

**GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH
PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND
EVALUATION
UVAWELLASSA UNIVERSITY**

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Points considered in developing Guidelines for research at the University

1. Title should be in line with national needs and University mission
2. Proposal should submit through proper channel (Head, Dean, etc.)
3. Evaluation process
4. Authority to obtain funds (Permanent posts)
5. How to submit final report or publication
6. Procedure if transfer research, hold the research if researcher go for study leave or inability to complete research.
7. Basically Responsibility of the researcher

Guidelines for Research Proposals Submission and Evaluation

The proposal submitted with the application should be concise, clearly written and thoughtful. Each proposal should include a background defining the inquiry, motivation for the current proposal, an explanation of the methodology to be utilized, a description of the role of related and supporting research, and a section regarding the significance of the proposed work in relation to current knowledge, possible outcome of the proposed research work (publication or patent) and references. As the Research Committee may or may not include a specialist in your field, you should avoid technical jargon. Your ability to carry out the research successfully is judged, in large part, by the quality of the proposal.

1. Formatting the proposal

The entire proposal must not exceed 10 pages (including any tables and figures but excluding references) and should either be a Microsoft Word readable document (.doc, .docx, .txt, .rtf) or an Acrobat PDF (.pdf). Proposals should be double-spaced, set in 12 point Times New Roman font, and have 1-inch margins top and bottom and 1.5-inch margins left and right.

2. Who can submit proposal and has the authority to obtain funds

Only the staff members who hold permanent carder positions in the faculty are eligible to submit proposals to claim research allowance and grants from Capital funds. It is highly desirable from the point of view of the Research Committee that if a senior academic member is involved in the project, he or she becomes the principle investigator (PI) by completing all necessary

requirements of the proposal submission process including the writing of the proposal. However, before becoming a PI, it is advised to consider the teaching/administrative load already has been entrusted by the department/faculty and then make the decision.

3. Contents of the proposal

The proposal must contain each of the following components, clearly labeled:

- 3.1 Title:** Authors should attempt at their best to focus the titles of their research projects to be in line with national needs and value addition vision of the university. Titles which are focusing both needs will receive the priority. However a wide spectrum of research topics from fundamental to applied sciences is highly encouraged to apply.
- 3.2 Abstract:** Give a short summary (no more than 600 words) of your project and its significance.
- 3.3 Description of the Project:** Explain the question you hope to answer and what it is you hope to accomplish.
- 3.4 Previous Work:** Explain the status of work in this field. Explain what other scholars have accomplished in this area to date.
- 3.5 Significance:** Explain why your project is important. Explain what original contributions you hope to make beyond the existing work reviewed above. Explain the relevance of your project to the previous research in this subject area.
- 3.6 Proposed Methodology:** Explain how you will proceed. Explain how you will collect and analyze your data or materials. Explain how you will interpret your results. This is an extremely important section of the proposal. It is imperative that it be detailed and well-constructed. Timetables, schedules, and budgets (where appropriate) are helpful.
- 3.7 Possible outcome(s):** Explain here the possible outcome that you think might result in following the completion of research work, such as a publication, patent, presentation in a symposium, etc.
- 3.8 References:** Include any references cited in the proposal and any important works that you expect to use during your research. Reviewers may check your references for literature widely understood to be foundational in your field.
- 3.9 A short 2-page CV:** Also attaché a short 2-page CV to the application

4. Proposal writing in wider perspective

Proposal writing can be challenging, but it is a vital skill within many academic fields and in many careers. Most internal and external granting bodies, review boards, and programs of graduate study will require proposal writing at some point in their process. Proposal-writers often find that for a single project they must write multiple proposals for a single project tailored for multiple kinds of agencies. For that reason, the committee believes that the crafting of the proposal itself is a valuable exercise, and will evaluate submitted proposals in this light.

5. Deadlines for proposal submission

There will be two deadlines for submitting research proposals. It is very important that each staff member abides by these dates and submits his/her own proposal before the end of the second deadline. The second deadline will normally fall after two weeks of the first deadline which will be decided by the Research Committee. The calendar of dates applicable to a forthcoming year will be displayed on university notice boards and web (www.uwu.ac.lk) on 01st July in the current year, which will start from 2015 onward. The research committee will not entertain proposals from any person submitted after the second deadline.

6. Submitting your proposal

After writing the proposal carefully according to the contents given above, it should be submitted to the Secretary of the Research Committee through a proper channel, before the end of the second proposal submission deadline. The proper channel for submitting a proposal is through the Head of the department and the Dean of the respective faculty to the committee. Each proposal needs recommendation and support from both of these officers.

Once the proposal reaches the office of the Research Committee, the secretary will forward it to the committee. Irrespective of whether the proposal is to claim the university research allowance or the funding from Capital grants, it will be forwarded either to internal or external reviewers for peer-reviewed evaluation. Internal reviewers are drawn from the experts from the relevant area from the respective faculties. However, in the event where the Research Committee finds the expertise of the internal reviewers do not match with a particular area of research under

which the submitted proposal falls, then the committee reserves the right to look out for such reviewers. Data bases belong to national scientific bodies such as National Science Foundation (NSF), National Research Council (NRC), Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Sciences (SLASS) and NCAS will be used to select suitable peer-reviewers. Further research committee members may also suggest possible external reviewers based on their common wisdom.

At least, two peer-reviewers will be chosen for proposals requiring evaluation outside the university. Prior to sending proposals, the research committee will liaise with the chosen peer reviewer and get his/her consent to do the job. Then the proposals will be sent by registered post to the reviewer with inclusion of a payment voucher. Payment for proposal reviewing will be done according to the UGC circulars. Soft copies of proposals and other relevant documents will also be sent to the external reviewers through email. Reviewers will be requested to submit their comments on the proposals to the research committee at least within four weeks following receiving the proposals. For internal reviewers, the review reports are expected to receive to the Secretary, Research Committee at their earliest convenience.

7. Evaluation criteria and the process

In general, the criteria used by the internal reviewers to evaluate the proposals may include, by are not limited to, the following:

7.1 Background: Does the proposal clearly describe the relationship of the proposed work to existing knowledge in the field(s)? Does the proposal convey the importance of the work to the scholar, explaining how it is part of an on-going stream of work or a new initiative/direction?

7.2 Objectives: Is there a clear statement of goals and objectives of the project? Is the proposal written in a way that is understandable to reviewers/scholars from an array of other disciplines?

7.3 Methodology: Is there a clear description of how the applicant will do the project? Does the proposal convey how the methodology/approach is appropriate to the project? Is there a clear description of how the results of the work will be reported and presented?

7.4 Budget: Are the budget items justified and explained? If travel, student employment, books, equipment and other materials are required, does the author offer sufficient explanation? Proposals exceeding more than a year, the budget has to be phased out.

7.5 CV (short version): Do the items selected for the 2 page CV highlight the applicant's ability to execute the project?

7.6 Outcomes of previous UWU grants: If the applicant received previous UWU support, does the current proposal describe the outcomes (conferences, published papers, performances, etc.) of that support?

Besides the reviewers will also look in the proposal

7.7 Whether the proposal shows excellent writing skills

7.8 Understands the project's relevance to the field of study and beyond

7.9 Will be able to apply theories and methods of research, analysis, or interpretation, or artistic techniques as appropriate to the field

7.10 Has cited appropriate sources and references

7.11 Is able to examine critically the work of other scholars or artists and relate that work to the proposal

7.12 Shows evidence of promise to contribute original research, ideas, knowledge, interpretations, or creative expression at a level appropriate for undergraduate/postgraduate study, such that the publications/thesis/patent go beyond describing the existing work.

8. Revisions of proposals:

Once the comments are received from the reviewers, the secretary of the research committee will forward the comments to the relevant researchers. Depending on the nature of the comments, the research committee will request from the researchers for resubmission of the proposals after addressing the concerns of the reviewers. Then resubmitted proposals will be sent back to the reviewers for their comments. Depending on the outcome of the comments from the reviewers for the revised proposal, the research committee will either accept or reject the proposals.

9. Accepted Proposals

Proposal accepted after the peer-reviewed process will be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor for approval for funding. Once the approval from the Vice Chancellor office is received to the office of the research committee, it will be forwarded to the university finance committee for further approval. The outcome of the finance committee for the proposals submitted to claim research allowance will be forwarded to the respective departments of the university while the outcome received for proposals submitted for grants from capital funds will be forwarded to the respective researcher. Then the full responsibility of handling funds to achieve the objectives outlined in the proposed projects lies on the shoulder of the PI of the project. He or she then has the responsibility to develop, initiate and propagate the research work to the completion within the stipulated length of time effectively liaising with relevant departments/authorities/people at the university and the research Committee producing progress review reports/presentations/discussions, etc. and other necessary documents as required by the Committee.

Each time, when the need arises to spend money originally allocated for some purpose of the project to a different purpose at some point as the research project progresses, the PI should request in writing this from the Research Committee with justifications and clarifying as to why it is necessary to redistribute the originally allocated funds. The research committee will then look into such matters with utmost care and takes all necessary steps and extends full support to the researchers to continue the work as originally proposed in the proposal. However, if the situation is resulting in from the factors that are beyond the control of the research committee

and the available resources at the university, then the research committee may grant permission to the researchers to redistribute the funds. However, under no circumstances, additional financial supports will be provided by the university to a project which exhausted money as a result of the redistribution of funds originally allocated to the project. Therefore, planning and conducting research work in a project has to be done in a careful and a vigilant manner, and comes under the sole responsibility of the PI.

10. Rejected Proposals

A researcher whose proposal was rejected is not barred from submitting a new proposal for the next year, but must in such a case indicate whether a previous version of the proposal was rejected, and if so, what changes were made in response to the reviewer's comments.

11. Evaluation of the progress of a project

Once granted, this is the most important part of a project from the point of view of the grant awarding body (UWU) as well as the Research Committee. Project evaluation can be a tedious job unless planned carefully. Therefore research committee expects to evaluate the progress of each project granted on every six (06) month period through a peer-reviewed presentation process and a submission of a report at the end of each year. Year-end project reports can later be compiled to submit the final report to the Committee at the end of the project. The final project report could also include the materials presented in the peer-reviewed presentations. Meanwhile, researchers are encouraged to publish their work through university research symposium, national and international symposia/conferences/workshops and as peer-reviewed journal (indexed journals are highly encouraged) publications. All such publications should mention UWU as the affiliation of the researcher and the place where the research work was carried out. All project reports should be submitted to the office of the Research Committee through the secretary on time by the PI and a list of the dates for peer-reviewed presentations for each project will be sent to the respective PIs by the secretary to the research committee. All members of the research committee should participate in the peer-reviewed presentations including the PIs (if the presenter is the RA)

12. Transfer of research projects

In the event where the research assistant or the principal investigator (PI) become unavailable for an unforeseeable length of time from the university due to, by are not limited to, following reasons,

1. Taking study leave for higher education
2. Moving to another institute/organization
3. Becoming incapacitated due to illnesses,

the research committee may consider a transfer or a cease to a research project depending on the progress of that project. If a project, which has submitted yearly progress reports on time and has held every six (06) month peer-reviewed presentations successfully and has won the confidence of the research committee that it performs a productive research work worth for money granted, faces one of the above three circumstances, the research committee may consider the transfer of the project to another competent PI who has the expertise and the skill in the relevant area with the recommendations from the Head and the Dean of the respective department and the faculty. Under no circumstances, the transfer of research should be done without the knowledge of the Research Committee. However, in the second case, where PI moving to another organization/institute, if the PI is still willing to collaborate with UWU to continue work as a collaborator, such approaches are highly encouraged and entertained by the Research Committee.