Scientific Research Committees Guidelines
July 2012

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Scientific Research Committees Guidelines

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2012

Research Sector
Introduction

The scientific committees are primarily constituted to facilitate the implementation of research proposals at the faculty and departmental levels. The functioning of these committees is governed by a standardized system, formulated by Research Sector (RS), which specifies the major responsibilities and procedures that the committees must adhere to in examining/reviewing research proposals submitted for funding support.

The following guidelines provide the objective basis for the formation of the Scientific Research Committees at the faculty and departmental levels, outlining their responsibilities and functions:
Scientific Research Committees

1. Faculty Research Committee (FRC)

The FRC is critically involved in promoting and supporting research programs at the faculty level. The committee also identifies research priorities in consultation with Research Sector.

Committee Formation

The Faculty Scientific Research Committee consists of the following members:

• The Vice Dean for Research (VDR), or any other equivalent person. (Convenor)

• The Departmental Research Coordinators representing the scientific departments in the Faculty. The rank of the Departmental Research Coordinator should be at least Associate Professor. (Members)

• The VDR may include one or more additional member(s), following discussions with the Faculty Dean and the Vice President for Research.

Committee Functions

The responsibilities of the FRC include:

• Reviewing research proposals submitted by faculty members. The VDR forwards the research proposals to RS for refereeing after approval of the FRC.

• Reviewing the PI’s response to referee reports. The VDR informs RS as regards the recommendations of the FRC for funding the research projects.
• Discussing any aspect of a research project with the concerned PI, including any modification(s) if deemed necessary, prior to forwarding the project to RS for processing and refereeing purposes. The Faculty Research Committees are not empowered to either deny funding a project or cancel it, once a project has been refereed, merits high scores, and PI has duly addressed all queries raised by referee(s).

• Preparing requested studies and reports, and cooperating with RS in planning and implementing research related activities.

• The VDR coordinates with RS for the refereeing of research proposals whose budget does not exceed KD 4000/-, in addition to evaluating the periodic and final reports of these projects.

2. Departmental Research Committee (DRC)

Committee Formation

The DRC is constituted in each department of the faculty, and is comprised of a requisite number of department council members, headed by the research coordinator.

The research coordinator is an active researcher, nominated by the departmental council. The rank of the research coordinator should be at least Associate Professor. He/she is appointed for one year, following the approval of his/her nomination by the Faculty Dean and the Vice Dean for Research. The research coordinator represents the Department on the Faculty Research Committee (FRC).
Committee Functions

The responsibilities of the DRC include:

• Setting, in cooperation with the Department Chairman, the research goals of the department.

• Following up the research activities at the department, and ensuring that there is optimum utilization of available resources and equipment to implement research projects.

• Assisting researchers in the preparation, submission and review of their research proposals, in conformity with RS rules and procedures, and in line with the requirements of the refereeing process.

• Maintaining a record of available research expertise in the department, to serve the varied needs of research projects submitted for funding support. This also includes providing requested information to the Vice Dean for Research to facilitate the refereeing process, and to ensure continuous updating of the Guide to Subject Areas.

• Encouraging departmental researchers to participate in scientific forums, apply for researchers’ awards, and publish in leading refereed international journals.
Responsibilities

1. **Research** Sector critically relies on project evaluation as an integral part of the funding process. It is a vital tool used in funding decisions. An objective and accurate scientific evaluation of a project assesses its strengths and weaknesses *vis-a-vis* major elements of the grant support application. RS accomplishes this evaluation through its refereeing process, for which a system is in place that permits competent professors in the project’s field of specialization *(specified by the PI)* to be selected from a continuously updated database of referees. The number of referees, from within and/or outside Kuwait depends upon the project’s budget. A standard evaluation form, which addresses the different elements of the research proposal is completed by each referee. *This evaluation serves as a principal consideration on which decisions by the RS Funding Committees are based*, taking into account the recommendation of the appropriate faculty scientific research committee.

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1Note: This responsibility is of RS Committees, and not Faculty Committees.
2. Based on the above principle, and in RS endeavor to ensure that the research proposal is presented to the referees in the best possible manner, the scientific research committees are responsible for the following:

   a. Reviewing the research proposal to ensure that the Research Support Application is complete and includes all required elements.

   b. Ensuring that the research proposal is linguistically correct, free from typographical errors, and presented in clear scientific language.

   c. Making sure that the following required elements are included in the research proposal, and providing comments and recommendations, if necessary:

      - The goals of the research project, and its importance for the State of Kuwait and the Region.

      - All elements of the project budget, ensuring the availability of resources needed for the implementation of the project, and the optimum utilization of available equipment in the department and general facilities labs.

      - The academic and research load of the principle investigator (PI) and co-investigators (Co-I).
- An adequate list of references. The DRC should ensure that these references are actually quoted in the proposal, and are relevant to its subject.

d. Making sure that the Department, represented through its Scientific Research Committee, is informed about the topics of the research projects submitted for funding.

3. The Faculty Scientific Research Committees may discuss other elements of the research project before the proposal is sent for refereeing. These include research originality, the overall presentation, background, suggested methodology, time plan, and budget. If any changes are recommended by the committee, these should be forwarded in writing to the PI by the Vice Dean for Research. Acceptance of the suggestions or not is the prerogative of the researcher.

4. Speedy implementation of procedures to expedite project processing.

5. Complete confidentiality as regards Scientific Research Committees’ work, including discussions concerning the project’s subject, refereeing or recommendations, should be strictly maintained. It is forbidden for the committee members to reveal the details about the project to any person or authority, as it may amount to violation of the intellectual property rights of the PI and his research team.
6. In the case of projects received from external sectors for funding, RS forwards a copy of the proposal to the research coordinator of the concerned scientific department to provide information on the subject, and to examine the feasibility of having the needed resources available in the department for its implementation.