



**RESEARCH SEED GRANT POLICY
OF ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
(AAU SEED)**

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1. Introduction

Addis Ababa University provides research funds to its academic staff through various schemes including Thematic Research, Adaptive Research, and SIDA fund for Women Researchers. These research funds allow the staff to engage in research, publish their findings in reputable journals, as well as provide evidence-based information to the public and decision-makers. These initiatives are successful and are going well for the past several years.

In 2019, Addis Ababa University is categorized as one of the eight Research Universities by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education bringing research to the forefront function of the university. This new category by the Ministry will take-off research to a high level; encourage staff to involve in mega and cutting-edge research projects and other international collaboration researches.

AAU is a research university with 366 graduate programs including 96 Ph.D. and over 43.5% of its staff are Assistant Professors and above (127 full Professors, 321 Associate Professors, and 848 Assistant Professors). Subsequently, the number of researches across all disciplines, the number of publications in indexed journals, and the number of collaborative researches is increasing over the last years making AAU one of the top ten African best universities in 2019.

As a research university, AAU needs to stretch its horizon to internationalization in higher education primarily interconnecting East African research universities but also other recognized universities all over the world through partnership and research. Currently, AAU is one of the 16 members of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and has several exchange programs globally. To strengthen this stance, AAU needs more effort and a strong commitment to attracting international grants and partnerships.

Addis Ababa University's strategic plan identifies externally funded research as one of the keys to achieving the vision of research growth that could make a difference. Externally funded research projects are deep integration of knowledge bases, tools, techniques, and methodologies to address major societal challenges as well as improve the publication profile of the University.

International research funds have become highly competitive and require imperative international collaboration. Because of the specificity and similarity of problems in developing countries, new opportunities are opening up in research funding and collaboration in research funding for middle- and low-income countries. Capacity in producing fundable research proposals is, therefore, a key strategic competence for countries that wish to exploit these emerging opportunities.

Encouraged by its recent high achievement in research and publications, AAU has designed a new staff supporting scheme by way of providing Seed Grant for preparation of proposals for externally funded Research Grant and improve its overall performance in research and publication in the years ahead. Seed Grant is aimed at investing in promising research directions where internal seed level investment can lead to externally funded research programs. Accordingly, seed funding proposals are invited from individuals or multidisciplinary teams that can compete for funding to develop a proposal for external funding. The key deliverable for awards will, therefore, be leveraging the work accomplished through the Seed Funding Program to submit one or proposals to funding agencies.

Research Seed Grant is hoped to increase the number of successful international applications by the staff. Seed Grant is a small amount of money allocated by AAU to improve the overall quality of a proposal, which is developed to be submitted for international funding organizations. Thus, Seed Grant funds the beginning stage of a project with the potential chance of winning an international grant. Furthermore, Research Seed Grants are intended to support the staff to materialize their ideas, to involve in multidisciplinary/ interdisciplinary research and activities in advancing the development of competitive research proposals; AAU SEED will support preliminary research work, data collection and facilitate collaboration for proposal development.

2. Objectives of the Seed Grant

The general objective of the Seed grant is to provide support for faculty to develop proposals for external funding.

The specific objectives are:

- a. stimulate competitive research in strategic areas of national or international importance
- b. facilitate the start of research programs that will potentially develop into creative ventures on their own through external funding
- c. lead to the development of a competitive proposal to an external funding organization within a year of the completion of the Research Seed Grant period.
- d. identify the program and funding organization to which a future proposal will be submitted, describing the research project in a language understandable to reviewers,

3. Eligibility

All academic staff who are Ph.D. holders have a full-time faculty position, academic staff with the rank of Assistant Professor and above (as applicable in the senate Legislation of AAU for Academic Staff in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, College of Veterinary Science, and College of Health Sciences) are encouraged to apply for Seed Grant as PIs as indicated in the guideline.

4. Use of Funds and Deliverable

Funds will be provided for one-time awards that may be used within one year from the time that they are awarded. Funds can be used to collect preliminary data relevant in pursuing external funding, meetings, conducting pilot or preliminary activities, trying out methodologies, refining ideas, and reworking grant proposals that have received encouraging review but were not funded. The outcome of the effort is a promising research proposal submitted to granting agency either individually in teams.

Publication in peer-reviewed journals/intellectual property (IP) generation including product/process development would be expected as outcomes of the project submitted and granted by the external funding agency. In the event that an IP has emerged from the research proposal granted by an external funder, it will be owned by AAU. Such IPR will recognize contributions by all researchers as "inventors", and any resulting royalties will be shared by AAU with the inventors.

5. Guiding Principles and Funding Priorities

The overall goal of the Seed Grant is to stimulate successful research proposals. Applications will be competitively evaluated based on the likelihood that the proposed work plan will result in robust preliminary data to support strong proposals for external funding. Other important considerations include the intellectual merit, overall feasibility of the proposed plan, the track record of success of the research team, and the effective use of resources.

6. Application for Funding

A guideline specifying the application procedure accompanying this policy is issued. Applicants are expected to strictly adhere to the guideline to ensure eligibility.

7. Review Process

A review committee, composed of faculty members representing a wide range of disciplines will review the applications and provide a list of recommended projects to the Director of Research for funding.

The decision of the selection committee will be conveyed to the PI who will be the contact person for all administrative matters regarding the project.

Feedback for each proposal will be provided on time after final funding decisions have been made by the Director of Research.

8. Approval and review details (version control)

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