

# Guidelines for Internal Research Grants (IRG)

Research Management Cell (RMC)  
Research Committee  
Everest Engineering College  
Sanepa-2, Lalitpur



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## 1. Introduction to the Internal Research Grants (IRG)

The primary purpose of the IRG Fund is to promote and support faculty at Everest Engineering College in initiating research projects. It supports members of the faculty in establishing new research projects and taking existing research in promising new directions. The long-term aim of the IRG is to build and sustain a vibrant research culture at Everest Engineering College (EEC). There are two announcement dates for the IRG applications each year: Fall and Spring. The Research Management Cell (RMC) is responsible for executing the program under the guidance of the Research Committee.

### *Research Definition*

Research is defined as the following for this document: It is a purposeful inquiry that generates new insights, knowledge, and innovation through scholarly investigation, experimentation, and scientific practices, in a field of specialization. Research activities typically result in quantifiable outcomes and knowledge mobilization activities where research knowledge is communicated to audiences both within and beyond academia to create positive impacts.

The list of activities that are not funded through the IRG includes:

- Faculty Development – such as training program and completing a thesis. Converting a thesis into a journal article can be supported.
- Institutional Research – studies directly related to the operation of EEC that cannot be generalized. The research proposal must have wider implications beyond EEC.
- Curriculum Development – preparation of curriculum materials and surveys related to curriculum are not supported. Proposals that include empirical studies related to the effectiveness of techniques and content may be considered if they are generalizable beyond EEC.

EEC may have a separate provision for funding such activities through its academic departments.

## 2. Eligibility

The primary applicant must be an EEC faculty member. Non-faculty members and current students interested in participating are encouraged to partner as co-applicants with faculty members. Team grants led by an eligible applicant with one or more co-applicants are accepted. However, the principal applicant will be the only person in charge of the funds, and the only one authorized to approve expenditures from an award. Research Management Cell and Research Committee members can also apply for the grants. They will not be involved in the adjudication process. All applicants must have completed and reported on any previously funded Internal Research Grants.

For each application window, an applicant may submit more than one proposal. Faculty members cannot hold two grants simultaneously as a primary applicant/principal investigator. However, the RMC may relax this constraint and accept multiple proposals from an applicant, provided that sufficient funds are available and the proposals are deemed to be of high quality.

## 3. Procedure for applying Internal Research Fund

- RMC will call for applications from faculty members near the end of academic semester. The actual date may vary but applicants should prepare at least a month before the end of the semester.
- Interested faculty members can apply for the grant by submitting a research proposal whose section guidelines are given below. There is no strict template to adhere to, but the application should contain sections listed in the guidelines unless they are not relevant for the nature of the research.
- The application should be submitted by the Principal Investigator (PI).
- Proposals received for internal grants will be reviewed by the RMC and the Research Committee. External experts can be consulted if required.
- Proposals are deemed successful if they achieve a score more than the threshold set by the RMC. The scoring rubric is provided at the end for reference.

## 4. Priority



Priority is given to proposals:

- most likely to produce tangible results.
- most likely to develop and enhance the applicant's research and scholarly profile.
- that are feasible, given their scope and timelines.
- involving student training, when student training is possible.
- with the potential to develop institutional strength and excellence.
- that involve collaboration, when the project lends itself to such collaboration.
- from first-time applicants, when proposals are of equal merit.

Low priority will be given to applicants who have not completed their previous research project(s) (i.e., not submitted a final report and produced promised outcomes).

## 5. Schemes

To foster a vibrant research culture and support innovative research initiatives, EEC offers a range of research grant schemes. These schemes are designed to encourage faculty members to undertake high-quality research projects, ranging from short-term exploratory studies to long-term, impactful investigations.

- a. *Small awards* : to support a range of research projects limited to six months [Rs. 30,000 – 75,000]
- b. *Medium awards* : to support a range of research projects limited to one year [Rs. 75,000 – 1.5 lakhs]
- c. *Large awards* : to support a range of original multi-year research projects [Above 1.5 lakhs]
- d. *Manuscript preparation awards* : Preparing a book or journal articles from completed or near-completed research [The actual grant amount depends on the publisher's estimate and publication costs]

Small and medium awards are given to proposals that:

- produce journal articles and conference papers as deliverables
- fits with the faculty research focus

Large awards are given to proposals that:

- are novel, ground-breaking, ambitious and unique
- fits with the faculty research focus
- address challenges of the society and community and/or advance the state of knowledge
- make the case for the expected impact and outcomes from the initiative
- have a strong possibility of obtaining external grants

Manuscript preparation awards are given to proposals that:

- report completed or near-completion research
- publish in a recognized and reputed avenue

### 5.1. General guidelines

- Proposals must be submitted following guidelines for the IRG awards.
- Proposals submitted to other grant awarding agencies or currently funded are not accepted.
- Proposals will be reviewed two times a year, once during each semester, and should be submitted electronically to the email address advertised in the call for proposals.
- The grant amount will be used to fund a few large proposals and many small proposals.
- Faculty selected for one active award in normal circumstances cannot participate as primary applicants (PI) in other proposals at one application period. Exceptions can be made for exceptional proposals and subject to the availability of funds.



- Published research results should acknowledge funding by the IRG.
- A brief report describing the results of the research funded by the award must be submitted to the RMC. Such reports will be used by the evaluation committee in its consideration of future grant applications.

## **5.2. Small, medium and large awards proposal guidelines**

The proposal for small, medium and large awards should contain at least the following sections. The applicant should include other sections that are not listed here but are critical for the evaluation of the proposal.

1. Title of your project
2. Abstract (not more than 250 words)
  - a. It should contain a succinct description of the research written for a reader who is knowledgeable but not a specialist in the field of study.
  - b. It should contain the contribution that the proposal will make and anticipated results.
3. Body of the proposal (closer to 2000 but not exceeding 3000 words): It should include the sections outlined below. Some sections may be dropped, or new sections added depending on the nature of the project. Include all sections that is critical to understanding of the project.
  - a. Provide a statement of the problem of your proposed research proving essential background information critical to understanding the important of the proposed research;
  - b. Include a brief review of relevant literature;
  - c. Explain the significance of the work to your discipline, relevance of the results and potential use, long-term goals and potential of the project beyond the award period;
  - d. Describe the research methods to be used, the structure and procedure of the fieldwork or experiment;
  - e. Indicate specific involvement of each faculty member and student co-applicants involved in the project;
  - f. Outline the plan for dissemination of the results, such as publication in journals and conferences;
  - g. Provide the project activities timeline;
  - h. Provide specific and detailed budget breakdown under two broad categories - non-personnel expenses such as travel, equipment and supplies and personnel expenses such as labor costs and research assistance costs;
4. Provide a working bibliography added as an appendix in the proposal in a consistent referencing style.

## **5.3. Manuscript preparation awards proposal guidelines**

Projects that are successfully completed should apply for separate funding for publication requests. The original project proposal does not need to include a budget breakdown for the cost of publication. One of the reasons why this has been kept as a separate scheme is because the quality of the research outcome is difficult to assess beforehand.

To qualify for publication funding, applicants should demonstrate that the articles, books, or other scholarly works are either under contract or have been accepted for publication. The proposal should:

- Include two- to four-pages providing title of the manuscript, outline of the manuscript's content, purpose of the research, significance of the research, publisher, and applicant's role in the research and manuscript writing;
- If the manuscript is ready, include the content, including references, after the proposal pages;
- Include the budget breakdown.

## **5.4. Costs**

*Allowable Costs:*

Awards may be used for a wide range of research expenses provided that a clear case is made that the expenses are essential to the project. Grant funds may be used for the purchase of research materials including books unavailable through the library system, equipment critical for proposed research, lab supplies, travel



necessary to perform research, manuscript preparation, necessary publication costs, necessary travel, and other costs of performing research and effectively disseminating outcomes. Travel to disseminate outcomes may be supported but needs to be carefully justified. Awards may be used to pay for research assistants if the role and responsibility is clearly stated in the proposal and critical to the project's outcome. Awards may be used to pay for travel directly related to the scholarship, including travel by research assistants in the performance of their assigned duties. Purchase of major equipment will require a compelling rationale to be included in the budget.

#### *Non-allowable Costs:*

Grant funds cannot be used for salaries, the purchase of general-purpose equipment and computers, and travel cost not specified in the application. Grant funds cannot be used for reimbursement of costs incurred prior to submission of the application.

### **5.5. Fund Release**

The award amount will be released in three stages. After the proposal has been accepted for the award, forty percent will be handed to the Principal Investigator. It will be the responsibility of the PI to purchase the required materials or pay for labour and maintain the list of expenditures. After the Progress Report has been submitted, which is at the halfway point, further thirty percent will be released.

After submission of the *final report* and *statement of expenditures*, the remaining amount of the award will be released. If in any case the project requires fund to be released earlier than scheduled, they must write an application stating the reason behind the urgent need of the fund. In some projects, such as involving only desk-based research, the *statement of expenditures* may not be relevant. Such projects should state that the *statement of expenditures* is not relevant, and they do not have anything to claim as expenditures.

### **6. Selection Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Originality, intellectual merit and potential impact. Do the applicants pose novel research questions, describe a new way of studying an existing question, propose novel means of bridging from theory to practice, or otherwise promise to advance an important field of scholarship, discovery or application? Is there potential for a sustained research program with broad impact? Is the work significantly different in scope from that of any pending, funded or recently completed grant?
- Quality of the research plan. Have the applicants proposed a sound research plan that makes good use of their talents and existing resources? Have they identified critical questions about the feasibility or promise of their new ideas, or about the viability of their project, and focused their plan on addressing those questions? Is the proposed timeline appropriate?
- Budget and personnel. Is the budget appropriate for the proposed work? If a team project, is every member making a substantive contribution?
- Long-term potential. Does the project have potential to open up new avenues for the applicants and for EEC? Does that potential reach beyond the initial focus of the project? Could it solidify or serve to expand a research team that could be uniquely productive and competitive? Does it make productive use, or creative new use, of existing resources?

#### **6.1. Scoring**

A detailed rubric for scoring an application is provided at the end. Each criterion is equally weighted and can get a proposal two marks for a total of twelve. The evaluation committee can adjust the minimum threshold needed to qualify for the award. The idea is that the threshold will keep on getting strict with the improvement in the quality of research at EEC.

### **7. Critical dates**

- *Proposal submission deadline* : The date will be announced towards the mid of each semester [actual date is subject to change to align with university's calendar]



- *Announcement of awards* : One month after the deadline

## 8. Post-award requirements

After receiving an award, and in order to be eligible for future awards, the awardee will be required to prepare a Progress Report halfway through the project, Final Report within 30 days of the termination of the grant and give at least two internal presentations. The first presentation will be after first set of preliminary findings have been produced to get feedback. The second presentation will be to present the final report or first draft of the journal article or conference paper for feedback. Additional presentations are encouraged.

The Principal Investigator must provide the progress report, the final report and research article as per the guidelines below:

- **Progress Reports:** For most awards it is required that a progress report is submitted at the halfway point of the project. For some projects that are more complex and needs a bit more support, RMC can ask for more than one progress reports. This helps in identification of the issues promptly.
- **Final Report:** Within one month after the end of the award period, the final report should be submitted along with the statement of expenditures. In case of delay a written request can be made to RMC by the Principal Investigator before the due date.
- Within three months of the research completion date, the first draft of the research article must be ready with intent to submit in a recognized peer reviewed journal. This gives another opportunity for giving a presentation for feedback. The submission deadline can be extended to six months for projects that require complex analysis or additional experimentation. The PI must submit a letter of request for extension.

## 9. Fieldwork and Attendance

The PI should submit a letter addressed to the RMC stating the purpose, duration, time and place a week prior of the fieldwork. It should list the investigators who will be involved and their duties. The RMC will provide a supporting letter to help their application for leave. In case the fieldwork was not anticipated in the proposal, the letter should be provided two weeks in advance. The letter should additionally include justification for the fieldwork and expenditures associated with it such as travel and lodging costs. RMC will review and write a supporting letter to help with the application for leave and budget approval.

## 10. Leaving the Job

In case the PI decides to leave the job at EEC before the completion of the grant period, the PI should nominate one of the co-investigators as the PI. RMC can choose the nominated faculty or send a call for faculty members to take up the vacated position in the project or decide to terminate the project in the worst case. It can be possible for the leaving PI to remain in the project as a co-investigator after relinquishing the PI role. The PI should submit a report detailing the work completed and work that is remaining before leaving the job. The report should declare the utilization of the released funds and the amount that remains with the PI. The PI should hand over all items procured or produced from the project to the RMC.

## 11. Acknowledgement

Awardees are expected to acknowledge funding support by the RMC in dissemination activities, publications, posters presentations, oral presentations, etc. Faculty members who publish research articles and submit conference papers without support of the internal grants are encouraged to mention their affiliation with EEC in their publications. They are encouraged to give presentations or trainings based on their research. Their contribution will be duly recognized by the RMC.

## 12. Contact

Emails can be directed to RMC coordinator:

Shailesh B. Pandey at [shailesh.pandey@eemc.edu.np](mailto:shailesh.pandey@eemc.edu.np)

## Appendix - IRG Application Evaluation Rubric (for application drafting guideline)

	Poor (0)	Acceptable (1)	Excellent (2)	Score
<b>Project Description and Quality</b>	Description is hard to understand or utilizes a lot of field-specific jargon. It is not clear that the project is creative or innovative. Objectives are not stated or not fully aligned with the need for the project.	Description does not explain project concisely, or it does not give a general picture of the proposed activities. The project contains no or few original, innovative, or creative aspect(s). Objectives are not specific or not fully aligned with the need for the project.	Description is clear, concise, and easy to understand. The proposed project contains original, innovative, or creative aspects. Objectives are clearly stated and are aligned with the need for the project.	
<b>Significance and Impact</b>	The contributions of the proposed activities to the broader community or field are not clearly stated. Significance and impact of the project are minor.	A link is made between the proposed work and the research field. It is not clear how the proposed activities will further the field as a whole, or how the community will benefit from the proposed activities. Significance and impact of the project might be high, but are not clearly articulated.	It is clear how the proposed activities fit into the broader scholarly field. Others will benefit from the new knowledge, applications, or creative works produced through the project. Significance and impact of the project are clearly articulated and high.	
<b>Approach and Methodology</b>	The approach is not feasible or will not accomplish the objectives. No outside research or support is provided.	Approach might be reasonable but is not clearly articulated, or is over ambitious. Lacks a clear evaluation of current research in the field.	Approach describes a logical plan to achieve the objectives and is clearly articulated. It reflects an understanding of current research in the field.	
<b>Deliverables, Outcomes and Goals</b>	Goals are not clearly stated and no outcomes or deliverables are described or feasible in the project period.	Goals are not fully stated. Outcomes or deliverables are of minimal impact or not feasible in the project period.	Goals are clearly stated. Deliverables and outcomes are feasible in the project period.	
<b>Timeline</b>	Timeline is not suitable for the activities described.	Timeline appears to meet less than half of the activities proposed.	Timeline is suitable for and meets all the activities described.	
<b>Budget</b>	Budget is unreasonable and not clearly justified or will not support completion of the project.	Budget seems accurate is detailed but may not support completion of the project.	Budget is accurate, detailed and will support completion of the project.	