



Royal University of Bhutan



## **Guidelines for managing research, projects and consultancy services and research centres**

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## **1. Background**

According to the Royal Charter of the University (Article 2.2), research is one of the primary mandates of the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB), besides providing quality higher education. Research and innovation in the RUB shall be carried out with an aim to make its outcomes relevant and beneficial to contemporary problems and issues and when possible, shall beneficially impact the communities in the country and beyond.

In an effort to illuminate research policies and operation of research in a more concise and simplified form, this research guide booklet (hereafter referred to as research guide) was developed. This research guide covers operation, management, planning, monitoring and reporting of researches, projects and consultancies (hereafter abbreviated as R/P/C) and the financial transactions related to R/P/C executed by the College of Natural Resources (CNR), Royal University of Bhutan.

This research guide is expected to help streamline and strengthen the overall management of R/P/C activities in the College and enhance transparency. It is also expected to ultimately contribute to building a strong database related to R/P/C.

This guide approved in principle by the 43<sup>rd</sup> College Research Committee held in August 2022 is the revised and updated version of the research guidelines developed and approved by the 52<sup>nd</sup> College Academic Committee held in April 2020. The guide book will supersede the provisions of the Research Guidelines approved by the 52<sup>nd</sup> CAC.

## **2. Administration of Researches/Projects/Consultancies**

- 2.1. The College Research Committee (CRC) through the Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages shall approve, promote and monitor all categories of R/P/C and financial transactions related to the R/P/C executed by the college and its staff on their own or in collaboration with others both within and outside the country.

## **3. Research Priorities and Planning**

- 3.1. The CRC is responsible for identifying research priority areas in line with University and national research goals and aspirations.

## **4. Call for College Research Grant (CRG) & Annual University Research Grant (AURG)**

- 4.1. Annually, there are two research proposal calls for CRG (Fall: July and Spring: February)
- 4.2. For AURG, interested researchers shall submit their proposals to the DRIL office by February of every year, which shall be vetted by the CRC and eligible ones forwarded to the Department of Academic Affairs and Research (DAAR) by the end of April of every year.
- 4.3. For submitting proposals to both CRG and AURG, a prescribed form should be used (Annexure 1 for CRG and Annexure 2 for AURG).
- 4.4. If the fund provided by the AURG is not enough and if the CRC deems that the research is critical to the College and it is within the thematic priority of the College, then the additional amount may be topped up from the CRG by duly filling the additional fund approval form. (See Annexure 3).

## 5. Approval of Researches/Projects/Consultancies

- 5.1. All categories of R/P/C must obtain prior approval from the CRC.
- 5.2. Prior approval should be sought from the R/P/C conceptualization phase itself.
- 5.3. The R/P/C proposal submitted for prior approval must contain the following at the minimum:
  - 5.3.1. Topic
  - 5.3.2. Objective(s)
  - 5.3.3. Name of the funding agency
  - 5.3.4. Cost details including F&A cost of a minimum of 10%
  - 5.3.5. Work plan
  - 5.3.6. Number of outstanding R/P/C of the Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Investigator(s) (Co-I), if any.
- 5.4. In instances where the F&A cost is not permitted by the funding agency/partner or agreed, but below the rate of 10%, then prior approval of the CRC must be sought.
- 5.5. The F&A fee does not apply to CRG, but it may be included in AURG.
- 5.6. The CRC shall review the R/P/C proposals within three working weeks from the time of the receipt of the proposal.
- 5.7. The decision of the CRC on the proposal will be the following:
  - 5.7.1. *Approved* - The R/P/C may proceed immediately without any changes.
  - 5.7.2. *Approved with minor changes* - The proposal has to be submitted again after incorporating the changes suggested by the CRC and in some cases the panel constituted by the CRC. The proposal should be resubmitted to the CRC within 10 days. (Failing to submit beyond the deadline of 10 days will not be considered.)
  - 5.7.3. *Reject* - A R/P/C may be rejected if it is not within the scope of the University's research interest and policy or the College's research agenda and fail to meet the quality standards required for approval.
- 5.8. However, the applicant may submit another or revised proposal in the next call, which shall be treated as a fresh application.
- 5.9. Criteria for evaluating the R/P/C proposal include the following:
  - 5.9.1. Title
  - 5.9.2. Introduction
  - 5.9.3. Problem Statement
  - 5.9.4. Specific aims and objectives
  - 5.9.5. Literature review
  - 5.9.6. Research Design
  - 5.9.7. Statement on the ethical conduct of the research
  - 5.9.8. Statement on potential conflicts of interest
- 5.10. Through an official letter, the DRIL shall inform the concerned PI of the R/P/C on the status (approval or rejection) of the proposal.
- 5.11. Until a separate body is established for ethical standards, the CRC shall serve as the Human Research Ethics Board on all matters related to human subject research and

Animal Ethics Committee on all matters related to animal research (Refer Zhib Tshoel for details).

## **6. Registration of Researches/Projects/Consultancies**

- 6.1. Once the R/P/C is approved, the concerned PI, will fill the R/P/C registration form (see Annexure 4) and submit it to the Office of the DRIL for registration.
- 6.2. The DRIL will issue an Office Order to the PI notifying him or her of the successful registration of the R/P/C. This Office Order will contain amongst others the following:
  - 6.2.1. Title of the R/P/C
  - 6.2.2. Registration number and date
  - 6.2.3. R/P/C start and end dates
  - 6.2.4. Centre under which the R/P/C is registered
  - 6.2.5. Total fund awarded
  - 6.2.6. PI and Co-Is
  - 6.2.7. Reminder on the progress and completion report submission.
- 6.3. It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure the content of the Office Order on registration is correct.
- 6.4. There is no need for registration of those proposals which are approved under the CRG and AURG funding. In such case, soon after the approval of the proposals by the CRC or DAAR (for AURG), the research shall be automatically registered through the issuance of the Office Order to the concerned PI.
- 6.5. Soon after completion of the registration, the concerned researchers can commence their R/P/C.

## **7. Collaborative Research within and outside the College/University**

- 7.1. For all collaborative R/P/C, a Letter of Agreement (LoA) must be signed between the collaborating partners, which has to be initiated and processed by the concerned PI.
- 7.2. The LoA can be signed by the Head of the College or by his/her legal representative only after consultation with the Office of the DAAR, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Thimphu.

## **8. Progress and Monitoring of Researches/Projects/Consultancies**

- 8.1. The progress report of the R/P/C must be submitted by the concerned PI to the DRIL office half-way through the implementation of the R/P/C or every six months, whichever is shorter. (See Annexure 5 - R/P/C Progress Report Form)
- 8.2. A final report of the R/P/C must be submitted to the DRIL office upon the completion of the work. (See Annexure 6 - R/P/C Completion Report Form).
- 8.3. Each staff of the College is allowed to take up only five R/P/C at any given time either as a PI or Co-I. However, a staff may be allowed the sixth R/P/C after vetting by the CRC and provided that the overlap between the completion of at least one of the outstanding R/P/C and the new/proposed R/P/C is not more than three months.
- 8.4. Notwithstanding the Clause 8.3, a staff member can not be a PI for more than one CRG or AURG research at any given time even if his/her outstanding R/P/C is less than five.

8.5. The DRIL office must maintain database of all the R/P/C and must report this inventory to the College quarterly.

### **9. Sanctions for not submitting R/P/C Progress and Completion Report**

9.1. Those (including the PI and his/her team) submitting progress or completion report late will not be allowed to propose for new R/P/C for up to 12 months.

9.2. Those (including the PI and his/her team) failing to submit the completion report will be liable for refunding the entire fund related to the R/P/C with 24% interest from the time of the completion of the R/P/C in addition to not being eligible for new R/P/C for up to 12 months.

### **10. Time Extension of R/P/C**

10.1. For any time extension of R/P/C, the concerned PI must submit an application and get approval from the CRC.

10.2. Time extension to R/P/C may be granted for up to 12 months, depending on the genuineness of the appeal.

10.3. Time extension for any externally funded R/P/C, a prior approval must be sought from the external partners, which will be the basis for the CRC to grant extension.

### **11. Financial Transaction related to Researches/Projects/Consultancies**

11.1. All funds secured for R/P/C must be deposited in the College's Current Deposit account.

11.2. Based on the request and on behalf of the PI, the Finance Section shall raise invoice for any fund transfer related to the R/P/C with a copy to the DRIL.

11.3. Advance money, if required, shall be provided to implement specified activities, but the same has to be utilized within 10 days of the release of the fund.

11.4. The settlement of the advance fund availed shall be done within three weeks after the completion of the specified activity or activities. Subsequent release of advance fund shall be contingent upon the settlement of the previous advance taken related to the R/P/C.

11.5. To avail the final payment after the completion of the R/P/C, the concerned PIs must submit the R/P/C completion report to the DRIL who in turn shall endorse for final payment and closure of the R/P/C.

11.6. The Finance Section shall maintain database of all research funds and report to the CRC quarterly. The report must contain amongst others, the following:

11.6.1. The annual fund allocated to research, amount used and balance

11.6.2. Breakdown of research fund received, used and balance for each of the R/P/C

11.6.3. Total fund generated through R/P/C for each quarter.

11.6.4. Total F&A fee deducted/collected.

- 11.7. Revenue generated from consultancies may be paid to the researcher subject to the consulting guideline as specified in the HR Policy (See Zhib Tshoel).
- 11.8. The management of funds will be as per the RUB financial rules and regulations. However, exceptions can be made to the revenue generated from the consultancies, which may be as per the consultancy guidelines of HR Policy.
- 11.9. Time sheet may also be followed for payment. (See Annexure 7).
- 11.10. For budget preparation, Annexure 8 form may be followed.

## **12. Operation, Management, Membership and Sustainability of Research Centres**

- 12.1. Research centres (RCs) at the Colleges are established to have research, advisory and consultancy services dedicated to specific thematic research areas that support and promote linkages with industries or organizations.
- 12.2. Each Centre shall have a Coordinator who is a faculty member and report to the DRIL.
- 12.3. The DRIL is responsible for oversight of the Centres and ensure proper functioning within the overall College research environment and strategic plans.
- 12.4. Annual activity planning of the Centres shall be jointly prepared by the Research Centres' Coordinators (RCCs), Research Officer and the DRIL.
- 12.5. The Research Officer and/or Liaison Officer shall support the implementation of the planned activities of the Centres and Units.
- 12.6. The RCs drive the research, services and projects to generate revenue for the College.
- 12.7. The RCs shall support and promote thematic research in the college.
- 12.8. The RCs shall disseminate, document and conduct capacity building activities at the College.
- 12.9. Support the formation of research groups of personnel with similar interests.
- 12.10. Initiate formulation of group proposals.
- 12.11. All the staff of the College by default are members of the RCs.
- 12.12. All the R/P/C including the advisory and community services must be registered with one of the centres relevant to the concerned Department or be registered based on the recommendation of CRC.
- 12.13. All the R/P/C, including the advisory and community services carried out by the Department of Sustainable Department shall report and be registered with the Centre for Rural Development Studies.

- 12.14. The Department of Environment and Climate Studies and the Department of Forest Sciences shall report and be registered with the Centre for Environment and Climate Research.
- 12.15. The Department of Agriculture, Department of Animal Science and Department of Food Science and Technology shall report and be registered with the Centre for Sustainable Mountain Agriculture.
- 12.16. Any R/P/C related to the cross-cutting issues shall report to the Centre for Rural Development Studies or should seek advice from the CRC through DRIL.
- 12.17. The RCs shall operate within their Terms of Reference, and follow research processes outlined in the Zhib Tshoel.
- 12.18. All RCs are expected to maintain a current information in the web with their approved logos.
- 12.19. The Centres shall align the research and other activities based on the College's strategic plan and the Key Performance Indicators.
- 12.20. The Coordinator shall report to the DRIL.
- 12.21. The Coordinator shall be responsible for the budget, research direction, and resourcing of a Centre.
- 12.22. The Coordinator shall be responsible for negotiation with the head of the Department to engage a faculty member should a need arise.
- 12.23. The Coordinators shall submit an annual interim report to the DRIL for onward reporting to the CAC and Research and Innovation Committee as per the guidelines.

### **13. Research Results Publications/Dissemination/Annual Reporting**

- 13.1. All researchers are encouraged to publish the findings of their research in peer-reviewed journals both within and outside the country, including the College's own BJNRD.
- 13.2. For publication related policies refer Chapter 15 of the Zhib Tshoel.
- 13.3. A copy of the publication (be they journal article or reports) should be submitted to the DRIL office, which will maintain a database of all publications and circulate the compiled record on a quarterly basis.

### **14. Administration of Trainings at the College**

- 14.1. All trainings should contribute to the overall financial and capacity development of the College.
- 14.2. Remuneration of staff involved in projects, consultancies and trainings shall be done as per Table 1.



**Table 1:** Remuneration for the work done by a researcher

<b>Entitlement</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Professional fee	Nu. 2000/day x No. of days	If work done on station during the session
Travel	Normal DSA	For actual travel outside the College only
Extra Salary	Per day cost x No. of days	If conducted during vacation only

*Note: A day is equivalent to a minimum of 8 working hours.*

14.3. Staff remuneration is based on the decision made by the 240<sup>th</sup> CMC meeting:

14.3.1. One week (5 days) = Nu. 30,000 lump-sum (1 Course Director and 2 Resource persons; if only 2 or more than 3 are involved then Nu. 30,000 has to be divided amongst all these members. Nu. 30,000 doesn't include pre- and post activities of the Course Director, which should not exceed additional Nu 10,000)

14.3.2. For preparing training materials, the time is included within the professional fee. Irrespective of the number of RPs engaged, professional fee per day is Nu. 2,000/day.

14.3.3. There will be no segregation between practical and theory sessions. The payment for both will be the same.

14.3.4. Resource person from outside the College should be paid from the lump-sum amount of Nu. 30,000 or from the maximum amount of Nu. 40,000.

14.3.5. The external RPs will be provided modest accommodation by the College as per the Office Order issued by the RUB.

14.3.6. The external RPs will be provided Nu. 2,000 professional fee per day in addition to the one-time two-way mileage (refer Office order of the RUB).

14.4. Table 2 should be followed while calculating the cost for training.

**Table 2:** Budget head and rate for project cost calculation

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Budget head</b>	<b>Rate</b>
1	Staff cost	Monthly gross pay divided by 30 x No. of days
2	Travel	DSA rate x No. of days
3	Professional fee	Nu. 2000/day x No. of days
4	Stationery/materials	Actual cost
5	Transport	km to travel x Nu. 25
6	Equipment	Actual cost
7	Facility rental	Actual cost
Subtotal (A)		Total of 1-7
F&A cost (B)		10% of the subtotal (A)
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>A + B</b>

In case of projects which mandates paying salary to the regular staff of the CNR, it will be done according to the RUB Financial Rules and the additional amount deducted in the name of CNR staff will be deposited to the College's account.

**Annexure 1: CRG Proposal Approval Form (to be approved by the CRC)**

1. Title of the proposal:			
2. Research start date:		3. Research end date:	
4. Team Members	Designation/Dept.	Email and Phone no.	No. of outstanding R/P/C
i) PI			
ii) Co-I			
iii) Co-I			
iv) Co-I			
5. Problem Statement			
6. Research objective(s)			
7. Review of key literatures			
8. Methodology (should include study area, research design, data collection methods and data analysis procedures)			
9. Workplan (include as Annexure 1)			
10. Estimated budget (breakdown of all costs) (Include as Annexure 2)			
11. Ethical considerations			
12. Research dissemination (e.g., publication in journals, periodicals, etc.)			
13. Bibliography			
Recommendation of the CRC			
<p><b>Signature of the Chair</b>  <b>College Research Committee</b></p>			

**Annexure 2: Annual University Research Grant proposal approval Form**

<b>Grant Applied for:</b>			
1	<b>Research Title</b>		
2	<b>Researchers and Institutions</b>		
2.1	<b>Main applicant and Principal Investigator</b>		
	<b>First name</b>		<b>Last name</b>
	<b>College</b>		
	<b>Position</b>		<b>Sex</b>
	<b>Email</b>		<b>Phone</b>
<b>Co-Investigator</b>			
	<b>First name</b>		<b>Last name</b>
	<b>College</b>		
	<b>Position</b>		<b>Sex</b>
	<b>Email</b>		<b>Phone</b>
<b>Co-Investigator</b>			
	<b>First name</b>		<b>Last name</b>
	<b>College</b>		
	<b>Position</b>		<b>Sex</b>
	<b>Email</b>		<b>Phone</b>
<b>Co-Investigator</b>			
	<b>First name</b>		<b>Last name</b>
	<b>College</b>		
	<b>Position</b>		<b>Sex</b>
	<b>Email</b>		<b>Phone</b>
3	<b>Project description</b>		
3.1	Problem statement (between 200-250 words)		
3.2	Research questions and sub-questions		
3.3	Review of key literatures (between 400-500 words)		
3.4	Methodology (1,000 words)		
3.4.1	Approach/Paradigm Theory		
3.4.2	Data Collection Procedure		
3.4.3	Data Analysis Procedures		
3.4.4	Data Presentation		
3.5	Significance of the study (in relation to knowledge, policy and practice) (200 words)		
3.6	Research dissemination (e.g., publication in journals, periodicals, newspapers, etc.)		
3.7	References		

<b>4</b>				
<b>Action Plan and Budget</b>				
	<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>		
		<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>
5	Has the Principal Investigator previously received AURG in the past two years?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Amount in Nu.	Year		
6	Has the PI previously received college research grant in the past two years?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Amount in Nu.	Year		
7	Ethics Committee approval number <b>Note:</b> Research/Project proposal (the PI must submit a research/project proposal using the RUB proposal submission form)			

**Certification**

This is to certify that the details provided in this application form are true and complete and evaluated and endorsed by the College.

**Chair**  
**College Research Committee**  
**Date:**

Endorsement by the President of College

I certify that the research/project can be accommodated within the general understanding of the College in relation to workloads, leave availability and overall research facilities.

Signature

Name:  
Date:

**Annexure 3: Approval Form for Financial Support from the CRG (for endorsement by the CRC)**

1. Title of the proposal:			
2. Research start date:		3. Research end date:	
4. Team Members	Designation/Dept.	Email and Phone no.	No. of outstanding R/P/C
i) PI			
ii) Co-I			
iii) Co-I			
iv) Co-I			
5. Total funds required for the research. Nu.			
6. Total funds requested from the CRG. Nu.			
<b>Remarks:</b>			
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Signature of the Chair</b> <b>College Research Committee</b></p>			





**Annexure 6: R//P/C Completion Reporting Form**

1. Date of Completion report submission:	
2. Title of R/P/C:	
3. Registration no.:	
4. R/P/C start date:	5. R/P/C end date:
6. Total fund used (Nu):	7. Total fund balance (Nu)
8. Activities completed ✓ ✓	
9. Attach evidence of completion of the R/P/C in the form of article, report, monograph, etc.) ✓ ✓	
10. Signature of the PI:	
11. <b>Signature of the DRIL:</b>	



**Annexure 7: Time Sheet Preparation Form**

Name of the R/P/C:				
Sl. No.	Date	No. of hours/days (specify)	Activities	Remarks
<b>Total</b>				
Name and signature of the PI Date:		Verified by DRIL: Date:		Approved by President Date:

**Annexure 8: Budget Preparation for R/P/C (Example)**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Amount (Nu)</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1.	Printing papers	Rim	Nu. 220/rim	3	660	
2	Travel	Days	Nu. 1,500/day	10	15,000	
3	etc.					
4	etc.					
	Subtotal					
	F&A fee	10% of the subtotal cost				
<b>Grand total</b>						

## References

- RUB. (2014). *Zhib Tshol - TUB Research Policies*. Royal University of Bhutan, KMT Printing Press, Bhutan: Thimphu.
- RUB. (2015). *RUB Research Degrees Framework*. Royal University of Bhutan, KMT Printing Press, Bhtuan: Thimphu
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