



Lahore University of Management Sciences

Faculty Initiative Fund

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Approvals

Name	Designations	Signature	Date
URC	Convener, URC	Dr. Amir Faisal	September 24, 2018
URC	Convener, URC	Mr. Uzair Kayani	June 20, 2020
URC	Convener, URC	Dr. Irshad Hussain	November 30, 2023

1. Purpose of Policy

This policy provides guidelines for awarding and managing Faculty Initiative Fund (FIF) grants. The FIF provides competitive annual seed grants of up to Rs 1,500,000 to full-time regular faculty members to develop innovative projects that could lead to larger endeavors, new research initiatives, external funding opportunities, or creative works.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy is applicable exclusively to full-time regular faculty members at LUMS. Adjunct faculty and teaching/research fellows do not qualify to serve as Principal Investigators (PI) for the FIF. However, teaching/research fellows may participate as Co-PIs in a proposal. Adjunct faculty members are not eligible to apply as either the PI or Co-PI. Contractual faculty members are eligible to apply if their contract does not expire during the duration of the FIF cycle.

3. Policies and Procedures

3.1 Pre-Award Guidelines

1. FIF is an internal funding mechanism that awards competitive annual grants of up to Rs 1,500,000 to LUMS faculty.
2. Proposals may be submitted individually or by a group of faculty members within or across schools to the Office of Research (OR).
3. FIF award cycles run twice a year, from January to December and from July to June, with deadlines announced by the OR.
4. Proposals must include an application form and a budget with justification.
5. Proposals are evaluated based on the clarity of the proposed research, potential impact on enhancing institutional capacity and research culture at LUMS, contribution to the body of knowledge, enrichment of research opportunities for students, and likelihood of leading to outside funding.
6. The University Research Council (URC) reviews proposals for funding and may ask the PI to present or clarify certain aspects. The URC may use expert reviewers and refer proposals with human/animal subjects or biosafety issues to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Proposals undergo evaluation by both technical and non-technical reviewers. Technical reviewers are selected from the same discipline, school, or group, possessing specialized knowledge in the subject matter. Non-technical reviews are conducted by URC members from different schools, offering a broader perspective.

7. A z-sum method is employed to assess and rank these proposals, ultimately identifying the highest-ranked ones. Z-scores follow a distribution with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. During evaluation, reviewers' scores for each question are normalized using the mean and standard deviation to derive z-scores. These z-scores for each question are then pooled across reviewers to calculate average scores. Then, the z-scores for all questions are aggregated. Notably, the technical domain is given twice the weighting compared to the non-technical section.
8. A URC member who has submitted an FIF proposal may not evaluate proposals from their school/group for that cycle but can review non-technical aspects of proposals from other schools/groups.
9. A faculty member cannot have two FIF grants with overlapping timelines, and PI(s) of an awarded FIF grant in the execution phase may not be eligible for another FIF grant.
10. Only one application may be submitted by a faculty member in a particular call.
11. Final decisions on funding are made by the OR based on the recommendations of the URC, in consultation with the VC, Provost, Director of OR, and URC Convener. OR announces the selected grant recipients after the decision is made.

3.2 Post-Award Guidelines

1. FIF grants are administered by the OR.
2. FIF awards are for one year only. If a project requires a second year of funding, a proposal may be submitted for next year's FIF award, which will be considered in competition with other proposals.
3. Recipients of FIF awards may not receive any fee, remuneration, compensation, or salary from the research award.
4. FIF grants may not be used for attending national or international conferences.
5. FIF grants are not intended for the acquisition of personal capital equipment, such as computers, unless a compelling rationale is endorsed by the Vice Chancellor (VC). Standard LUMS policies will govern the procurement of research equipment. Although allocated to PIs, all assets remain the property of the University. The University's asset policy should be consulted for audit and asset disposition post-project completion.
6. All PIs must submit project initiation, mid-year, and end-of-year reports to the OR, which should include an updated plan of action and progress report towards the project's objectives.
7. Final deliverables and reports must describe the achievements of the project's objectives, any new proposals submitted for external funding, research publications, potential patents, or research collaborations resulting from the grant.

8. Unspent funds are not available after the project deadline.
9. Expenses, including advances and out-of-pocket costs, must be adjusted within 45 days of the expense being incurred. Claims submitted after this period may not be facilitated by the OR.
10. The FIF offers the flexibility to hire Research Assistants (RAs) and PhD students on both part-time and full-time arrangements. For part-time RAs, the maximum monthly salary ceiling is set at up to Rs. 50,000, while full-time RAs have the potential to receive a maximum monthly salary of up to Rs. 100,000, contingent upon their level of expertise. Minimum salary can be proposed by PIs considering the experience of an RA. In cases where a higher salary is required, it is advisable to secure funding from alternative sources beyond the FIF. Exceptions to this guideline may be considered under extraordinary circumstances, with the Principal Investigator (PI) able to request a salary exceeding Rs. 100,000, provided that a robust justification is provided.
11. The grant recipient should limit subcontracting to a third party to no more than 40% of the grant award unless the proposal budget clearly specifies otherwise. In exceptional cases where such subcontracting is justified, the recipient must obtain prior approval from the OR.
12. To ensure prudent management of grant funds, expenditures should be distributed evenly throughout the grant period. It is recommended to avoid spending more than 70% of the budget in the last two months of the grant. While we recognize that different projects may have varying spending patterns, the OR discourages abnormal spending practices, such as inflating staff salaries, or engaging in last-minute subcontracting without prior approval. Any such practices will not be entertained.
13. Awardees are required to submit a final report within 15 days after the grant expires. While unspent funds will no longer be available after the grant expires, the OR will process payment for any valid advance adjustments or Research Assistant (RA) payments during this period.
14. An application will be considered only if the final report from the previous FIF call has been received.
15. For procedural guidelines relating to approval of expenses, release of payments, and other procedures, LUMS policies on procurement and payments shall be referred.

3.3 FIF Procedure

Sr. No.	Responsibility	Procedure / Activity	Output
1	Director of OR	The Director of OR announces the call for FIF applications to the faculty via email.	Email containing FIF application guidelines

2	PI	The PI submits the proposal to OR through GAMES.	Proposal containing budget and required information
3	Relevant Personnel (OR)	Relevant Personnel (OR) convene a URC meeting to discuss the review process.	Minutes of the meeting
4	Relevant Personnel (OR)	Relevant Personnel (OR) emails the received proposals to URC Members and co-opted/external members. A blind review process is implemented to maintain applicant confidentiality.	Email containing project proposals and the evaluation forms
5	URC/Co-opted members	URC and co-opted members review, evaluate, and rank the submitted proposals based on the specified criteria.	Scores by the evaluators
6	Relevant Personnel (OR)	Relevant Personnel (OR) forwards the ethics review request for IRB approval to the IRB Convener.	Proposal for IRB approval
7	IRB Convener	The IRB Convener proceeds with the approval process in accordance with applicable LUMS policies and returns it to Relevant Personnel (OR).	Letter containing IRB approval
8	OR	OR applies Z-Scores to the reviewed proposal scores provided by the evaluators and prepares a presentation for the URC.	Presentation for the URC
9	URC/OR	The final funding decision is made by the URC based on the rankings generated by OR using the Z-Score method, in consultation with the VC, Provost, Director of OR, and URC Convener.	Minutes of the meeting
10	Relevant Personnel (OR)	Relevant Personnel (OR) announces the selected grant recipients to the PI via email.	Award announcement
11	Relevant Personnel (OR)	Relevant Personnel (OR) establishes a FIF grant account in SAP and shares the account details with the respective PI.	SAP details
12	PI	The PI raises a purchase requisition for expenses to be charged to the FIF.	PR through SAP
13	Relevant Personnel (OR)	Budget approval is granted by OR in accordance with LUMS policies.	Budget approval
14	PI	The PI submits the Project Initiation Report and Mid-Term Progress Report as per the specified dates to OR.	Reports received to OR
15	Relevant Personnel (OR)	Relevant Personnel (OR) notifies the PI of the closure of the FIF grant period via email.	Email intimating grant time-period closure
16	PI	The PI prepares and submits the Final Report to OR.	Reports received to OR
17	Relevant Personnel (OR)	Relevant Personnel (OR) compiles a consolidated report on FIF grants for the year.	Consolidated report on FIF grants

4. Waiver of Policy

In exceptional cases, and on a showing of good cause, the Vice Chancellor or his designated authority may waive a policy or procedural requirement. A waiver must be granted in writing and be specific to each case. The written request for a waiver should be timely communicated to the Office of Research (OR). Repeated waivers of any requirement shall prompt a policy review of that requirement under the LUMS governance structure. To show good cause, the written waiver shall provide reasonable justifications that:

1. The requirement being waived is impossible or impracticable.
2. The waiver does not violate any applicable law; and
3. The waiver is fair, in the best interest of the University, and narrowly tailored to address an exceptional case.

5. Special Circumstances/Exceptions

No special circumstances are identified in this policy. Each identified case of misconduct will be reviewed on its own merit.

6. Roles and Responsibilities of Policy Implementation

The major responsibilities that each party has in connection with this policy are as follows:

Faculty Member/PI is responsible for:

1. Submission of FIF proposal to OR.
2. Compliance with reporting requirements, including submission of Project Initiation Report, Mid-Term Progress Report and Final Report.
3. Execution of proposed work as per targets outlined in the proposal; and
4. Ensuring that all expenditures are following university policy.

URC is responsible for:

1. Reviewing, evaluating, and ranking grant proposals; and
2. Recommending selected proposals to OR and Higher Management.

IRB is responsible for providing expertise to assist URC in making decisions about awarding grants if proposals involve human and animal subjects or issues related to biosafety.

OR is responsible for:

1. Coordinating the overall process for FIF grants.
 2. Announcing the recipients of the selected grants after the decision is made. Keeping Higher Management informed and raising flags, where necessary.
 3. Administration of the grant, including recording of FIF grant proposals, reports, and related information.
 4. Creation of consolidated reports about project accomplishments which may be used by the URC to make future decisions.
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5. Opening and maintaining FIF grant accounts; and
6. Provision of account details to stakeholders.

7. Title of Position with Maintenance Responsibility

OR will be responsible for maintenance of the policy including its periodic review and approval of any subsequent modifications to the said policy.

8. Consequence(s) of Non-Compliance with Policy

Each instance of non-compliance will be referred to University Research Council (URC) for review, which will finalize its recommendations for the action to be taken by VC. In all cases, the decision of VC will be final.

9. Related Laws

It is mandatory to abide by all laws and regulations as applicable in Pakistan. In certain circumstances, sponsors may require compliance with certain laws and their own statutory regulations as well.

10. Distribution & Physical Security

Access to these Policies & Procedures on the intranet portal shall be restricted and access shall be provided by Director of OR through following LUMS Access Management Process. For further information, refer Access Management Policies & Procedures. However, in case a hard copy is required, printing rights shall be granted to the respective stakeholder as part of standard Access Management Process. System shall track the number of hard copies printed against each Login ID and shall maintain log as well.

Where there is a change in responsibility of an employee, the copy / access that the employee has of policy document should be handed over to the new employee and this action shall be documented in the previous employee's handing over notes. When an employee leaves the employment of LUMS, then the copy of/access to policy document should be returned to/ revoked by the Head of Department / IT Department prior to his departure.

11. Contacts

Contact	Designation	Phone
Office of Research (OR)	Director	8336, 8207, 8042