Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology

AUST Internal Research Grant (AIRG)

(Terms and Conditions, and Applications Procedures)

Subject to the Approval of BoT

Approved in 16th CASR held on 7th February 2023

February 2023

Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology
Committee for Advanced Studies and Research (CASR)
AUST Internal Research Grant (AIRG)

Terms, Conditions,and Application Procedures for
AUST Internal Research Grant 2.0

1.0 Preamble

Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST)shall regularly allocate a significant portion of its annual budget to fund internal research. AUST Internal Research Grant (AIRG) shall be awarded to the faculty members and officers of AUST for carrying out research that will help strengthen the teaching, learning, and research capacities, and acquire external research funding by demonstrating the potential of the proposed research.

The Committee for Advanced Studies and Research (CASR) will foster the fundamental research activities at AUST to generate knowledge that contributes to the improvement of intellectual assets. The award of the grant shall be made following the terms, conditions, and procedures outlined in this document. The grants would be managed by the CASR with the help of the Research Project Committee (RPC) and the Research and Publication Office (RPO).

2.0 Objectives

- ✓ To contribute to the development of the society and the nation.
- ✓ To help enhance the University's research profile and image.
- ✓ To engage the university population in a culture of expanding knowledge.
- ✓ To develop a linkage with the industry and other stakeholders.
- ✓ To attract external collaboration and research funding.
- ✓ To increase scholarly output.

3.0 Call for Proposal

- AUST Internal Research Grant applications will be solicited through Call for Proposals twice in a financial year.

- A Call for Proposals for AIRG shall be published on AUST website and circulated among the faculty members and officers of AUST through emails.

- Applicants shall submit research proposals in prescribed forms (Appendix A) within four weeks of the Call.

- Proposals shall be evaluated through a judicious method, and the grant will be available for the successful applicants from either the 1st of January or the 1st of July— the earliest following a call.

4.0 Application Criteria

- AIRG applicants must be full-time faculty members and officers of AUST.

- Chairman and Member Secretary of CASR cannot apply for AIRG during their tenure.

- Funding can be requested for projects that can becompletedwithin a period of up to 2 years. A maximum of BDT 5.0 lac per year can be requested as the research grant.

- The proposal must be submitted in Form A provided by theCASR (Appendix A).

- Proposals for AIRG shall be scrutinized and forwarded by the concerned Head/Director of the Department/School/Institute/Centre to CASR.

- CASR will maintain an online portal to facilitate submission, review, notification, and management of submitted proposals, and funding information.

- **Research Team**
  - Each project shall have one Principal Investigator (PI) and one Co-PI (both full-time AUST faculty members and officers). This condition must be maintained throughout the project time.
  - A research team can consist of up to 3 (three) Co-PIs. A maximum of 2 (two) Co-PIs from outside AUST can be included in the team.
  - In a particular AIRG Cycle (under a specific Call for Proposal), an applicant can submit only one proposal either as the PI or as the Co-PI.
  - A person cannot be the PI for more than one project simultaneously. However, after completing a project, he/she may apply for another project as a PI.
  - A Co-PI can be the PI for another project that is not awarded in the same cycle.
  - A PI or a Co-PI can be the Co-PI for another project not awarded in the same cycle.
  - If a PI is unable to continue with a research project, the Co-PI from AUST will replace him; the new PI may include another Co-PI for the project. Similarly, if Co-PI (from AUST) leaves, and there is no Co-PIfrom AUST in the team, then PI can include another AUST faculty member or officer as Co-PI for the Project.
  - If both PI and Co-PI(from AUST) of a project are unable to continue the project, and no other Co-PI (from AUST) is available to take up the project responsibilities, the CASR will decide about the project's completion.
  - If project progress is affected by any other unforeseen reason or changed circumstances, it should be referred to the CASR that will take appropriate decision.

5.0 Selection of Research Grantees

- The grant applications will be initially screened for eligibility by the relevant department. Head of the Department and a senior faculty member/officer in the relevant field will verify, among others, the budget, duration, project timeline, and eligibility of the project and the applicants.

- After this screening, the Department will send the document to RPCfor conducting review, along with a list of at least 3 (three) prospective reviewers for each proposal who have already consented.

- The RPC will be chaired by the Pro VC and shall consists of the Dean of the Faculty and the Head of the Department to which the PI belongs to. If the Dean or HoD is a grant applicant in the said project, then a senior faculty member can represent the Faculty or Department.

- The RPCwill select appropriate reviewers for each eligible grant application from a number of suggestions sent by the Department. The peer review process will be double-blinded.

- The reviewers will receive an honorarium for reviewing AIRG Proposals. The honorarium will be decided and managed by the RPO.

- Each project will be reviewed by 2 (two) independent reviewers as selected by the RPC; at least 1 (one) reviewer must be selected from outside AUST.

- The reviewers will give their comments and score the proposal by using the Form B (Annexure B).

- If the mean of evaluation scores is less than 60%, the project will not be granted.

- However, if the average is 60% or more but one of the scores is either 40% or less, the proposal will be sent to a third reviewer. In such a case, the two closest of the three scores would be considered to make the decision.

6.0 Evaluation Criteria

- **Design, novelty and feasibility**:
  - The proposal is written in a way that a person with no prior knowledge of the subject can make an informed judgment on the scientific or scholarly merit of the proposed project.
  - The proposal clearly describes objectives and anticipated implications of the project's findings and how the projects intends to reach them.
  - The proposed project clearly exhibits the application of a sound investigative methodology.
  - Models/proceduresrelevantto the statistical and survey analyses are linked to the research questions/hypotheses and observemoral and ethical values.
  - Tasks, deliverables and milestones are properly specified, achievable within the timeline, and aligned with the project objectives.
  - All the works relevant to the project proposal, investigation, data, analysis, report etc. maintain the required moral and ethical standard.

- **Significance of expected results and outcomes**:
  - The proposal indicates generation of new ideas or re-examination of theestablished concepts.
  - Irrespective of the nature of the research, the proposal demonstratesitsvalue, and have the potential for producing scholarly publications in high-impact, peer-reviewed international journals.
  - The project possesses a potential to obtain external funding or elevate institutional image.
  - The proposal is supported by relevant scholarly literature.

- **Research Team**:
  - The RPC shall make necessary judgment on the Research Team.
  - Specific attention will be given to the PI's performance with respect to prior AIRG awards and to the quality of outcomes thereof.
  - The research and publication record of the PI will be considered.
  - Whenever applicable, the PI shall submit results from one research project for publication or presentation before requesting funds for a new project.
  - Special consideration will be given to young applicants who are engaged in their initial research efforts, wish to change their research focus, begin new research efforts in emerging areas, and/or build research teams.

- **External Support**:
  - PIs are expected to apply for external funding to support on-going research.
  - The AIRG shall generally favor applications that have scopes of getting external funding for further research.

7.0 Fiscal and Other Conditions

- The number of proposals to be funded will be contingent upon availability of funds.

- The amount of maximum grant per project will be reviewed every 3 years by theCASR.

- A maximum of 10% of the research grant can be requested as honorariums for the PI and Co-PI(s).

- Research projects can request for Research Assistants (RAs) for specific duration from the AIRG.The remuneration of RA(s) shall not exceed 20% of the total budget.

- RAs shall be appointed by the PI by using Form E (Annexure E).

- Preference shall be given to the applicant with sound academic background from a reputed university and some research experience. A candidate for a RA has to be at least a fourth-year undergraduate student with a minimum CGPA of 3.0.

- Application for the position of RA can be calledon the AUST website and posted on noticeboards. The Research Team should conduct an interview to select an RA. RA can also be selected by soliciting a qualified person; in that case a soliciting meeting minutes should be kept.

- Approved budget may be revised during the project by adjusting allocations under different heads; the revised budget must be approved by the Chairman of CASR.

- However, in extra-ordinary circumstances of cost escalation that may affect the project progress, PI may apply for consideration of budget increase to the CASR which shall take appropriate decision.

- Extension of the project duration is maximum for 1 year (with 6 months intervals). However, the project has to be completed with no additional AIRG funding.

- For fund releasing, PI should applyin Form D (Annexure D) to the Treasurer.

- University rules and regulations shall be applicable for purchasing equipment.

- CASR reserves the right to determine the disposition of equipment, software, or any other resource purchased with AIRG. These shall usually become AUST's property and part of the PI's departmental/institutionalinventory.

- The PI should try to avail equipment through the department, institute, or by other means rather than making a budgetary request in the proposal.

- Project funding commitments from all sources (if applicable) should be made known and documented. Multiple grants for the same component or the whole of a project cannot be availed.

- Project budget should be inclusive of all the applicable VAT and TAX.

- **Fund releasing strategy**:
  - The fund of the AIRG-awarded projects will be released in three (3) instalments [1st instalment (50%) after approval of the project, 2nd instalment (40%) during the project period, and 3rd instalment (10%) at the end of the project period].
  - PI should apply for releasing the 1st installment within 30 days of getting the final approval (awarded) of the project.
  - The commencement of the project will be considered from the day of fund release of the 1st installment.

- **Evaluation and Monitoring:**
  - Dean of the faculty to which PI belongs will head the Evaluation Team that shall evaluate and monitor project progress. He/she may select any faculty member in the rank of Associate Professor and above specializing in the area of that particular research topic to help with this task.
  - If this Team finds it necessary, it may ask PI to present the progress of the research project and arrange site visit.
  - In the case of a one-year project, the PI should submit a progress report in every four months using Form C (Annexure C).
  - In the case of projects of more than one-year duration, the PI should submit a progress report in every six months in Form C (Annexure C).
  - The PI shall submit a project completion report (PCR) along with the project presentation within 3 months of project completion in Form F (Annexure F). The CASR will arrange presentation in front of distinguished guests (members of different statutory bodies of AUST, industrialists, subject experts, etc.).
  - The RPC shall evaluate and ascribe a letter grade (A: excellent, B: good, C: average, D: not satisfactory) to the Project Completion Report. This grade will be considered for awarding the next research grant.

8.0 Ethical Issues

- Grant funding will not be released until CASR receives appropriate review on ethical aspects, human or animal subjects, social and behavioral concerns, or biomedical hazards.

- The RPO shall provide the service of such review when required.

- All Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) relatednorms shall be observed. Related support shall be provided by the RPO while any dispute thereofshall be dealt with by the CASR.
- Grant holders must acknowledge CASR's support (and where possible, include CASR's logo) in all research outputs, including publications, oral or written reports, posters, presentations, and information posted on websites related to the AIRG activities or results.

9.0 Award

Notable publications from the research project in high quality journals (Q1 ranked, impact factor, h-index, sjr score and cite score etc.) will be awarded.

10.0 Annexures

11.1 Annexure A: Grant Application Form
11.1 Annexure B: Proposal Evaluation Form
11.1 Annexure C: Project Progress Report
11.1 Annexure D: Budget Request Form
11.1 Annexure E: RA Appointment Form
11.1 Annexure F: Project Completion Form