

Research Incentive Fund (RIF) Grants are administered by the Zayed University **Office of Research**, under the direction of Dr Michael Allen, Assistant Provost Faculty Affairs and Research.

For more information, visit the [Research Website](#) or email [research@zu.ac.ae](mailto:research@zu.ac.ae)

Suggestions and input are always welcome.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Research Incentive Fund (RIF) Grants are competitive grants for **research** or **creative projects** made available each year to University faculty, through the Office of Research.

**Research** is defined as a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Research should discover new information, or reach a new understanding.

Please note: RIF Grants **will not** be awarded for purely professional development proposals, or for projects such as the hosting of a conference or workshop alone. All successful research proposals will be grounded in sound qualitative or quantitative research methodology and will be of a research scale to have significant and generalizable results.

**Creative Projects** include the creation, production, exhibition, performance, or publication of works by one or more individuals demonstrating originality in design or execution. Creative projects should include a clear articulation of the scholarly process, a definable product, and a mechanism for outside review and /or dissemination.

The product of creative projects may be disseminated to academic, consumer, government or others through original artwork, live performances, exhibits, consumer and other print media, academic journals, books, photographs, film, reports, video or audio recordings, graphic designs, digital imaging or other technologies. Typically, the significance accorded the creative project depends on the audience and recognition it achieves – local, national, or international.

## 2.0 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All regular contracted faculty and staff members at ZU are eligible to apply for RIF funding to support research. The Principal Investigator (PI) is expected to be PhD qualified or hold a research masters degree, and through their CV, demonstrate appropriate research training and experience.

To maximize broad faculty participation, faculty may not be named as PI on more than one current RIF project. Adjunct faculty may act as Co-Investigator with a contract faculty as PI. Collaborative projects may include Co-Investigators from other institutions, either national or international.

RIF Grants are designed to fund research projects over either a one or two year period, which can be either an individual grant (normally to a maximum of AED 20,000) or a small team or group research grant (normally to a maximum of AED 100,000).

Submissions will only be accepted using the [RIF Grant Proposal Application Form](#)

Submissions must be made electronically to the [Office of Research](#) and must be received prior to the closing date. Late submissions and incomplete submissions may not be accepted.

### Annual RIF Cycle

The annual RIF grant cycle begins in the Fall Semester of each year with a Request for Proposal released by the Office of Research and distributed to all University faculties. The exact submission dates, required forms and guidelines which will assist you with your proposal are available through the [Research website](#).

Date	Action
September	Request for RIF proposals issued by the Office of Research.
September/October	Grant Writing Workshops will be delivered on both AUH and DXB campuses to assist PIs develop their proposals.
End of October	RIF proposals submitted by faculty to Dean of College
November	College and Dean reviews completed, and endorsed proposals forwarded to Office of Research
December	<i>RIF Review Panel</i> completes review of proposals and makes recommendation to the Assistant Provost, Research.  Announcement of Awards.

### 3.0 COMPLETING THE RIF PROPOSAL

Since your proposal will likely be read by reviewers with varying experience and depth of knowledge in your field, it is critical to write in plain language with limited use of acronyms and jargon. A well scripted, error free document is a clear signal of PI and project quality.

Submissions will only be accepted using the [RIF Grant Proposal Application Form](#). The Application Form consists of five (5) parts:

- **SECTION A:** *Proposal Summary* – an overview of the major components of your proposal
- **SECTION B:** *Description of the Research Project* – a detailed description of your proposal
- **SECTION C:** *RIF Budget Spreadsheet* – a detailed explanation of your budget  
(Attach as a separate excel document)
- **SECTION D:** *SEDONA CV* – PI’s and Co-PIs CV generated in SEDONA  
(Attach as a separate word document)
- **SECTION E:** *Dean’s Evaluation* - approval from your Dean

A complete RIF application comprising the *RIF Grant Proposal Application Form* and two attachments (as above) must be submitted electronically to the [Office of Research](#) before the annual deadline. Page and word limits should be carefully followed as additional material will not be provided to the *RIF Review Panel* for evaluation.

## 4.0 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The *Research Standing Committee* is charged with responsibility for review and ranking of all RIF Grant proposals, and in this context are referred to as the *RIF Review Panel*.

Proposals will be judged using the [RIF Project Evaluation Criteria](#), on the basis of scholarly and creative merit, impact, and the ability of the PI to successfully accomplish their stated goals.

The review process undertaken by the *RIF Review Panel* occurs in three stages:

### Pre-Selection Review

A *Lead Reviewer* is identified for each proposal. Proposals are distributed to members of the *RIF Review Panel* for review/ranking. Each proposal is reviewed by multiple reviewers. The selection of reviewers attempts to match experience and specific research knowledge with relevant proposal topics.

Panel members review proposals, and independently complete the *RIF Project Evaluation Criteria* score sheet. Completed score sheets are then forwarded to the Office of Research for collation prior to the selection meeting.

Reviewers feedback is treated as confidential in order to secure candid judgment.

### The Selection Meeting

The *RIF Review Panel* meets in person to review the ranked list of RIF proposals. Proposals showing discrepancies in scoring and those near a financially or quality determined cut-off are discussed in depth. The final panel recommendations for funding, which may be conditional or may include modification of proposal budgets, are forwarded to the Office of Research.

Lead Reviewers will also provide an in-depth written critique highlighting both the strengths and limitations of the research and the appropriateness of the budget. At the discretion of the Assistant Provost Research, excerpts of this critique may be provided to the PI at the close of the process.

Should members of the *RIF Review Panel* also be applicants for the RIF grants, they will not be involved with the evaluation and ranking of their own proposal; will not be present if their proposal comes up for discussion at the *RIF Review Panel* meeting; and will not have access to the ranking or evaluation comments made by reviewers of their proposal.

### Post Selection Processing

In the case of a conditional award, the Office of Research will seek further clarification from the PI prior to confirming the final funding recommendations.

Recommendations for RIF Grants will be forwarded to the Provost for review. The Office of Research will then notify all PIs regarding the success of their proposals, including the written critique developed by the Lead Reviewer. Award letters for successful projects will specify the approved funding, the award period of the grant and the appropriate Financial Activity Codes which must be used for all RIF financial claims.

As all RIF proposals are independently ranked and evaluated, appeal of the decision taken by the *RIF Review Panel* or resubmission of the proposal within the same yearly competition is not possible. This is in line with international protocol for competitive research grant selection.

## 5.0 REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### Progress Reports

Acceptance of a research grant implies accountability of the PI to the project funder to achieve the goals set out in the research proposal. The Assistant Provost Research is responsible for monitoring the progress of on-going projects via review of regular [Progress Reports](#), which will be due biannually. The Office of Research will send a reminder when progress reports are due.

### Final Report

A [Final Report](#) is required at the completion of your research work, to document your progress in achieving the research goals and deliverables such as publications and knowledge transfer. The final report also acknowledges the closing off of financial accounts associated with your research.

The RIF project final report must be submitted to the Assistant Provost Research and copied to your College Dean not later than 90 days following the project completion date.

As part of the finalization of your RIF project, PIs should present their research findings or discuss the research project with the wider faculty community at Zayed University, in an endeavor to share research experiences and newly generated knowledge. The Office of Research can provide support in this area.

## 6.0 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The date the PI receives the *Financial Activity Code* from the Office of Research is considered the official project starting date.

All claims for expenditure should be made on the [ZU Payment Requisition](#) form and directed to the Office of Research for approval to ensure that budget is available against your activity code.

The Office of Research will assist PIs with all other implementation issues eg contracts and MOUs, intellectual property, human or animal subject research clearance, third party agreements, financial approvals etc

### 6.1 Budget Spreadsheet and Expenses

The [RIF Budget Spreadsheet](#) calculates all expenses you wish to include in your RIF proposal. Embedded formulas and detailed information will assist you to create your budget, and many of the calculations will be done for you. The budget will be used to verify financial claims against grant funds and so should be as accurate as possible.

Budgets are limited to an individual grant. Eligible expenses may include:

- ✓ Salaries/stipends for students, postdoctoral fellows, research associates, technicians, programmers etc.
- ✓ Purchase or rental and maintenance of research equipment, materials, laptops, supplies, and incidentals.
- ✓ Costs of computing, statistical and consulting services.
- ✓ Travel expenses for research-related activities for the PIs, Co-PIs and research personnel when essential to the research or creative project.
- ✓ Dissemination/publication costs of research results, excluding conference hosting and travels.
- ✓ Fees or other direct costs associated with the research use of facilities.
- ✓ Direct costs related to international exchanges and collaborations essential to the research or creative project.

Expenses may not include:

- ✘ Contingency values.
- ✘ Fees or payments to the PI or Co-Investigators.
- ✘ Course reassignments/releases fees.
- ✘ Conference hosting and travels.

Please note: teaching reassignments are managed and funded by the colleges and units.

As a PI, you are responsible to spend funding in accordance with the project budget. Minor reallocation or transfers between line items (**max. 10%**) do not require prior approval. However, substantial transfers or greatly deferred expenditures should be referred to the Office of Research for approval, as carry-over of unspent RIF balances into a new financial year is usually not possible.

The following table may assist you to estimate some of your eligible expenses:

Estimated expenses and contact information (May 2010)			
	Level	Range	Description
Research Assistants	AA 6	35-45 AED/hr	Data entry
Research Assistants	AO 5	45-55 AED/hr	Data gathering, interviewing
Research Assistants	AO 4	75-95 AED/hr	Specialist level for analysis, coding, interviewing, technical expertise
Translators	Level 1	60-90 AED/hr	General
Translators	Level 2	90-130 AED/hr	Technical translation, medical, legal
Room hiring/use	AUH Convention Center: <a href="mailto:jane.mckinnon@zu.ac.ae">jane.mckinnon@zu.ac.ae</a> ; DXB Convention Center: <a href="mailto:asli.palfreyman@zu.ac.ae">asli.palfreyman@zu.ac.ae</a>		
	AUH / DXB Campus: tbc		
Travel	Travel estimations: <a href="mailto:eric.dejesus@zu.ac.ae">eric.dejesus@zu.ac.ae</a> or <a href="mailto:jarita.sebastian@zu.ac.ae">jarita.sebastian@zu.ac.ae</a>		
	<a href="#">Local and international travel</a> (including mileage, per diems)		

## 6.2 Travel Expenses

Acceptable travel expenses include field trips to collect data, survey execution, field studies... etc. Traveling for dissemination purposes such as participating in overseas conferences is **not** included under the RIF grants' travel expenses. Conference travel should be processed by the colleges or units.

Please note: ZU policy states that any international travel requires specific pre-approval by the Provost. Once your RIF Grant proposal has been approved, a [Request to Engage in Professional Development](#) should be completed, approved by your Department Chair and Dean, and sent to the Office of Research, to ensure that budget is available against your RIF activity code. The request will then be forwarded to the Provost or designee for signature.

All claims for expenditure related to international travel are normally made using the ZU [Foreign Expense Claim Form](#). The completed form should be directed to the Office of Research for approval before processing in Finance, to ensure that budget is available against your RIF activity code.

## 6.3 Sub-Contracting and Out-Sourcing Staff

RIF Grants are intended to develop research expertise at Zayed University. To maximize the learning opportunities, PIs and/or Co-Investigators should be directly involved in as many facets of the research as possible. In some cases it will not be reasonable to expect that PIs and/or Co-Investigators have both experience and time to conduct all phases of the project, and in those instances it is acceptable to include sub-contractors in the budget.

Release of funds to subcontractors for RIF Grants will require Office of Research approval based on a signed MOU, timesheets and an invoice for the work completed. To avoid conflict of interest, approved subcontractors should be at arms-length from the PI and Co-Investigator(s).

An [MOU for hiring sub-contractors](#) is available.

It is recommended that a PI wishing to consider this route be in contact with the [Office of Research](#).

#### **6.4 Use of ZU Student Research Assistants**

The Office of Research encourages the use of ZU research assistants to build student research capacity. Budget allocation can include an allowance for payment of research assistants, based on the type of work they will be required to do (see suggested pay rates in Section 6.1).

A short [MOU for hiring of research assistants](#) is available.

Contact the [Office of Research](#) for advice on the identifying and selecting appropriate research assistants.

#### **6.5 Timeframe**

PIs are responsible for the management of their research progress to achieve major project milestones such as approval for human or animal subject research, development and testing of survey instruments, equipment/software acquisition and installation, execution of sub-contractor contracts, data acquisition, focus group planning, survey distribution, field trips, data analysis, presentation and manuscript preparation etc. Regular progress reports are required by the Office of Research.

#### **6.6 Project Assets**

Equipment, software, and other research infrastructure purchased with RIF funds must be inventoried, and is considered the property of the Zayed University. On either RIF grant finalization or departure of the PI from Zayed University, RIF purchased research infrastructure may remain with the department housing the project, or be transferred to central stores or the library for future use.

Hardware and software must be purchased with the advice of CSD to ensure compatibility and support.

#### **6.7 Intellectual Property**

Successful research normally generates intellectual property. While all intellectual property is valuable by virtue of its implicit new knowledge, only limited examples have real commercial value. As a public institution, Zayed University is committed to generating and disseminating new knowledge that contributes specifically to the strategic goals of the University and the UAE. PIs should consult [Policy ACA-RES-03](#) in relation to intellectual property at this University.

For more information about any aspect of your RIF Grant proposal, please contact the [Office of Research](#).