



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FUND GUIDELINES

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Botswana Open University (BOU) has established a Research and Innovation Fund to build BOU's internal research capacity and to enable staff to undertake research which contributes to knowledge advancement and societal impact.
- 1.2 In order to ensure equitable usage of the Research and Innovation Fund and to optimize the quality of research deliverables funded through institutional support, these Guidelines have been developed to inform the process of application and decision on grants from the Fund. Recommendations for funding are vested in the School/Institute/Centre Research Committees. Staff of the University who are not academic members of staff shall submit their application through the School whose disciplinary area is cognate to the topic of their proposed research project.
- 1.3 Decisions to award a Research and Innovation grant are the prerogative of the Research and Innovation Fund Committee, which is a sub-committee of the University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC).

2. The Purpose of the Research and Innovation Fund

- 2.1 The Research and Innovation Fund is integral to the achievement of the commitment in the University *Research and Innovation Policy* to “develop and sustain an institutional culture that promotes active staff engagement in research and innovation”.
- 2.2 In particular, the Research and Innovation Fund is intended to:
 - 2.2.1 drive the research themes identified in the *Research and Innovation Strategy*;
 - 2.2.2 strengthen research and innovation excellence among staff and foster the research and innovation competencies of students;
 - 2.2.3 provide incentives and support for the dissemination of research findings and related spin-offs, concepts and any discoveries or innovations arising from the research and innovation projects;
 - 2.2.4 foster collaborative research, especially where a senior member is mentoring a junior staff member or BOU students;

- 2.2.5 provide assistance toward submitting a proposal to an external funding or granting body or agency;
- 2.2.6 provide support for research projects with conclusions and recommendations for solving industry or societal problems;
- 2.2.7 support the dissemination of high quality results with the potential for publication in accredited journals.

3. Role of the School/Institute/Centre Research Committee

- 3.1 Each School, Research Institute and Research Centre shall have a Research Committee. One function of this Committee is to make recommendations on the allocation of research and innovation funds. The Research Committee is tasked with vetting all potential grant proposals and making a recommendation, using the following process:
 - 3.1.1 Receive and assess the intellectual contribution, societal impact or commercial potential of the grant proposal applications with motivations, budgets and timelines;
 - 3.1.2 Make a recommendation and justification for funding having satisfied itself of the quality of the grant application proposal.
- 3.2 The Committee will forward the application documentation and the minutes containing its recommendation to the Centre for Research and Innovation.

4. Role of the University Research and Innovation Fund Committee

- 4.1 The University Research and Innovation Fund Committee will be comprised of a representative of each School/Institute/Research Centre and will choose its own Chairperson. The Director, Centre for Research and Innovation shall be the Secretary. The Committee shall take decisions on recommendations received from the School/Institute/Research Centre Research Committees. Its decisions for the award of research project grants will be based on merit and the equitable allocation of funds.
- 4.2 The Committee's decision will be conveyed in a formal letter. Where a grant has been awarded, the letter will indicate the following:

- The amount granted
- The obligations of the grantee (s)
- The logistics of payment
- The accounting procedures upon delivery of the research project report

5. Conditions for Research and Innovation Funding

In making its decisions, the University Research and Innovation Fund Committee will take into account the conditions stipulated below:

- 5.1 Research and innovation project support will be subject to the availability of funds and may involve full funding or partial funding to supplement funding from an external source.
- 5.2 Preference will be given to research and innovation projects that address the research and innovation themes identified in the *University Research and Innovation Strategy*.
- 5.3 Funding will only be considered on the basis of a recommendation from the School/Institute/Research Centre Research Committee and evidence that due process has been followed.
- 5.4 Both junior and senior members of staff will be eligible for research and innovation funding support.

6. Eligibility for Research and Innovation Funding

A research and innovation grant will be made in accordance with the BOU Financial Regulations. Eligible expenses may include all or some of the following:

- 6.1 Costs of materials/equipment and supplies needed to undertake the research and innovation project. The applicant(s) must first demonstrate that there are no existing materials/equipment that can be used to meet the needs of the project

- 6.2 Travel costs. These must be directly aligned to the purpose and objectives of the research and innovation project and include clear details of destination, duration, mode and cost of travel justified.
- 6.3 Research assistance costs.
- 6.4 Costs of dissemination activities and publication fees.
- 6.5 Other related costs deemed appropriate by the Committee.

7. Application Motivation

An applicant's motivation for a Research and Innovation grant should include an explanation of any or all of the following:

- 7.1 How the project is aligned to the *University Research and Innovation Strategy*.
- 7.2 How the results will advance the knowledge base of the field and how they will be disseminated.
- 7.3 How the research and innovation project will build research capacity and serve as a catalyst for greater impact in the field.
- 7.4 The potential to generate a concept or prototype.
- 7.5 The potential to develop an application for external funding.

8. Progress Report

A progress report shall be submitted to the Committee mid-way through the research project.

9. Failure to Undertake or Complete the Research and Innovation Project

Failure to undertake or complete the funded research and innovation project for whatever reasons should be indicated to the Centre for Research and Innovation immediately and the funds should be returned.

10. Upon Completion of the Research and Innovation Project

Upon completion of the project, grantees will be expected to:

- 10.1 Submit a report to the Centre for Research and Innovation, highlighting the following: the major outcomes of their findings; the new knowledge, concept or innovation(s) generated; the dissemination and publication plan; and any other follow-up activities.
- 10.2 Complete the financial form as provided for in BOU's Financial Regulations.

11. Review

These Guidelines will be reviewed every three years or as necessary.