



SUR UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
كلية صور الجامعية

Research Manual

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Preamble

As a Higher Education Institution (HEI), Sur University College (SUC) shall endeavor to support and promote state-of-the-art research with an aim to create new knowledge, theories and practices. Further, it shall encourage its faculty members to dedicate appropriate time and resources to generate new ideas, concepts and preferably, novel methodologies in key research areas as identified by the Research Council of Sur University College (RCoSUC), in collaboration with its stakeholders. While at present, research at SUC is generally researcher-oriented, however, new policies and procedures are being discussed to broaden research efforts, for example, by forming research groups at all academic departments. The research groups are expected to identify and work on research areas that shall benefit both national and international communities.

SUC appreciates the significance of research not only for innovation but also equally for enhanced teaching. The university college values the significance of research and its impact on innovative teaching that are key to meet the growing challenges of future. It therefore promotes and encourages research areas that include but are not limited to Applied Research, Action Research, Experimental Research, Exploratory Research and Strategic Research.

The overall aim of research at SUC shall be to enhance knowledge – base, improve teaching, and add to the betterment of the society. SUC shall aim to adhere with highest quality research practices, strict ethical standards and procedures especially when it comes to collection and validation of data and dissemination of research findings at national and international platforms, for example, through world's leading journals and established international conferences. The Sur University College's Research Council shall be responsible for managing research activities at college level.

Key Terms

Research: Attempting to uncover novel information, establishing new knowledge-base, developing new theories or models, validating existing theories, redefining conventional interpretations of previously published research findings; and to make an effort to apply existing knowledge and information for the betterment of the university college, its affiliates and the society.

Research Education: Using research as a fundamental training and education tool to enhance professional growth of the academic staff and graduate students.

Financial Year: Research funds are calculated during the Academic Year (AY) at SUC and disbursed with the annual leave settlement in July, the Financial Year shall be considered between July of the previous AY to June of the current AY.

Invites: Invitations from International Conferences to present a paper as the first author or second author of an accepted manuscript.

Abbreviations

SUC: Sur University College

SUC RC: Sur University College's Research Council

UC: University College

CAB: College Academic Board

HEI: Higher Education Institution

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

PG: Postgraduate

FM: Faculty Members

ROSQA: Requirements for Oman System of Quality Assurance in Higher Education

OAAA: Oman Academic Accreditation Authorities

BoD: Board of Directors

BoT: Board of Trustees

TRC: The Research Council

IFP: Institutional Focal Point

HoD: Head of Department

IEEE: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers

AIS: Association for Information Systems

ACM: Association for Computing Machinery

AY: Academic Year

Research Ethics and Standard Values

1. Academic staff and postgraduate students shall be dedicated to global values of research and professional behavior.
2. Academic staff and postgraduate students shall make efforts that their work enhances the name and reputation of the university college.
3. Academic staff and postgraduate students shall only undertake research that is ethical and is in accordance with their area of expertise.
4. Academic staff and postgraduate students shall accept constructive criticism and take it as an opportunity to improve their work.
5. It shall be the responsibility of the researchers to guarantee the wellbeing of all the individuals that are part of any research project.
6. It shall be the responsibility of the researchers to thoroughly consider any ethical or legal issues that might affect the name and reputation of the university college.
7. The Research Council must approve any research project at Sur University College.
8. Confidentiality of the data must be ensured by strict procedures.
9. It shall be the responsibility of the researchers to maintain data confidentiality and integrity. The collected data shall not be shared with a third party in any case.
10. It shall remain the responsibility of the researcher/s to secure the collected data in an archive and that the data is kept for no longer than 5 years after the completion of the research project.

Staff Research Funding – External

SUC encourages its faculty members to approach national and international research funding agencies for their research activities. On such identification of research funding agency, the faculty members shall approach the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs who will liaise with the agency to try to obtain research funds abiding by the Omani Laws, and College Rules and Regulations. Any such fund received must be accurately accounted for and audit reports must be prepared and sent to the external funding agency at regular time intervals. In case of any violations and / or disputes, the faculty members should abide to the conditions of the research funding agencies.

Staff Research Funding – Internal

SUC supports its faculty members to be active in research activities. A faculty members who publishes his / her research paper in highly reputable peer reviewed, refereed and indexed journals, and well established international conference (both dedicated and general) can apply for a monetary reward. After the publications, the faculty member shall submit a written request to the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs for such rewards with the published paper copy (Both soft and hard copy must be submitted). The Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs shall check the publication details and indexing of the journal and recommend the reward

amount in line with the “Faculty Research and Publication Funding” Policy in the SUC Constitution Handbook.

While the faculties cannot claim that these awards as their rights, however, SUC management supports such research- related rewards as a motivational factor and to meet its vision statement. All the Ph. D holders shall focus on their area of specialization however expanding the area in a logical way is natural and will be appreciated by the management. Financial compensation shall only be granted for publications in leading world-class journals and established international conferences. However, publications in sub-standard journals or emerging conferences shall add value to the faculty annual appraisal. There shall be no financial rewards in a situation where the faculty member is affiliated with another university for the same manuscript. However, if the faculty member is a visiting scholar, the case might be acceptable. All the approved financial compensation/rewards shall be given as a lump sum at the end of each financial year. SUC advises that faculty members must not to publish their papers in any paid/exploitative journals or the ones that do not have appropriate indexing. The university college further advises its faculty members must be cautious of phony and manipulative open-access journals.

Student Research Funding – Internal

SUC envisions students’ knowledge as a valuable asset and is committed to support their research activities. It will support the students through internal research funding if the research projects are conducted under the affiliation of SUC. The student (s) and the supervisor (s) shall contact the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs with the fund request that details the requirements and scopes. The student and the supervisor should also give in writing that such research activities will not be published in any journal or presented at any conference without prior approval from the university college’s Research Council.

Student Research Funding – External

SUC supports the students and the supervisors to get external research fund for their projects and research activities. SUC is a member of The Research Council Oman (TRC) and the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs is the Institutional Focal Point (IFP) for this contact. SUC supports its students in getting various research funds from TRC.

Grants for Regional and International Collaborations

SUC has a vision to develop a feasible research network and collaborations inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman. For such external regional and international research collaborations, the faculty members shall apply for grants by stating the importance, expected impacts and implications to the field of study. Such grants shall be requested

only in their area of specialization. Based on the significance of such research collaborations, SUC will provide financial support up to OMR 500.

Workshop and Conference Funding

Fund Request for Presenting Papers

Being a HEI and to be one of the distinguished universities in future, SUC encourages the faculty members to present and share their research with the community both at national and international conferences. SUC's management believes that the national level symposiums and conferences inside shall benefit the local community to meet Oman Vision 2020. The international conferences will support the faculty members to gain knowledge in the latest developments in the field of studies. The faculty members shall follow the procedures stated under "Procedure for Applying Conference Fund for Presenting" at annexure.

Fund Request for Conference Participation

The faculties may apply for participating in conferences as viewer or observer. The above all procedures should be followed as it is. But the conference should be more specific to the requester's field of study and the conference topics provide good knowledge on the latest developments in the particular field. On return, the participant should make an internal presentation about the conference ideas and what s/he learnt about the latest development.

Consultancy Activities

SUC is categorized as a "University College" by ROSQA; it therefore motivates its faculty members in various consultancy activities. They are motivated to undertake external consultancy services after the prior approval from the management without any contractual obligations. The consultancy activities shall be undertaken from any external client without any conflict of interest to the management. The faculty should apply through the proper procedure to the management through the head of the departments. On receiving such request, the management will help the faculty members in developing and creating an agreement / contract with the external stakeholder. The management will ensure that such consultancy activities comply with the Omani Laws, and Ministry Rules and Regulations.

The faculty members shall carryout consultancy services only under the name of "Sur University College". The mutual benefits shall be shared among the parties without any conflict to the college. Based on such sharing of benefits, the university college will provide required all facilities and resources such as reduction of teaching load, travelling expenses etc. The fund generated through such consultancy activities should be reported to the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs. As the fund generated through such external consultancy activities needs to be properly accounted and audited, the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs should maintain all the documents in proper custody.

Commercialization

SUC expects and supports the faculty members to commercialize their innovative research ideas as a valuable products/services to the community. SUC assists the faculties for getting license and market the product. If any of the faculties have such innovative ideas, SUC shall support them to bring out the product by providing required resources and funds. Such inventions should strictly follow the academic integrity and intellectual property rights. Apart from that the product should comply with the Omani Laws and regulations.

On completion of the product, the university college will support the faculty members to register the product in the respective ministry and get licensing / patent rights. The mutual benefits shall be shared between the faculty members and the university college. If the product is fully funded and supported by the university college, then the faculty members will be registered as inventors and the product would be registered under SUC's name. The inventor shall create a contract or agreement with the college for future benefits and royalty. If the product is partially supported by the university college, the inventor shall decide on sharing the mutual benefits with the college in conjunction with other project supports. In any of the cases, both the parties should maintain the confidentiality and the product secrecy. Both the parties shall approach to court in case of any such violations and disputes in future.

Upgrading Student Projects

SUC motivates its faculty members to upgrade their students' projects into research papers and/or products. But it strongly recommends that the students involved in those projects should be given clear priority in all cases (I.e. Authorship, presentations etc.). The faculties should strictly follow "the Policy on Upgrading the Student Project into Research Products" and "the Policy on Intellectual Property Rights" stated in the SUC Constitutions Handbook.

Conduction of Seminars and Workshops

All the departments at SUC are expected and encouraged to arrange and conduct seminars and workshops in collaboration with external stakeholders. The seminars and workshops shall be conducted either inter departmental or college wide. The proposal should be prepared by the respective department scientific research and seminar committee and submitted to the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs. The following activities may be conducted for both students and staff members:

1. Inviting guest speakers.
2. Seminars / Workshops on general / community related topics.
3. Seminars / Workshops on department / specialization related topics.
4. Arrangements for Poster Displays / Gallery / Stalls

Based on the request, the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs in conjunction with other related Heads of the Departments should arrange for such activities. The department committees must submit a proposal for fund requirements for the approval in advance. After the approval from the Dean, the activities shall be arranged. The activities should not violate the college rules and regulations and should strictly abide the Omani Laws and Regulations. The organizing committee members shall be responsible for any violations and liable to be penalized under SUC Misconduct Rules and / or Omani Laws.

Conduction of Symposiums, Workshops and Conferences

The departments shall arrange for national or international level symposiums, workshops and conferences at the university college to meet its vision and mission statements. Such activities should be planned well in advance and proper procedures must be followed. Such national or international level research activities should be in line with the rules and regulations of the Omani government and should abide SUC Constitutions. SUC will support with required resources and other document requirements such as visa, letter of invitation etc. If any fund is collected for such activities, proper accounts should be maintained and submitted to the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs who is responsible for producing and getting the approval from the College Academic Board (CAB). But, symposiums and national level seminars should be arranged ideally within 3 months time upon approval from BoD whereas conference should be approved by the BoD at least a year ahead of the event.

Internal Seminars

SUC encourages all the departments to conduct internal research seminar series every year. All the faculties of the departments are encouraged to present their ideas in the seminar series. The seminar series may be either core to the department- specific or common for general audience. The department internal research and seminar committee shall meet under the Head of PG Studies and Research and finalize the schedule for each academic year. The Head of PG Studies and Research should discuss the schedule with the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs to avoid clashes with other college level activities. The Head of PG Studies and Research and Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs shall later present the schedule to the CAB for approval. The individual faculties shall be consulted for common for all audience seminar presentations.

Ethics Issues

SUC emphasizes that appropriate measures are taken while conducting any research activity that involves, for example, human as participants/subjects/clients. The individual faculty conducting the research activities should ensure no violations occur in ethical considerations. Proper care must be taken while interacting with bio-hazardous materials. SUC strongly advocates that the researcher should take Ethical

Approval from the Research Council prior to the initiation of any research activity. For any research activity, it shall be the policy of the University College's researchers to ensure that there is no risk of physical or psychological harm for the subjects. Further, any research effort where humans will be involved as subjects, an Informed Consent must be obtained. Additionally, the aim of the research must be clearly stated in a written format and be distributed to the subjects before commencing data collection.

Department Level Research Groups

SUC has initiated department level research groups to motivate the faculties to cutting edge research activities. Each department shall form research groups either for each specialization or smaller groups with same research interests. The department level research committees shall be responsible for promoting research culture among the department staff members. The research groups shall concentrate on the core specialization of the individual group rather than common or cross cultural research activities.

Community Orientated Research Activities

SUC believes that the development of local community plays a vital role in its achievements. The faculty members are advised to conduct research activities by selecting the local community requirements and provide solutions that may be feasible to apply. However, SUC strongly advocates that the faculty members should understand and abide with the local community ethics and religious beliefs.

Suggested Areas of Research Activities

SUC supports the faculties to conduct researches in any area of field. But, to support its vision and mission statements, and to comply with the ROSQA conditions on HEI status, SUC promotes the faculties to conduct their research studies in their specific areas and field of study such as Information Technology, Information Systems, Business Administration, Marketing, Management, Accounting, Engineering, Education, Linguistics etc. The faculties are motivated to conduct the researches under the specializations offered under the department. The faculty's research activities shall focus on the local community and industrial requirements. The interdisciplinary research activities shall be highly appreciated and the research activities that are conducted as per the interest of the Sultanate's national development. The research activities are not limited to certain areas or specifications but that may have impact and effects on international research activities and best practices.

Annexure

Annexure 1: Procedure for Applying Conference Fund for Presenting

Annexure 2: Policy on Research Ethics

Annexure 3: Faculty Research and Publications Funding

Annexure 4: Upgrading Student Projects into Research Papers

Annexure 5: Intellectual Property Rights