



DEANSHIP OF  
**Scientific Research**

# Guidelines for International Collaboration Research Grant

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Deanship of Scientific Research  
King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals



## Table of Contents

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Table of Contents.....                         | 1 |
| 1. Introduction .....                          | 2 |
| 2. Objectives.....                             | 2 |
| 3. Funding .....                               | 3 |
| 4. Collaborating Institutions and Fields ..... | 3 |
| 5. Who May Apply.....                          | 3 |
| 6. Procedures .....                            | 4 |
| 7. Evaluation Criteria.....                    | 5 |
| 8. General Regulations.....                    | 6 |
| 9. Outcomes.....                               | 6 |
| 10. Acknowledgements.....                      | 6 |



## 1. Introduction

The University aspires to be an internationally recognized institution in research in strategic areas of focus, including energy, catalysis, desalination and clean water. In line with this aspiration, the University has selectively engaged in strong collaborations with top institutions in these specific areas through university-wide collaboration agreements, including the collaboration with MIT in renewable energy and clean water, the collaboration with Georgia Tech in seismic signal processing, and with Caltech in catalysis, among others. Through these focused collaboration efforts, the University has been able to grow its research profile of high quality scholarly publications and registered patents, and develop new innovative technologies that solve real-world problems, some of which have already seen their way into commercialization.

In order to maintain the momentum created through these university-level collaboration agreements and facilitate a stronger involvement of KFUPM researchers in international research networks and programs, the International Research Collaboration (IRC) grant is created. The IRC grant will support the development of existing international collaborations within the well-established research priorities of the University's Strategic Research Plan. The grant is intended to support large collaboration projects aiming to advance knowledge and develop technologies and to complement existing grants and support programs. The grant may also support the establishment of new international collaborations in the future provided that the collaboration is demonstrated to be able to fulfill its potential.

## 2. Objectives

The overall objective of the IRC grant is to further advance well-established international collaboration efforts between the University's researchers and their peers in top institutions in the world. The specific objectives are the following:

- i. Encourage the development of sustainable long-term international joint research and collaboration,
- ii. Strengthen the knowledge exchange and collaboration between KFUPM researchers with their peers in top institutions in strategic research areas of the University,
- iii. Facilitate increased exposure of KFUPM researchers and students to international and collaborative research,
- iv. Promote high-quality research leading to impactful and significant research outcomes, and
- v. Further raise the research profile of the University and enhance its global reputation in its strategic areas of research.



It is important to note here that this grant is not intended to be a seed funding grant for exploring new international research collaborations possibilities. On the contrary, the aim of the grant is to facilitate continuing existing well-established collaborations between experienced and synergetic teams from both KFUPM and the other institution in areas of focus of KFUPM.

### 3. Funding

The duration and funding of a project awarded through this grant depend on the amount of work planned to be conducted, the type of activities and the size and involvement of the project team members and their backgrounds. A major discriminator of this grant is the funds allocated to cover the collaboration overhead cost. Matching funds from the international partner institution will be considered favorably in the selection process.

Projects funded through this grant will not exceed **four years** in duration, and the funding amount per project cannot exceed **SAR 2,000,000**. These funds can be used to hire post-docs, provide compensation incentives for students (including students from the other institution) and cover costs related to research collaboration activities, such as research visits, research training, delivering lectures, teaching a course in the summer, joint seminars or workshops, procurement of equipment and consumables, joint publications and other forms of joint information dissemination.

### 4. Collaborating Institutions and Fields

Collaboration with researchers from top institutions in the field of the project is highly desirable. The field of collaboration must be a priority area of KFUPM or an emerging area of research (as identified by the steering committee of the grant). Evaluation of the partner institution and the partnering team will be conducted on a case-by-case basis and collaboration with universities with whom KFUPM already has established ties in the area of the proposed research will be given priority for funding.

### 5. Who May Apply

KFUPM faculty members and researchers with a proven record of accomplishment in the area of the collaboration and with a strong history of the successful management of previous research projects may apply for this grant. It is expected that the partnering researchers and institutions have a proven record in the proposed research and with whom research links have already been established before. However, for the first cycle (2017 – 2018) applies only to MIT, Stanford and Georgia Tech.



## 6. Procedures

The grant will be administered by a Steering Committee headed by the Vice Rector for Research. The steering committee sets the strategic areas of research for each cycle, oversees the operation of the grant, assesses the performance and impact of the grant and the quality of its outcomes and reports its activities to H.E. the Rector of the University. It is important that the management model of the grant is fully integrated with the research enterprise at KFUPM due to its strategic significance and impact.

The following procedures will be followed in administering this grant:

- i. The Steering Committee decides on the areas of strategic priorities to be supported by the grant. The list of support areas will be dynamic where emerging areas may be added as the steering committee deems appropriate. The steering committee also decides on the awards based on the priorities in a temporal basis given the budget as well as the “priority areas” covered so far at the time. The steering committee ensures a balanced coverage of all priority areas as much as possible.
- ii. DSR makes a call soliciting pre-proposals from University faculty and researchers. Pre-proposals must include project description, explaining their importance, relevance and significance, and demonstrating existing collaborations with the peer institution, along with clear statements of objectives and expected outcomes. Pre-proposals are evaluated by the Research Committee and it informs the selected proponents to submit the detailed proposals.
- iii. The selected project team submits the research proposal in the format prescribed by DSR (available in DSR’s website). The proposal must include: (i) a description of the proposed project including the proposed partners, the proposed objective and expected outcomes, (ii) a short description of how the project meets the grant objectives, (iii) detailed budget showing the funding sought, breakdown of the main expenditure and an indication of the resources (cash and in-kind ) to be contributed by each participant (iv) a detailed schedule including milestones, (v) the expected outcomes and benefits, (v) resumes of the project team, and (vi) a signed commitment from the collaborating researchers and their affiliated institutions. The submitted proposals must also provide evidence that: (i) the project contributes to the strategic research objectives of KFUPM in achieving excellence in its priority areas of research and (ii) the project will have demonstrated results that could not be achieved by KFUPM researchers alone without international collaboration.
- iv. The research proposal will be reviewed by the Research Committee in conjunction with the opinion of selected experts from the world’s top universities in the area of the proposed research.



- v. Criteria used in evaluating proposals include project justification, clarity and achievability of proposed objectives, methodology, significance of project's expected outcomes, student training and others (see Section 7 below).
- vi. The Research Committee makes its recommendations about all the submitted proposals through this grant and forwards them to the Steering Committee, which does a contextual evaluation of the recommended proposals, their fitness, relevance and impact and forwards its final recommendations to H.E. the Rector for approval.
- vii. During the project execution phase, progress reports of the projects submitted every six months will be evaluated by the Research Committee within the Deanship of Research, and summaries of progress are forwarded to the Steering Committee.

## 7. Evaluation Criteria

Submitted proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- i. The alignment of the proposed research with the strategic areas selected by the Steering Committee;
- ii. The merit of the proposal based on novelty, significance, clarity of presentation and appropriateness of design and research plan, feasibility of the proposed work, appropriateness and justification of the budget, and significance of expected outcomes;
- iii. The academic record and research background of all researchers involved in the project;
- iv. The strength of the researchers and institutions in the area of the proposed research;
- v. The mutual benefits of the proposed international research collaboration for KFUPM and the international partner institution;
- vi. Expected outcomes, such as publications, student training, intellectual property development, etc., and
- vii. The current focus of the grant is to target well-established collaborations with top institutions having on-going collaboration. However, international collaboration in strategic research priority areas with other top institutions can be made available at the later stage. Therefore, submitted proposals that do not fit this criterion will not be considered through this grant at this stage.



## 8. General Regulations

- i. Projects submitted under this grant will be competing for its annual budget allocated by the University based on a recommendation from the Steering Committee and the available budget for research funding.

## 9. Outcomes

Expected outcomes include:

- i. Publication Quality (At least one Q1 paper per year per project).
- ii. Publication Quantity (THREE ISI papers per year per project).
- iii. Other forms of IP. The IP ownership will be governed by the University policies in this regard.
- iv. Development of other research projects of strategic significance to the University.
- v. Research training of KFUPM students.
- vi. Joint seminars/workshops/visits of international collaborators.
- vii. Knowledge transfer, such as the development of a process or a product.

KFUPM researchers are expected to contribute significantly to the project work. Consequently, they are expected to be the lead authors in the joint publications. IPs developed through this grant will be governed by the KFUPM regulations for contributory research work.

## 10. Acknowledgements

Proper acknowledgment of KFUPM support in all publications and other outcomes resulting from completed funded projects is mandatory.