



**Guideline for Preparing, Submitting, and Administering
Research Seed Grant**

Office of the Director of Research

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1. Preamble

Recognizing that a research university is a Higher Education Institution that is committed to research and graduate studies as central to its mission and has a reputation on a global scale,

Acknowledging that AAU, as a Research University, needs to stretch its horizon to internationalization in higher education primarily through partnership and research with universities and funding agencies abroad and nationally,

Appreciating that AAU has designed a new staff supporting the scheme, Research Seed Grant, to increase the number of successful international applications by the academic staff,

Emphasizing that Research Seed Grant is intended to support academic staff (faculty) to concretize their researchable ideas, participate in multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary research to advance the development of competitive research proposals,

The Director of Research henceforth has issued a guideline on the details of preparing, submitting, and administering the Research Seed Grant.

2. Introduction

Research Seed Grants are intended to support activities necessary to advance competitive research proposals, such as performing preliminary work and facilitating collaboration.

Research seed grant has proven efficacy in giving opportunity researchers in defining objectives and test hypotheses in preparation for larger grant applications at corporations, foundations, and government agencies. It is, therefore, expected that a competitive proposal for a sizable project will be submitted to an external funding organization within a year of the completion of the Research Seed Grant period.

Research Seed Grant proposals are expected to identify the program and agency to which a future proposal will be submitted, describing the research project in a language

understandable to faculty reviewers, delineate how the Research Seed Grant activity will result in a more competitive proposal, include a budget for the Research Seed grant and a timeline for submission to an external funding organization.

3. Eligibility

Any AAU faculty (Academic staff) employed by AAU and whose research will be administered through AAU is eligible. AAU faculty employed by affiliated institutions, AAU faculty whose research will be administered through affiliated institutions, emeritus faculty, adjunct faculty, visiting faculty, and postdocs, are not eligible to lead projects as Principal Investigator (PI), but maybe included in research teams.

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.

An eligible applicant may lead one project as PI but may participate in research teams for submission of other proposals that are distinctly different in the subject matter. PIs are allowed to submit one SEED GRANT proposal per year.

4. Reporting Requirements

Within 60 days of the end of the approved award period, the recipient must provide to the Director of Research a final report. The report should outline the work that was accomplished and describe the proposal(s) submitted to external sponsor(s) or the potential sponsor as a result of this award. The report should also describe any significant deviations from or extensions to the project described in the original proposal.

The fund may be used to support reasonable and necessary costs for the collection of pilot research data or compilation of information for proposal development. All expenditures under this program must be in accordance with University policies and procedures.

Expenditures for faculty salaries (either summer or academic year), indirect costs graduate student sponsorship is not permitted.

5. Award Conditions

Funds will become available to faculty in the month of September of each year. The funds would be available for use until the end of August of each year unless an extension was requested and approved. Local travel must also have been completed by that date. Funds not expended by the completion date will be returned to the university Financial information center, Research Fund Coordination Section. Investigators selected for a Seed award will be required to obtain IRB as applicable before funding can be expended.

6. Application Requirements

Applications are strictly limited to the cover page information and a total of 9 additional pages excluding bibliography, plus CVs and letter of support.

6.1. Applicant Information

- a. The project title; the name of Principal Investigator (PI) and contact information emails, telephone number, and College and Department
- b. Name of any co-investigators and contact information including emails, telephone numbers, and College(s) and Department(s)
- c. Indication of disciplinary and thematic areas to help assign faculty reviewers.

6.2. Abstract

Abstract (300-word limit): This summary should include a statement of the main question being addressed by the project, the primary aims or objectives of the project, the significance or potential impact of the proposed project, and a statement or two about the general methods to be employed and research group or funding agency that will ultimately fund the intended project.

6.3. Main body

The proposal should summarize the relevant background literature and research that puts the proposed project into the appropriate context and explains how it will significantly extend or contribute to the field. The applicant should describe the proposed research project in terms that do not require reviewers to be experts in the sub-area of the research. The applicant should clearly describe the goals of the research, the activities to be carried out to achieve those goals, a timetable for completing these activities, and an assessment of the potential for subsequent external funding.

6.4. Strategy for Seeking Subsequent External Support

A description of the strategy for seeking subsequent external support. The description should include a statement of intent to submit a proposal as one of the outcomes of the project. The sponsor(s) to which the proposal will be submitted should be identified along with the intended date(s) of submission and the amount(s) that will be requested.

6.5. Budget Worksheet and Justification

A budget that itemizes general categories of expenses for which award funds will be used and a brief justification for these expenses, including the role of all personnel. The total budget cannot exceed Birr 100,000 for 1 year of support.

6.6. Seed Program History (If Applicable)

- a. If this is a resubmission of a previously unfunded Seed proposal, the applicant may briefly address comments from the prior review.
- b. If an applicant has been previously funded through the previous Seed Grant, please indicate the year, results, and whether this is a new idea or continuation of an existing one.

6.7. Size of the Proposal

The proposal is not to exceed 10 pages. Font should be Arial, at a size of 12. Margins, in all directions, must be at least 0.5". A short (2-page maximum) list of references/bibliography may be appended and is not included in the 10-page proposal limit. The proposal and list of references/bibliography will be uploaded as one pdf file.

7. Evaluation Criteria

The Office of the Director of Research ensures that the evaluation committee has diverse discipline representation and there is a distinct possibility that faculty outside your discipline will review the proposals. Therefore, applicants are reminded and encouraged to use language that can be understood by a diverse audience.

The overall merit of the research project will be considered and evaluated by a committee of faculty reviewers who will make their award recommendations to the Director of Research.

The proposal evaluation will consider the alignment of the budget with the deliverables.

The final selection will be made based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Value (%)
the intrinsic merit of the work and potential impact of the research on the academic field of study and its importance for national economic growth and development	40
potential for the award to provide a basis for further research support from external sponsors	30
the likelihood that the proposed work will be completed during the award period	10
International collaboration, research grant record, and publication track	15
Clarity of the proposal	10
Passing mark	70

The award will be given starting from the top scorer till the passing mark based on the available budget.

8. Responsibilities of the PI

- a. The PI is responsible for the conduct of the research as per the AAU research policy.
- b. The PI has to make sure that the fund has been to be utilized within the stipulated period.
- c. The PI is required to report progress or outcomes at the end of one year after the termination of the seed grant, including a proposal submitted to a granting agency and communication made with the agency.
- d. In case the PI leaves the Department before the completion of the project, a co-investigator from the same department or another one will assume responsibility as PI. Otherwise, the total award budget should be reimbursed to AAU.

9. Letter of Support from the Dean of the College or Chair of the Department

A letter of endorsement from the applicant's dean/chair discussing the importance of the proposal in expanding the horizon of knowledge and its applicability for national economic growth and development is required.

10. Curriculum Vitae

Detailed Curriculum vitae of the PI and the collaborating academic staff must also be attached.

11. Uploading

Full proposals, saved by their FULL Name, and associated documents for funding should be submitted electronically through the AAU Research Management Platform on or before the deadline.