Department of Human Resource to publish on DU website who will forward them to the Web Master.
4. After receiving CVs from the HR with the HR application number, the PI should arrange interview for the applicants after approval of the College Dean.
5. The hiring committee may consist of following members:
  - Dean or Assistant Dean
  - College Research Committee Chair
  - Principal Investigator
  - Co-Principal Investigator
  - DURG Focal Point or DR representative
6. In case of conflict of interest, any research team member assigned by the College Dean can replace the committee member.
7. The memo detailing the selection of most favourable candidate along with the contract (appendix-A) and the CVs of the all applicants shall be sent to the DURG Focal point through RMS.
8. The two original copies of contract should be signed by the candidate, PI and legal advisor prior to the approval by the Vice Chancellor.
9. The contract shall be sent back to DURG Focal point by the VC office who will share a copy with the Department of HR, Finance and the PI.
10. For releasing the salary, the memo (Appendix-B) shall be submitted by the PI to the DURG focal point specifying the amount as per no. of working hours’/work package details and the bank details of RA/technician in the RMS.
11. The PI should attach the attendance sheet (Appendix-C) along with the salary memo every month or as per the approved work package in the contract.
12. The DURG Focal point after approval shall forward it to the Department of Finance for further processing.

### 3.3 Guidelines for Submitting Reports to the Department of Research

The research team shall submit a final report (at end of the project cycle) along with Turnitin report to the Department of Research as per the approved Call via RMS. The reports should follow the approved template provided by the Department. The report should be accompanied by the Audit report and equipment inventory.

### 3.3.1 Final Reports

The final scientific report must be submitted along with the final statement of expenditure to the Department of Research through RMS. The report contents should 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 wishes to withhold some information from public access, he/she needs to inform to DR 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.

The final reports shall be forwarded to URC for evaluation. The successful DURG recipient will also have to deliver a presentation (at college level) and participate in DU Annual Research Day (as an oral or poster presenter).

### 3.3.3 Audit Reports

The audit report along with supporting documents (invoices, Purchase Vouchers(PVs), Hiring contracts & memos or any other documents requested by internal auditor) must be submitted along with the progress and final report to the DR through RMS. For approval by the Internal Audit office.

## 3.4 Guidelines for Project Management

### 3.4.1 Budget Adjustments

The DR provides flexibility for PI to move funds twice only across expenditure categories. Movement between categories is allowed within one year or between years without exceeding the caps for each category and the total approved budget.

1. PI may undertake budget movement across expenditure categories within the project period.
2. PI must submit a detailed justification for the movement to DR. The updated budget will only be considered subject to DR's approval.

### 3.4.2 Replacing Project Team Members

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

1. Replacement of team members is under responsibility of College Dean and must meet the eligibility criteria for the position.
2. In case of the PI's departure/death or inability, it is the DR's responsibility to make sure that the Co-PI leads the project. In the case where both the PI and the Co-PI depart or unable to lead the project, it is the responsibility of the DR to find a replacement in coordination with College Dean.

### 3.4.3 Changing the Project Plan

The PI is expected to carry out the project as described in the research proposal. 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 DR.

### 3.4.4 Extension

Grants will not be extended from one fiscal year to the next. Failure to use grants in a timely manner may jeopardize eligibility for new DURG grants. An applicant could be given a semester extension by the Department of Research (upon URC's recommendation) in a special case (to complete the outcomes of the project).

### 3.4.5 Termination and Suspension

The DR may terminate any project and notify the College Dean. If the project is terminated; the DR shall take all necessary steps and shall keep all necessary documents for future auditing.

### 3.4.6 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 research ethics and code of conduct, intellectual property, AI, security and copyright are respected. The DR shall provide a

## 4. Guidelines for Externally Funded Projects

### 4.1 Guidelines for Purchasing any Item

For purchasing any item as mentioned in the approved budget specified in the Grant Agreement for externally funded project or DU funded Research Grant project, following procedure shall be followed:

**For Research Grant (RG):**

1. The Principal Investigator (PI) shall submit the purchase request through Research Management System. He/She should also specify the budget category and the total amount required for purchasing the item(s) along with Memo/justification. Only one quotation for the requested items (for budget reference purpose only) Should be attached along with the request.
2. Based on the guidelines, the research team will not be allowed to purchase devices, equipment, and all other requirements for the research project approved in the research proposal.
3. All purchases must be done through the Department of Procurement.
4. The PI has no right to interfere in the purchasing process. The PI only has the right to determine the specifications of the device as mentioned in the approved project.
5. It is also not permitted to purchase devices that have not been approved in the research proposal.
6. All requests shall be submitted through RMS to the Research Focal Point (RFP) for further processing.
7. The RFP after approval shall forward it to the Department of Finance or University Store depending on the item(s) requested. Note that:
  - a. As per RIA's policy, if the specifications of the requested item(s) match with the equipment already available in DU managed equipment 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 University Store as per request forwarded by the RFP with required specifications. Else, the purchase request will be forwarded to the Department of Finance for further processing.
8. Buying tools and equipment that are regarded as a component of an academic institution's infrastructure such as labs, PCs, printers, office supplies, Internet access, and the like is prohibited. Moreover, purchasing tablets and smartphones is prohibited.
9. For purchasing the tickets for local travel, please follow the steps as of clause 4.1(5). The tickets should be purchased from University trusted ticketing agency or direct from the airline.
10. For call 2025 Only, the international travel will be allowed for RIA funded projects for presenting papers in prestigious conferences. The application should fulfill the conditions detailed in DU R&D guidelines for Traditional/Online Conference Grant. For per diem, the grant will be given as per DU R&D guidelines for Traditional/Online Conference Grant.
11. Only one team member (having DU affiliation) will be allowed to apply for funds for international travel/conference for RIA funded projects.
12. For call 2026 onwards, the travel for local/International conferences will not be allowed as per BFP guidelines.
13. All items purchased shall be registered with University store which will label the material/equipment with DU & RIA Logo. The laboratory consumables shall be registered

in laboratory inventory maintained by each College once received by the PI from the University Store. The PI shall maintain the log of equipment usage (Appendix-D).

14. Original receipts/invoice must be submitted to the Department of Finance within two weeks of purchasing the item. The research team should keep a copy of all receipts and the purchase requests.
15. The PI shall ensure that all receipts are uploaded via RIMS while submitting the progress, final and audit reports.
16. After the project completion, the research team shall submit a complete inventory report detailing the item specifications as in Appendix-E to RFP. The RFP will submit the final list after approval to the University Store and will subsequently notify the PI to submit all items to the store.
17. The store will request CNC to inspect the electronic equipments and will keep them in their inventory. The laboratory items shall be handed over to Colleges after approval of College Dean.
18. All items purchased under RG can only be used for other research projects once project is completed with approval of RFP. The DR shall update the inventory upon project completion along with the University store and circulate it to the Colleges.
19. The item usage shall be maintained in a log book along with quantity by the University Store.
20. All required items must be purchased at least two (2) months before the close of the funding year. Purchase requests submitted within the final two months of the funding year will not be accepted.

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

21. The team leader shall submit the purchase request through Research Management System. He/She should also specify the budget category and the total amount required for purchasing the item(s) along with Memo/justification. Only one quotation for the requested items (for budget reference purpose only) Should be attached along with the request.
22. All requests shall be submitted through RMS to the Research Focal Point (RFP) for further processing.
2. The RFP after approval shall forward it to the Department of Finance or University Store depending on the item(s) requested. Note that:
  - a. As per RIA's policy, if the specifications of the requested item(s) match with the equipment already available in DU managed equipment 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 University Store as per request forwarded by the RFP with required specifications. Else, the purchase request will be forwarded to the Department of Finance for further processing.
  - c. Buying tools and equipment that are regarded as a component of an academic institution's infrastructure—such as labs, PCs, printers, office supplies, Internet access,

and the like—is prohibited. Moreover, purchasing tablets and smartphones is prohibited.

3. All items purchased shall be registered with University store who will label the material/equipment with DU & RIA Logo. The laboratory consumables shall be registered in laboratory inventory maintained by each College once received by the team leader from the University Store. The team leader shall maintain the log of equipment usage (Appendix-D).
4. Original receipts/invoice must be submitted to the Department of Finance within two weeks of purchasing the item. The research team should keep a copy of all receipts and the purchase requests.
5. The team leader shall ensure that all receipts are uploaded via RIMS while submitting the progress, final and audit reports.
6. After the project completion, the research team shall submit a complete inventory report detailing the item specifications as in Appendix-E to RFP. The RFP will submit the final list after approval to the University Store and will subsequently notify the team leader to submit all items to the store.
7. The store will request CNC to inspect the electronic equipments and will keep them in their inventory. The laboratory items shall be handed over to Colleges after approval of College Dean.
8. All items purchased under GRG/URG can only be used for other research projects once project is completed with approval of RFP. The DR shall update the inventory upon project completion along with the University store and circulate it to the Colleges.
9. The item usage shall be maintained in a log book along with quantity by the University Store.
10. All required items must be purchased at least two (2) months before the close of the funding year. Purchase requests submitted within the final two months of the funding year will not be accepted.

## 4.2 Guidelines for Hiring Research Assistants (RAs)/Technicians and Processing Salary

For hiring RAs or technicians for your RIA funded BFP project or DURG project, priority should be given to DU Omani graduate or Undergraduate students 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 or DURG project approved in DU-RMS. Following procedure should be followed:

13. Prepare an Advertisement as per requirements specified in the RIA approved project proposal uploaded on RIMS.
14. Submit the Advertisement to the RFP through RMS.
15. The RFP after review and approval will forward to the Department of Human Resource to publish on DU website.
16. After receiving CVs from the HR with the HR application number, the PI should arrange interview for the applicants after approval of the College Dean.
17. The hiring committee will consist of following members:

- Research Program Management Committee Chair
- College Research Committee Chair
- Principal Investigator
- Co-Principal Investigator
- Research Focal Point

18. In case of conflict of interest, any research team member assigned by the College Dean can replace the committee member
19. The memo detailing the selection of most favourable candidate along with the contract (appendix-A) and the CVs of the all applicants shall be sent to the RFP after College Dean approval.
20. The two original copies of contract should be signed by the candidate, PI, the RFP and legal advisor prior to the approval by the Vice Chancellor.
21. The contract shall be sent back to RFP by the VC office who will share a copy with the Department of HR, Finance and the PI.
22. For releasing the salary, the memo (Appendix-B) shall be written by the PI to the RFP specifying the amount as per no. of working hours'/work package details and the bank details of RA/technician.
23. The PI should submit the attendance sheet (Appendix-C) along with the salary memo every month or as per the approved work package in the contract.
24. The RFP after approval shall forward it to the Department of Finance for further processing.

### 4.3 Guidelines for Submitting Reports to the Department of Research

The research team shall submit quarterly reports (at end of each semester), a progress report (at end of each funding year) and a final report (at end of the project cycle) along with Turnitin report to the Department of Research as per the approved Call. A copy of all reports shall also be sent to the respective College Dean/Assist. Dean. The reports should follow the approved template provided by RIA and circulated by RFP. After approval from DR, the progress and final reports should be uploaded via RIMS by PI/team leader for submission to RIA.

### 4.4 Guidelines for Submitting Reports to RIA

The Principal Investigators (PIs)/team leaders must communicate and send the Progress and Final report through RIMS to RIA/. The reports should be submitted to the RFP via RIMS who after approval by Research Program Management Committee (RPMC) will forward to RIA. **Similar guidelines follow for DU funded projects where reports are submitted to the Department of Research via email.**

#### 4.4.1 Progress Reports

Progress reports are submitted at the end of first year from commencement date. It should be approved by RFP, IIEC and submitted to RIA to be reviewed by the RIA 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 RIA, as specified in the RIMS.
  3. This report should highlight:
    1. 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 in the project, with their categories and institutional affiliations.
    8. 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 RIA 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, RIA may conduct periodic audits to ensure its resources are used as per the “Grant Agreement”. In conjunction with progress reporting requirements.
- (BFP Guidelines, 2024)

#### 4.4.2 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:

8. Progress made in achieving the objectives and plans specified in the approved research proposal.
9. Project actual outcomes and impact.
10. Project Contribution to Capacity Building
  - c. Development of human capital.
  - d. Development of research infrastructures, including equipment.
11. Project outreach activities.
12. Problems or difficulties encountered.
13. Expenditures including financial expenditure reporting, detailing outlays by budget category.
14. Any deviations from the original objectives of the approved proposal.  
(BFP Guidelines, 2024)

#### 4.4.3 Audit Reports

The audit report along with supporting documents (invoices, Purchase Vouchers(PVs), Hiring contracts & memos or any other documents requested by internal auditor) must be submitted along with the progress and final report to RFP. The audit report shall be submitted to RIA by RFP upon approval of Internal Auditor.

## 4.5 Guidelines for Project Management

### 4.5.1 Budget Adjustments

RIA provides flexibility for PI/team leader to move funds twice only across expenditure categories. Movement between categories is allowed within one year or between years without exceed the caps for each category and the total approved budget.

3. 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.
4. PI/team leader must submit a detailed justification for the movement to RFP. The updated budget will only be considered subject to RFP approval.  
(BFP Guidelines, 2024)

### 4.5.2 Replacing Project Team Members or Research Institution

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

3. Replacement of team members is under responsibility of University and must meet the eligibility criteria for the position.

4. PI and Co-PI must be from the same institution for RG projects.
5. 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.
6. In case of the PI's departure/death 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.
7. Changing research institution is not allowed.  
(BFP Guidelines, 2024)

### 4.5.3 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 RFP (BFP Guidelines, 2024).

### 4.5.4 Extension

The University may extend the project duration and notify RIA through RIMS. However, the extensions shall not entail the utilization of unused funds of the extended project. These funds must be returned to RIA 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, 2024).

### 4.5.5 Termination and Suspension

University may terminate any project and notify RIA through RIMS. If the project is terminated; the University shall take all necessary steps and shall keep all necessary documents for future RIA auditing. In case of termination, the unused budget may be used for another project under the same program or returned back to RIA at the end of funding cycle. RIA 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 RIA 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, RIA 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, 2024).

#### 4.5.6 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 research ethics and code of conduct, intellectual property, security and copyright are respected (BFP Guidelines, 2024).

*For more details, please refer to BFP guidelines.*

## 5. References

Block Funding Program Guidelines. (2024). BFP Guidelines issued by Research and Innovation Authority, Muscat, November, 2024

# APPENDIX-A



## RESEARCH ASSISTANCE CONTRACT

This Contract (the "**Contract**") is entered into effective on Date/Day/Year, **Between**:

(1) **Dhofar University**, a private higher education institution established by Ministerial Decree No. 5/2004 of the Omani Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, its address is at Al-Saadah, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman, P.O. Box: 2509, Post Code 211, (Hereinafter referred to as "**the University**");

(2) [insert Name, Nationality, civil or passport number, address ]..... (Hereinafter referred to as "**the Researcher**"); who may together hereafter be referred to as the "**Parties**" or in the singular as a "**Party**".

WHEREAS, the **University** wants to appoint a research assistant temporarily to participate in its research project .....[insert]..... Which is a Research Council Funded Project by grant agreement number:..... ("**the Research Project**"); and

WHEREAS, the **Researcher** accepts to be appointed by the **University** as a research assistant on the **Research Project** as to the terms set out in this Contract.

NOW, THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the mutual covenants contained herein, the **Parties** agree as follows:

- (1) The **Researcher** shall be appointed by this **contract** temporarily as a **Research Assistant** in the Department of ..... to assist the principal investigator of the research ..... , in the **Research Project**(the **Appointment**).
- (2) **The Appointment** shall start on Day/Date/Year and shall be valid until the end of the **Research Project** with a maximum period of [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) months.
- (3) The **University** shall pay to the **Researcher** for the **Appointment** remunerations RO per hour, will be paid at the end of each month, Or as work packages (details attached) on accomplishing certain responsibilities and duties during the **Research Project** specified by the project Principle investigator (Appendix A) as per the decision of the **University**.
- (4) The **Researcher** shall commit to work on the **Research Project** at the **University** campus in the same working hours as its non-academic staff, from 7.30 am to 3 pm, as per the principal investigator's instructions.
- (5) Parties agreed that the **University** will own all intellectual property, including technical information, know-how, copyrights, models, specifications, prototypes, inventions, and software created in the performance of the project and the **University** may assign its interest in Intellectual Property according to the University's applicable policies and procedures.
- (6) The Researcher is not permitted to disclose confidential information and results obtained in the course of the project to another party whereas confidential information shall be regarded as per this **Contract** as to any or all information in whatever form whether disclosed orally or in writing or whether eye readable or machine-readable or by using the discloser facilities or in any other form, including, but not limited to any technical, scientific or business information, patents or any other intellectual property right as well as all applications thereof, trade and business secrets, photographs, documents, lists, data, drawings, designs, formulae, specifications, test results, performance data, and reports — whether patentable or otherwise capable of being protected — as well as commercial, marketing, and financial information.
- (7) **Parties** acknowledge that this **Contract** can't be considered as an employment contract and the **Researcher** will not be entitled to any additional benefit or allowance of any kind (end of service indemnity, transportation allowance, etc.) other than his remuneration (specified in clause 3).
- (8) **Parties** have the full rights to terminate this **Contract** in the will of each individual party before the period referred above in clause (2) without submitting any reason to the other party by giving one-week notice.

(9) Every notice, request, instruction or approval Agreement given or required to be given under this Contract will be in writing in English or Arabic and sent for the attention of the person, and to the address, fax number or e-mail specified in this clause (or such other address, fax number, e-mail or person as the party may notify to the other, in accordance with the provisions of this clause) and will be delivered personally, sent by pre-paid registered post, or Sent by e-mail.

(9.1) The addresses for service of Notices, Requests, Instructions or Approvals are:

- a. If to the **University**, addressed to Dhofar University, ....., For the attention of: ....., With a copy sent to:.....
- b. If to the **Researcher**, addressed to INSERT],.....,For the attention of: .....,With a copy sent to:.....

(9.2) A Notice, Request, Instruction or Approval is deemed to have been received:

- a. if delivered personally, at the time of delivery; or
- b. in the case of pre-paid registered, at the actual receiving date; or
- c. in the case of e-mail, at the time such email is acknowledged by the recipient.

(10) This **Contract** annuls and replaces any previous agreements between the **Researcher** and the **University**, be it written or verbal.

(11) The **Researcher** shall abide by the laws of the Sultanate of Oman and by the rules and regulations of the **University**.

(12) This **Contract** drafted in three papers and made from two original copies, one for each party.

The **Appointment** subjected to this Contract confirmed by the principal investigator of the **Research Project** Dr..... ,  
department of....., college of ..... :signature\_\_\_\_\_.

**Dhofar University**

[INSERT NAME]

By : Prof. Amer Ali Abdullah AL Rawas

By : \_\_\_\_\_

Title. : Vice Chancellor

Title. : \_\_\_\_\_

signature: \_\_\_\_\_

signature: \_\_\_\_\_

This **Contract** approved as to legal drafting by the University's legal advisor (Mr. Mohammed Abbas):\_\_\_\_\_.

This **Contract** approved as per RIA guidelines by the Department of Research:\_\_\_\_\_.

# APPENDIX-B

## Memo for Salary of RA/Technician

**To:** Click here to enter text.

**From:** Click here to enter text.

**Cc:** Click here to enter text.

**Date:** Click here to enter a date.

**RIA/DU Agreement No.** Click here to enter text.

### Subject: Salary Payment of 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 RIA/DU contract.

Regards,

---

Principal Investigator

## APPENDIX-C

## Attendance Sheet

[illegible]

Signature of PI

Total no. of Working HoursTotal Salary

## APPENDIX-D

### Equipment Usage Log Sheet

| No. | Date/Day | Name of Researcher | Project Code | Detail of Equipment, Material or supplies used | Hrs Used | Analysis Type | Location |
|-----|----------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------|----------|
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |
|     |          |                    |              |                                                |          |               |          |

Signature of PI

Signature of Co-PI

Signature of Lab Technician

# APPENDIX-E

## Equipment Inventory

| No. | Name of PI/Team Leader | Project Code | Detail of Item | Type of Item    | Location | Condition of Electronic Item (to be filled by CNC) | Receiving from the University Store |
|-----|------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|----------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|     |                        |              |                | Choose an item. |          |                                                    |                                     |
|     |                        |              |                | Choose an item. |          |                                                    |                                     |
|     |                        |              |                | Choose an item. |          |                                                    |                                     |
|     |                        |              |                | Choose an item. |          |                                                    |                                     |
|     |                        |              |                | Choose an item. |          |                                                    |                                     |
|     |                        |              |                | Choose an item. |          |                                                    |                                     |
|     |                        |              |                | Choose an item. |          |                                                    |                                     |
|     |                        |              |                | Choose an item. |          |                                                    |                                     |
|     |                        |              |                | Choose an item. |          |                                                    |                                     |

Signature of PI

Signature of College Dean

Signature of Lab Technician/CNC Director

Signature of Research Focal Point

Signature of University Store



# DHOFAR UNIVERSITY

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