



# **Research Grants Bylaws at the Arab Open University**

**Adopted by AOU University Council**

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction-----	3
Article (1) Title -----	3
Article (2): Definitions -----	3
Article (3): APPLICANTS-----	3
Article (4): Research Types and Methods-----	4
Article (5): Application Procedures-----	4
Article (6):- Review and evaluation-----	4
Article (7): Project Acceptance Criteria-----	5
Article (8): Controls of the Implementation of the Research Project-----	5
Article (9): Support Subsidies -----	6
Article (10): Budget-----	6
Article (11): Notification of Approval Decision -----	6
Article (12): Project Reports-----	7
A. Progress Report	
B. Final Report	
Article (13): Extension and Extra Support-----	7
Article (14): Project Suspension and Cancelation-----	7
Article (15): General Financial Rules-----	7
Article (16): General Provisions-----	8

## Introduction

The Arab Open University seeks to prepare the proper environment for providing equal opportunities aiming to encourage mental growth and theoretical and applied research. Therefore the University's academics must do research in order to improve the quality of teaching and to enhance its sources by considering the research process a basic tributary and a primary factor for the development of society.

As an effective partner in this process, the AOU also provides support for research works and academic activities in the areas of interest to the Arab society. Therefore, specialized committees at the HQ and the branches determine research priorities and provide the needed support in association with external bodies that partake in the planning and implementation processes, in addition to benefitting from research results.

## Article (1) Title

The current bylaws shall bear the title of: "The Research Grants Bylaws at the Arab Open University"

## Article (2): Definitions

- a) The following words and expressions shall have the meanings specified hereunder unless the context indicates otherwise:

University	The Arab Open University (AOU)
Branch	The AOU branch in a certain country
Rector	The Branch Rector
Programme Dean	The Dean of an Academic Programme at HQ
College Dean	The local Dean / Branch Level Coordinator
Institutional Research	A general research which supports the AOU message
Academic Research	A specialized research linked to the specialization of a staff member
Committee	The Supreme (Central) Committee for Research and Development at HQ

## Article (3): APPLICANTS

All academic staff members at AOU may apply for an academic research grant. Priority shall be given to the research projects carried out by a team of researchers over single researcher projects. The team of researchers may include academics from universities or research centres outside AOU. However, in such cases, the chief researcher must belong to the Arab Open University.

#### Article (4): Research Types and Methods

- A. The AOU supports two types of research. These are:
1. Scientific research topics related to staff specializations.
  2. Institutional research topics which contribute to the achievement of the University's message and which also aim to develop and improve the educational process in the University.
- B. Research activities may consist of the following types:
- **Local research** undertaken by one or more researchers from the same AOU branch.
  - **Joint research** undertaken by a team composed of members from different AOU branches.
  - **External research** undertaken by team from AOU and one or more universities or research centres provided that the team leader is an AOU researcher.

#### Article (5): Application Mechanism and Procedures

- A. The basic steps of applying for AOU research funding/grants are:
1. An application submitted by the researcher asking for a research grant,
  2. Details of the research project,
  3. Filling in a relevant funding application form.
- B. The procedures of the application for research funding begin by preparing a "research project" which contain the following:

Project title	General work plan, administration and timetable
Project summary	Research methodology
Project aims	CV(s)
Project budget	Research revision report
Project team leader and members	Filled-in application form
An introduction and project background	

#### Article (6):- Review and Evaluation

- A. All research grant applications are reviewed and studied by the Supreme Committee for Scientific Research in order to determine their importance, their expected benefits and the suitability of the required funding.

- B. This Committee may nominate experts or assessors to review and determine the value of the proposed research project. These can be local or external assessors. Based on this procedure, the committee shall adopt one of the following decisions:
- Approve the request for a research grant.
  - Request an amendment of the project.
  - Refuse to grant a research fund after indicating the reasons.

#### **Article (7): Project Acceptance Criteria**

Research projects are valued according to the following benchmarks:

- **Academic criteria:** these are the criteria which reflect the academic competence of the researcher and his contributions, discoveries and additions in his field of study.
- **Competence and feasibility:** these are the criteria that show the academic capability of the researching team and the adequacy of the available resources.
- **The importance of the research topic** and its link to real life. Such criteria explain what the researcher(s) shall add to human knowledge in general and to AOU in particular.

#### **Article (8): Controls of the Implementation of the Research Project**

Each research project implementation is controlled by the following:

##### **A. The grant contract:**

- If the grant contract is accepted by the HQ committee, it will be sent to the chief researcher and asked to sign it.
- The contract controls the granting process. It is also considered a legal document which clarifies the nature of the two parties' commitments.

##### **B. Grant Conditions:**

Each grant contract consists of the following minimum conditions:

- Commitment to complete the project according to the administrative and scientific plan indicated in the research contract.
- Pledging to send progress reports and final reports according to the set deadlines.
  - o Progress reports each 6 months.
  - o A final report at the end of the project.

##### **C. Publication Rights and Acknowledgement**

The chief researcher must acknowledge the support accorded to him/her by the AOU in preparing and publishing the written paper.

### Article (9): Support grants

- A. The chief researcher shall be responsible for the management of the support grants according to the set rules and regulations. He/she shall sign all financial statements pertaining to the support grants.
- B. The pertinent AOU branch and its HQ shall bear the legal responsibility – via research committees – for matters of financial censorship on research grants.

### Article (10): Budget

- A. Applications for research grants must include a summary of the budget in US dollars that indicates the period needed to complete the proposed project.
- B. Amounts that have not been disbursed during a research period can be transferred to the next period provided that all unspent sums during the research period are returned.
- C. The research sums are distributed onto the following four major categories:
  - 1. **Working force:** meaning wages or remunerations given to team members during the implementation of the project, early expertise, and the assigned period which is determined by the project chief.
  - 2. **Operating expenses:** These are the sums needed by team members to purchase operate the project in a set period covering consumed items and printing.
  - 3. **Capital expenses:** These are the expenses needed by the team to purchase devices and books which are directly linked to project goals. Ownership of these supplies and books ought to go back to the university following the end of the research project. The chief researcher may keep these supplies and books with the approval of the supreme research committee.
  - 4. **Conference Attendance:** the chief researcher or a participating researcher may apply for “participation in a conference” to present a paper published about the research project results.

### Article (11): Notification of Approval Decision

- A. The decision to support academic research project is made exclusively by the Supreme Committee for Research and Development at HQ. Its decision is announced in a message sent to the research committee at the respective branch. A copy of the same is also sent to the chief researcher.
- B. The research committee at a certain branch may approve a research project costing not more than \$5000 without seeking the approval of the supreme committee at HQ.
- C. The said message names the title of the research, its implementation period and the amount of the grant, in addition to its other conditions.

## Article (12): Project Reports

The chief researcher must submit two types of reports:

### A. A Progress Report:

This is written every six months allowing the reader to follow up the progress of the project. It should contain the achievements made in carrying out the project up to date. It ought to be addressed to the Supreme Research Committee at HQ. The progress report is regarded as a document the Committee takes into consideration for allowing the payment of the next sum for the forthcoming implementation stage.

### B. A Final Report

The researcher must submit a final report for the research project at the time determined by the grant's contract signed by the chief researcher at the start of the project. The chief researcher must state that the project had been completed according to the drawn up plan. The report should also contain a full description of the completed project.

## Article (13): Extension and Extra Support

- A. Applications for extending the period of research which demand additional sums are dealt with like new applications requiring meeting of all conditions of procedure, form and budget.
- B. As for applications that do not require additional funds, the deciding body i.e. the HQ Supreme Research Committee or the Branch Research Committee may approve an extension provided that it does not exceed 3 months.

## Article (14): Project Suspension and Cancelation

- A. **Project Suspension:** if a research project had run into unforeseen emergency difficulties that would affect the implementation time limits and require its suspension on temporary basis, the chief researcher must send a suspension request to the committee at the branch which will ask the supreme committee to make the final decision.
- B. **Project cancellation:** the Supreme committee has the power to cancel the grant wholly or partially as a result of failing to submit follow up reports on time, or following a request made by the chief researcher who must state the reason for failing to proceed with the project.

## Article (15): General Financial Rules

- A. Commitments and expenses must be proven by receipts or other documents recognized by the AOU financial rules and regulations.
- B. All financial expense documents ought to be kept for periods determined by AOU's financial regulations.

## **Article (16): General Provisions**

- A. The current bylaws annul all previous bylaws named "Research Grant Bylaws"
- B. Rectors of AOU branches are responsible for implementing the decisions made according to the current bylaws.
- C. The University Council shall deal with matters not stipulated in these bylaws.