

**The Regulations of Research Grants at the Arab Open
University**

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Introduction

The Arab Open University (AOU) works on creating the right environment that provides equal opportunities in order to stimulate intellectual growth and theoretical and applied research. Faculty members should undertake research to improve the quality of education and learning resources, as the research process is a key factor in the development and evolution of society.

As an active partner in this process, AOU promotes research and scientific activities in areas of interest to the Arab community. Specialized committees at the University headquarters (HQ) and its branches identify research priorities and provide the necessary support in partnership with external bodies, to contribute to the planning, implementation and utilization of research results.

Article 1: Title

This document shall be called: “The Regulations of Research Grants at the Arab Open University.”

Article 2: Definitions

Unless the context indicates otherwise, the following words and expressions shall have the meanings specified hereunder:

The University	The Arab Open University
The Director	The Director of an Arab Open University branch or campus
The Branch	An Arab Open University branch or campus
Programme Dean	Dean of an academic programme at the University / HQ
College Dean	Local Dean/Coordinator at the branch level
Institutional Research	Public research that reinforces the University’s mission

Scientific Research	Specialized research related to faculty members' specialties
The Committee	The High (Central) committee for Research and Development at HQ

Article 3: Applicants

All faculty members at AOU can apply for research support. Priority is given to researches conducted by a team of individuals rather than by individual researchers. The team of researchers can include academics from universities and research centers other than AOU, in which case the principal researcher should be from AOU.

Article 4: Types and Methods of Research

- A) AOU promotes and supports two types of research:
- 1) Scientific research related to the specialties of faculty members.
 - 1) Institutional research that contributes to accomplishing the University mission, which aims to develop and improve the educational process at the University.
- B) Research activities include the following methods:
- *Local Research*: prepared by one or more researchers in the country branch.
 - *Joint Research*: prepared by a group of different AOU branches.
 - *External Research*: prepared by a team from AOU and other universities or research centers, provided that the team leader is from AOU.

Article 5: Mechanisms and Procedures of Submission

- A) Steps to apply for University funding for a research project:
- 1) Submit a letter from the researcher requesting funding.

- 2) Provide details of the research proposal.
 - 3) Fill out the research funding form.
- B) Preparation of the research project proposal is the first procedure in submitting the research project. It includes the following:
- Project title
 - Project objectives
 - Project summary
 - Project budget
 - Project leader and team members
 - General plan, work management and schedule
 - Research methodology
 - Research review
 - Filling in the special form
 - Curriculum Vitae

Article 6: Review and Evaluation

- A) All research projects submitted for grants shall be subject to evaluation procedures so that the Higher Committee for Scientific Research shall examine the project proposal to ascertain the importance of the project, its usefulness, and the appropriateness of the requested research budget.
- B) The Committee may nominate experts or arbitrators to review and evaluate the project proposal, whether they are internal or external. Accordingly, the Committee shall make one of the following decisions:
- Approval of the project proposal for a research grant.
 - Request of modification to one or more parts of the project proposal and re-review after amendments.
 - Rejection of the project proposal for a research grant with justification.

Article 7: Project Acceptance Criteria

Research projects are accepted based on the following evaluation criteria:

- **Academic standards:** the criteria that indicate the extent to which the researcher makes contributions, discoveries, or additions to their field of specialization.
- **Efficiency and feasibility:** the criteria that demonstrate the scientific competence of the research team and the adequacy of available resources.
- **Research significance and its linkage to reality:** the criteria that explain what the research adds to knowledge in general and to AOU in particular.

Article 8: Research Project Implementation Controls

A) Grant Contract

- If the research project is accepted by the Committee at HQ, the grant contract is sent to the principal researcher to sign it in agreement.
- The contract governs the grant process and is considered a legal document that explains the nature of both parties' obligations.

A) Terms of Grant

The grant contract contains the following terms as minimum requirements:

- Commitment to complete the project according to the administrative and scientific plan prescribed in the research document.
- Commitment to submit progress reports and the final report on time.
 - *Interim report:* a progress report conducted every six months.
 - *Final report:* the report conducted after project completion.

C) Acknowledgment of Copyright and Gratitude

The principal researcher should express their gratitude for the support provided by the University in preparing and publishing the scientific papers.

Article 9: Support Allocations

- A) The principal researcher shall be responsible for administering the support allocations under the applicable laws and regulations. He/she shall also sign any financial statements related to the research support.

- B) AOU HQ and the branch have a legal responsibility, through the research committees, to carry out financial control of the support allocations.

Article 10: Budget

- A) The request for support should include a summary of the required budget (in US dollars). It should also indicate the time period required to complete the proposed research.
- B) Amounts not disbursed during one stage of the research may be transferred to the subsequent stage. All remaining amounts that have not been disbursed during the period specified for the research are returned.
- C) Allocations are distributed to the following main items:
- 1) **Manpower:** the salaries or financial rewards provided to the team members during project implementation. Previous experience and time period should be determined by the project leader.
 - 2) **Operational expenses:** the allocation required by the project team to operate the project within the specified period of time, covering the purchase of consumables and printing.
 - 3) **Capital expenditure:** the allocation required by the project team to purchase equipment and books, which are directly related to the objectives of the project. After research completion, capital expenditure items will be the property of the University.
 - 4) **Attendance of Conferences:** the principal researcher or the co-researcher are entitled to apply for conference participation in order to submit any research published from the results of the project.

Article 11: Reporting the Approval Decision

- A) The decision to approve scientific research support is granted by the Higher Committee for Scientific Research and shall be announced by means of a letter addressed to the Scientific Research Committee in the branch, and a copy shall be sent to the principal researcher.

- B) The Scientific Research Committee in the branch may approve research projects in which the required support value does not exceed US \$5000 without reference to the Higher Committee at HQ.
- C) This letter identifies the title, duration, amount of support, and terms of the research grant.

Article 12: Project Reports

The principal researcher should provide two types of reports:

- A) **The Interim Report:** a progress report that includes the current status on project implementation. It is released every six months.
- B) **The Final Report:** at the start of the project, the principal researcher signs the grant contract, which specifies the time to submit this final report. The researcher acknowledges in this report that work on the project has been completed according to the drawn up plan, and provides a full description of the project.

Article 13: Extension and Additional Support

- A) Extension requests requiring additional funds are treated as new orders. They need to meet all the requirements in terms of procedures, form and budget.
- B) Extension requests that do not require funds can be approved by the reference; Scientific Research Committee in the country branch or the High Central Committee. The extension period must not exceed three months.

Article 14: Project Suspension and Cancellation

- A) **Project Suspension:** if the project is exposed to emergency difficulties that affect implementing it within the time commitment and requires temporary suspension/freezing, a request is submitted by the project leader to the branch scientific research committee then transferred to the High Committee for final decision.

- B) **Project Cancellation:** The High Committee has the right to cancel the grant in whole or in part as a result of non-compliance in submitting the interim reports on time, or by a request submitted to the Committee by the project leader with justification for cancellation.

Article 15: General Financial Rules

- A) Liabilities and expenses must be proven by receipts or other documents approved by the financial regulations in force at AOU.
- B) Financial documents justifying expenses should be retained for a period of time determined by the financial regulations in force at AOU.

Article 16: General Provisions

- A) The current bylaws herein shall override any previous bylaws relating to or having the same title or subject matter.
- B) University Directors are responsible for implementing the decisions issued under these regulations.
- C) The University Council should decide on cases where no provision is made in these regulations.

