

Policy Title	Research Internal Seed Funding
Responsible AIU Office (Higher Management/Directorate)	Office of the VP for Research Affairs
Policy Owner (Executive Department/Office)	Office of the Comptroller Finance Department The Grants and Contracts Office (GCO)
Pertinent Dates	Draft1 : 19 th March 2022.

I. SCOPE OF POLICY

The internal seed fund grant scheme of AIU is designed to stimulate competitive research in strategic areas of national or international importance, to promote innovative product and technology development, and/or to facilitate the start of research programs which will potentially develop into creative ventures on their own through external funding. The grant is for full time academic staff with Ph.D. degree.

II. DEFINITIONS

PI	A full time AIU academic with Ph.D.
Strategic Areas	Areas specified in the AIU research strategy
Maximum Grant value	TBA
Maximum Grant Period	2 years

III. POLICY STATEMENT

Internal seed grant is provided by AIU to

- 1) Aid a faculty to start a research program that has the potential to sustain by attracting funds from external agencies.
- 2) To test a novel idea and to generate preliminary results before submitting proposals to external agencies.
- 3) To promote inter-faculty collaboration in emerging areas.

- 4) To promote generation of IPR and product/process development.
- 5) To attract and retain talent.

Internal seed grant shall be awarded up to the maximum grant value. The duration of the grant will be up to the maximum grant period. It could be extended by another year after a complete review of the outcomes. Grant money should be allocated for materials, licenses, equipment, hiring research assistants, hiring external professionals, and product development. It should not be allocated for furniture, travel, and/or publications.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

PI: Provide competitive research proposals.

Research Grant Committee: This committee evaluates research proposals, scores them, and allocates grants for winning proposals. It also monitors projects progress, and decides of grant continuation.

Research Unit Manager: Manages the financial issues of the research projects, also collects progress reports from PIs.

V. POLICY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

1- Eligibility Policy:

- a) Any faculty member holding a PhD degree with a proven track record of quality research and employed in AIU for at least one year.
- b) Any group consisting of faculty of AIU and collaborators from other institutes who shall submit a proposal for an externally funded program with the same proposers during or within 6 months of the completion of the seed funded project. External collaborator cannot be Co-PI in the seed grant. However, where required, letters from such collaborators may be attached in the proposal with commitment (such as facility use) clearly specified. They should also demonstrate that they do not have funding from external agencies for their proposed research.
- c) Any group comprising AIU faculty, PhD scholars, undergraduates, and post- doctoral fellows belonging to AIU with the principal investigator (PI) being an AIU faculty with PhD. Only AIU faculty can be PI. Participation by students of any category is encouraged but they may be only named as personnel in the project.
- d) At any time, a PI can submit only one application. However, he/she can be a coinvestigator in more than one proposal.
- e) The PI at the time of submission of application shall not have a running project funded by the seed-funding scheme in which he or she is the PI.
- f) To encourage all faculty members to participate, priority will be given for PIs who have not received an internal seed grant before, then the ones with less number of allocated internal seed grants.

2- Application Process:

- a) AIU should announce call for proposals twice a year. A decision will be made within 10 weeks of the submission deadline of the application.
- b) The call for proposals may limit research funding to a few strategic areas.
- c) Pre-proposals should be submitted for short-listing.
- d) The short-listed applicants will be asked to submit a full proposal of maximum 7 pages including figures and references.
- e) The full proposals will be reviewed by the research grant committee. The PI will be invited to make a presentation before the committee.
- f) Decision on the grant award should be announced on AIU web site with the proposal scores.
- g) Rejected proposal should be informed in writing about their scores, and suggestions for improvements

3- Selection Criteria:

- a) Innovative interdisciplinary applied research
- b) Team of faculty members whose expertise is complimentary.
- c) Promise of sustainable research and development attracting external funds.
- d) Budget matches the claimed outcomes.
- e) Potential to generate intellectual property. (Including product and process development)
- f) Commercialization Readiness.
- g) Number of previously allocated internal seed grants.
- h) Adherence to the AIU research policies and standards.

4- Evaluation Process:

- a) Pre-proposals will be evaluated by a rating scheme which considers each of the selection criteria.
- b) The PIs of the shortlisted pre-proposals will be asked to submit a full proposal.
- c) The selection committee would comprise a core of three or more internal (or external) faculty members/experts who may seek inputs from internal and/or external reviewers (as required).
- d) The full proposal will be rated for intellectual merit and its broader impact.
- e) The selection committee may if required, discuss proposals with TICO, and may seek further information from the PI before making a final decision.
- f) The proposal evaluation will consider the alignment of the budget with the deliverables
- g) The committee may suggest that two or more proposals to be combined if the committee deems it advantageous, and may award an amount greater than the maximum amount.

5- Grant Conditions:

- a) 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.
- b) The PI is responsible for the conduct of the research in accordance with the institute research policy.

- c) Procurement, utilization and maintenance of equipment will be as per institute policy
- d) The funds have to be utilized within the stipulated period.
- e) The grant money has to be utilized in accordance with the approved budget.
- f) The PI should submit a progress report every six months in the prescribed format for evaluation by the committee mandated to monitor individual projects. In case it is found that proper efforts are not being made further release of funding may cease.
- g) The PI will also be required to report progress or outcomes at the end of one year after the termination of the seed grant, including grants received and publication/IPR arising out of the seed grant.
- h) In any research communication arising out of the funded project, the contribution of the institute should be duly acknowledged.
- i) In case PI leaves the institute before the completion of project, a co-investigator from AIU will assume responsibility as PI. No collaborator from another institution can become PI under this condition.

6- Expected Deliverables:

- a) Externally funded projects should be generated as outcome of seed grant scheme.
- b) Publication in peer-reviewed journals/intellectual property generation including product/process development would be expected as outcomes of the project.
- c) Any IP emerging out of research funded by AIU will be owned by AIU. Such IPR will recognize contributions by all researchers as "inventors", and any resulting royalties will be shared by AIU and the inventors **(split percentages to be discussed)**.

VI. FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS (if applicable)

- 1- Research Pre-Proposal Template
- 2- Research Proposal Template
- 3- Project Progress Report Template

VII. APPENDICES (if applicable)

VIII. RELATED POLICIES

- 1. Research Ethics and Scientific Integrity Policy
 - 2. Research Fund Management and Financial Practices
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VIV. CONTACT INFORMATION

Research Office Manager

Triggered by:	Name	Date	Sig.
Created by:	Name	Date	Sig.
Revised by:	Name	Date	Sig.
Approved by:	Name	Date	Sig.