

University Research and Grants Policy

Approved by the University Council on March 18, 2016

Approved by the Board of Trustees on May 9, 2016

University Support for Research

Notre Dame University–Louaize (NDU) commits itself to the creation and promotion of a general atmosphere conducive to individual and collective research, to the allocation of a specific part of its budget for research activities, to a systematic program for attracting external financing and sponsoring of research, to the dissemination of all results derived from research, and to the establishment of the best possible conditions for carrying out research at all levels, whether in development and design or in publication, dissemination and integration into the classroom. The University places special emphasis on research work that encourages and advances universal values based on humanistic principles, social justice, and spiritual development.

Policy Goals and Objectives

Commensurate with the University’s mission, vision, and core values as well as with its commitment to liberal arts education, increased emphasis shall be placed on the academic development process for both faculty members and students.

While emphasizing the paramount role of fundamental research activities by faculty members in the academic development process at NDU, emphasis on student research shall be considered as a complementary aspect of research at NDU. Student research shall go hand-in-hand with the development of faculty teaching and research skills in the respective majors and in the General Education Requirements (GERs) courses. The latter offer a platform for academic development based on educational inter-disciplinarity.

Inter-disciplinarity as such, be it in the education of students or in the research activity of faculty members, shall always be considered as a commendable track toward knowledge creation and a powerful promotion of NDU as a place of choice for scholars at all levels.

The University's commitment to gender equality and cultural diversity enables it to serve the interests of the community and to help integrate and retain faculty members and students in a way that reflects the complex makeup of the country as a whole. The use of outreach programs and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) will enable the University to introduce “information commons” by integrating the resources of the respective Faculties, libraries, and research centers as well as the greater scientific community. This process will serve NDU targets in terms of funding and resource development by linking it to alumni, potential domestic partners, and international donors and sponsors.

Protecting the Rights of All Who Do Research

The primary guideline of NDU in supporting research shall be to protect the rights of all individuals, be they faculty members, students, or non-academic research staff involved in research activities. Participants in the research process are free to carry out their research as they see fit, provided the principles of the *Policy on Ethics in Research* are always respected.

The University shall also acknowledge the eligibility of all its researchers, including students, for financial support by the University within the limit of its resources and its priorities for funding research projects coming from the various Faculties and research centers.

In return, any researcher at NDU shall assume responsibility for protecting the best interests of the University when carrying out any kind of research, including the rights of the University as detailed in any contract pertaining to a research activity or the general duties of researchers toward the University. Possible misconduct by researchers shall be dealt with according to the general academic policies and by the appropriate committees or panels.

Disclosure of Research Results

The University shall not participate in research projects classified as secret or constrained by any secrecy-of-results agreements of any kind, except upon the explicit approval of the President and in accordance with the *Policy on Ethics in Research*. In particular, the University shall not approve in principle that its researchers be involved in research, the results of which cannot be disclosed publicly due to the researcher's possible agreement with an outside party involved in or sponsoring said research.

The right to publish and disseminate research results, and the obligation to disclose research methods and results, including those related to artistic production, as well as the right to demonstrate compliance and transparency, must apply to faculty members, students, and non-academic staff alike. The right and obligation to disseminate results could also be significant in cases related to the integration of certain findings into students' Master's and doctoral dissertations.

The University does, however, recognize that the fundamental principles of research ethics allow for specific forms of constraint and confidentiality in order to protect personal and private information that might have been used in the course of the research process.

Conflict of Interest in Research

Researcher's professional integrity is the first line of defense against conflict of interest. In the emergence of a case, a disclosure form must be submitted to the University Research Committee (URC) that handles conflict of interest cases and sending recommendations to the Office of VPAA through the AVPRGS.

The following are researcher guidelines to avoid conflict of interest:

- Research findings are to be disseminated;
- University policy on copyrights applies to the transfer of research data or material entrusted to the University, if they need to be disclosed externally. This transfer cannot be for purposes of personal benefits;
- Researchers must be very cautious about involving students in projects with outcomes serving their own financial or other benefits;

- Unless approved by the University, a research cannot be carried out or oriented with the objectives of meeting persons or organizations interests, even if funding is offered; and
- Researchers should not use NDU administrative or research facilities for personal or consulting activities unless properly authorized.

Departments, Research Centers and Laboratories

Research at NDU shall be undertaken as part of the activities to be performed by the basic academic units of the University, i.e. the departments, Faculties, research centers, interdisciplinary units, and laboratories. In line with its declared commitment to enhance research for the service of the community, be it in a local, national, regional or international setting, NDU emphasizes the need for all academic units to engage in interdisciplinary research besides their basic internal scholarly work. Accordingly, NDU strongly encourages research networks among its various academic units in order to achieve the following:

- Secure optimal conditions which enable active members in the individual departments and units to do research;
- Support international research projects and cooperation between individual researchers and University research centers on the one hand, and international partners on the other;
- Establish and promote national and international funding programs by connecting the University with as many external academic institutions and exchange programs as possible;
- Cooperate with the private and public sectors, nationally and internationally, in order to promote funded cooperative research;
- Work with representatives of the local community in order to disseminate research results that are beneficial to the mission of the University and to the economic and social advancement of Lebanon; and
- Ensure that the results of research carried out at NDU are integrated into the teaching process as far as possible.

Promoting Research at NDU

Promoting research at NDU by developing research-related policies and providing administrative follow-up for research endeavors is of particular significance and shall be carried out according to the following guidelines:

- The University Council shall be the primary framer and initiator of policies with regard to research and research-related matters, in addition to its responsibilities in reviewing the proper functioning of the various research-related policies and establishing the necessary preconditions for supporting research at NDU;
- Research activities at NDU, which are carried out according to the set fundamental principles, may be initiated and followed up through the Faculties concerned, through the URC, or through any other committee and panel that the University might find necessary to establish in order to deal with specific research-related cases requiring special attention; and

- Conflicts regarding authorship and ownership rights, the dissemination of research results, the ethics governing the research methods, the possible misconduct by researchers, or any related case, shall be dealt with by the appropriate University appeal bodies.

The criteria for evaluating a research proposal include the following:

- Any research, whether funded externally or sponsored by the University must be in line with the University mission, vision, and core values;
- Any University-sponsored research is contingent upon the availability of funds and must take into consideration the capacity of the University physical resources. The decision on the amount and on the form of support, if any, rests solely with the University;
- Any request for University-sponsored research, e.g., applying for a course release, must be considered according to the rules and regulations pertaining to that request. These rules and regulations, normally, stipulate that the request be processed by the Department Chair, Faculty Dean, AVPRGS, and VPAA before a final decision is made by the President.; and
- Externally funded research and projects are governed by a contract drawn between the granting institution and the University acting on behalf of the researcher/project leader. The contract should be cleared by the Office of the AVPRGS and signed by the President, in case of approval.

Extra Compensation

The University faculty or staff members who engage in research activities/projects may be compensated for those services they have rendered or have executed along the way (of research or otherwise), and that fall outside the scope of their basic duties (of teaching or research or committee work, etc.), as outlined in their letters of appointments or job descriptions with the University.

Faculty compensation for the previously mentioned extra services, must be acknowledged by the appropriate Dean and the VPAA, and must secure the approval of the President.

Extra compensation (for extra work) for staff members must be approved by the Vice-President for Administration and the President.

Sponsored Research

In conformity with its mission as a non-profit educational institution, NDU has always welcome an added external support for research activities, projects, and/or programs. Such support is essential, because it facilitates the students' and/or faculty's pursuit of knowledge and its appropriate practical application.

'Sponsored Research' as used in this *Policy* is a research activity that requires University facilities, assistance or budget, and, in general, is a research supported and/or funded in whole or in part by an external or internal source.¹

¹ Conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. are not included.

The external source may be:

- Governmental or non-governmental agencies and/or organizations;
- Business firms;
- Foundations;
- Institutes;
- Private companies;
- Personal donations;
- Fundraising for research; and
- Others.

Based on available funds, NDU may partially or fully support and/or sponsor competitive research submitted by faculty or students.

Proposals sponsored by external source(s) within the Faculty structure must include:

- A formal research proposal that requires University facilities, budget and/or assistance submitted to the department concerned (or departments) for initial approval; and
- The Dean's concerned (or Deans') approval(s).

Once approved, the proposal is forwarded by the Dean concerned to the VPAA.

Proposals sponsored by external sources outside the Faculty structure, i.e. through one of the research centers at NDU or through an academic or administrative unit placed outside the Faculties:

- These proposals should first secure the initial approval of the Center concerned;
- then they should be submitted to the URC for review; and
- after which they are forwarded to the VPAA and President for final action.

Proposals requesting NDU's support should secure favorable recommendations from the respective and concerned Director(s), Chairperson(s), Dean(s), URC, and VPAA before they receive final approval from the President.

Course Release Policy

A full-time faculty member may be eligible for a 3-credit course release per semester, from his/her regular teaching load, with regular pay. This course release shall be granted by the President after the candidate submits a proposal. The remaining teaching load of the faculty member with a course release for a specific semester shall be at least 3 credits during that semester. By the end of the semester, the faculty member shall submit a progress report along with supporting documents for possible renewal on a semester basis.

A. General Considerations for Sponsored Research

- It is a general and basic policy of NDU to encourage faculty members to engage in fundamental research to further their professional and academic development in serving themselves, the University, and the field of knowledge. However, it is expected that sponsored research be consistent with the academic interests or priorities of the university, or with those of the sponsor of such research;
- In as much as sponsored research is concerned, faculty members are responsible for the writing of their proposals, and once the approval is granted and an agreement is signed, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to comply with the specific terms and conditions associated with the project, including the provision of progress reports to the funding body and to the AVPRGS, and the latter will forward the report(s) to the respective head of unit in the University;
- Faculty members are expected to maintain budgetary control through the coordination with the University bookkeeping budget, and financial control system;
- It is the responsibility of the AVPRGS's Office to provide the Business Office with the necessary information about the budget, and request the establishment of a project account number and take whatever administrative steps needed for the proper management throughout the period of the research project;
- In the course of the project period, the Office of the AVPRGS should be notified in case of modification of the terms and/or conditions associated with the interconnected agreement. In case of violations of the contract/agreement, the University has the prerogative to query and investigate the conditions and actions pertaining to these violations, and to settle such cases according to its adopted set of rules and regulations;
- Upon completion of the project, the Office of the AVPRGS is to be notified by the faculty member(s) concerned (or student) to be able to close the file and instruct the Business Office to lock and settle the account; and
- In principle, the University does not set any limitations or restrictions upon the rights of the faculty or student to disseminate or publish the results of sponsored research unless such limitations or restrictions are incorporated into the research agreement. All embracing, faculty and students protect themselves by adhering to all agreements that may carry limitations or restrictions reviewed by the URC .

It is University policy to embark on research based on 'best efforts basis,' but professes no guarantee of results.

B. Research File for Sponsored Research

With respect to all sponsored research, the file of any research project or program should include the following:

- A formal research proposal;
- Assistance and/or Budget Justification:
 - A description of the expense or service;
 - How it relates to and benefits the project;
 - The anticipated cost;
 - The time period; and
 - Any other information that will aid the sponsor in evaluating the proposed cost.
- The written approval of the Chairperson and Dean concerned. In case of proposals involving faculty members from more than one department or faculty, the written approval of the Chairpersons and Deans concerned is required.

C. Financial Conflicts of Interest in Sponsored Research

The purpose of this section is to outline the principles for identifying and managing financial conflicts of interest related to sponsored research conducted at the University. Conflict of interest could arise:

- When a member of the University involved in sponsored research is in a position to influence a decision, policy, or purchase, with the intent to financially benefit, provide benefit to others, or advantage or disadvantage a colleague, staff member, or student;
- As a consequence of researchers' involvement in outside activities or commitment, adversely affecting the primary faculty commitment to NDU in terms of student instruction, research, and services; and
- When a researcher (or immediate family member or co-dependent) has a financial interest in an external venture that exhibits similarity to the researcher's line of investigation at the University. Such financial interest encompasses any form of paid service.

To avoid such instances of financial conflict of interest:

- Research findings are not to be disclosed unless an approval is granted by the stakeholders;
- Sponsored research cannot be accepted if the findings are predicated, predetermined, dictated, or influenced by the sponsor or any other party;
- Researchers must exercise common sense when involving students in projects, with outcomes that serve the interests of a researcher in terms of personal gain or any other personal benefit accruing from such research; and
- Researchers involved in external consulting or other agreements must ensure that these external commitments do not in any way conflict with the NDU policy, or the commitment of the University under sponsored research.

Since the professional integrity of a researcher is the first and most fundamental line of defense against conflict of interest, in the emergence of a conflict of interest in sponsored research, a disclosure form must be submitted to an ad-hoc committee of the URC. The committee receives

and evaluates each case in collaboration with the Dean of the Faculty concerned. After due investigation, the committee will recommend the appropriate measure(s) to the URC by which research objectives would be reached. The form has been appended to this policy as *Appendix A*².

Awarded Grants

Leading Researcher(s) – LR (Principal investigators)³ affiliated to a Research Center or Faculty are expected to assure that the project finances are represented as accurately as possible. Once the grant is awarded, the LR will be the sole responsible person to manage the technical and administrative work for the project, in accordance with the University policy and requirements of the grant provider, unless otherwise mentioned in the grant agreement.

A. Grant Files and Conditions

The LR is responsible for establishing a grant file which will include the terms and conditions of the grant and which will define the relationship between the grant provider and the University. The grant file outlines:

- Project Title and Proposal;
- Name of principal investigator(s)
- Name of co-investigator(s), if any;
- Duration of the project or grant;
- Project budget;
- Cost sharing, if applicable; and
- Project deliverables, i.e. publications, programs or products.

The terms in the grant agreement may vary depending upon the grant provider and the type of the grant. It is important that the terms and conditions do not conflict with NDU's mission or established policies.

Notification of any changes in budget or work plan must be submitted to the grant provider for approval by a written letter, drafted in coordination with the Assistant to the Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies (AVPRGS).

B. Overhead Costs

When a grant is awarded and funded, an account is opened by the NDU Business Office for the research project. (*Refer to the 'Sponsored Research Policy' for details.*)

Unless otherwise stated in the agreement with the funding body, the University reserves the right to withhold 10% to 20% of the total grant for overhead costs. Common overhead costs include but are not limited to: the use of office space, computers, printers and other office equipment, electricity, access to the Internet and Library resources, office supplies, accounting services, etc.; costs not traceable within the budget, but subsumed within indirect costs.

² *Appendix A* is not part of the *University Research and Grants Policy*.

³ The status of Leading Researcher (LR) is granted to full-time faculty members and/or to senior administrative staff. Requests for LR status should secure approval and endorsement from the relevant department chair (if applicable).

In the case where the grant provider has cost limitations, the University has the right to reject the project or agree to contribute in costs that would be incurred, as time release for principal investigator(s), office space, electricity, internet access for the principal investigator(s), purchase, accounting, personnel, supply, library, student services and multimedia utilities as needed.

C. Administration of Funds

The LR, affiliated to a Faculty or Research Center, is the sole person to distribute funds, through a memo requesting payment addressed to the AVPRGS. The memo should include the following information:

- Amount to be reimbursed or paid ;
- Name of person/company to be reimbursed or paid ;
- An expenditure sheet with budget with each request ; and
- Original payment vouchers invoices, etc.

Once approved by the AVPRGS, the payment request is submitted to the VP for Finance for approval.

D. Purchase of Supplies and Equipment

The purchasing of all items will be the responsibility of the LR(s).

The AVPRGS reserves the right to study the quotation of goods supplied by the principal investigator(s). All non-consumable purchased goods may be donated to NDU once the project is completed.

Procurements — not consistent with the project budget — made by principal investigator(s) without prior approval of the AVPRGS are not legal and not binding, and may result in a personal obligation for the individual making the procurement or commitment.

E. Consultants, Administrative and Research Staff

Appointments of personnel on sponsored research grants are recommended by the LR(s).

The LR(s) prepares all contracts with consultants, administrative, and research staff (subcontractors) for the funded project. The leading researcher(s) will draft an agreement for the part-time employee which includes:

- Title of the project;
- Employee's name;
- Rate per hour;
- Nature of the job and/or task;
- Hours of work; and
- Total amount allocated for the task as outlined in the budget of the project.

Once the contract is prepared, it is sent to the Director/Dean concerned for approval. Once approval is secured, it is signed by: the LR(s), the employee, and the AVPRGS. Monthly tasks are kept in a ledger matrix, including the hours and days of employment, which is then attached to a request form for the release of funds. (*Refer to the 'Sponsored Research Policy' for details.*)

The Business Office is responsible for the payment upon the approval of the AVPRGS and VP for Finance.

Current University employees may be employed on a contractual basis in accordance with the University policy on outside employment.

F. Monitoring of Funds

Since LR(s) are responsible for the ongoing fiscal management of their sponsored projects, they have to comply with the approved project plan and budget. Grant providers and NDU expect expenditures to be reasonably consistent with the approved project and budget. They reserve the right to question or restrict expenditures that appear inconsistent with the project plan and/or budget.

LR(s) should request prior approval from both the grant provider and AVPRGS when additional funding is required due to a change in the scope of the project or other valid reasons. It is NDU's expectation, however, that projects will be managed within their established budgets.

G. Progress and Final Reports

The LR(s) is responsible for all progress and final reports. The LR(s) must submit those reports to the Director/Dean concerned with a copy to the AVPRGS. It is the responsibility of the LR(s) to remain in communication with the grant provider and the AVPRGS and to ensure that all the required progress reports are submitted on time. The LR(s), in agreement with the grant provider and the AVPRGS, may make extensions of the set due date. If it is the final report, the LR(s) must present a final detailed expenditure report with respect to the project budget. The LR(s) must send the expenditure ledger to the business office for approval before submitting the final report to the grant provider.

It is the responsibility of the LR to notify the grant provider in writing with a copy to the AVPRGS that all the requirements of the project have been fulfilled and that the project is completed.

Award for Distinction in Research

This annual award recognizes full-time faculty members who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in research. The award could be:

- A monetary award: Honorarium + a research grant;
- An engraved plaque presented in an Awards Ceremony in recognition of his/her research achievements; and
- A ceremony in honor of recipient(s).

A. Eligibility

Full-time faculty members who have sustained their status at NDU for at least six (6) regular semesters prior to the current academic year of nomination are eligible for an award, especially if they participated in research publication(s) or creative endeavor(s) that must have been presented within the last three academic years.

B. Nominations

In consultation with the Dean, a Department nominates faculty members for the award. The nominee is requested to provide the following:

- Cover letter summarizing his/her research and/or creative accomplishments;
- Letters of recommendation from established academicians, minimum of three. At least one letter must be from an individual outside of NDU;
- Comprehensive and up-to-date C.V. that includes:
 - Complete list of publications (refereed and invited publications should be so designated);
 - Special honors and prizes;
 - Presentations, exhibits or concerts (invited or other);
 - Editorial and review positions;
 - National or international committees or panels;
 - Symposium, conference, or program organizational responsibilities;
 - Grants and contracts awarded; and
 - Other noteworthy achievements or activities.
- Samples of the candidate's research and/or creative accomplishments, for example, journal publications, and/or audio/visual ; and
- Representations of creative works.

C. Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria, as appropriate, will be used for evaluating nominations:

- Publications published in internationally recognized journals, with demonstrable impact (i.e. impact of journal and/or citations by other authors);
- Critical reviews or published appraisals of the work under consideration;
- Awards, grants, or other recognitions from National or International organizations with regard to the work under consideration; and
- Demonstrable utility or usefulness of the research or creative endeavor.

D. Submissions

Nomination files should be submitted as follows:

- Full-time faculty members shall submit their files to the Chairperson concerned who will forward it to the Department Personnel Committee for review. After review by the Faculty Personnel Committee, the Dean shall give his/her assessment and submit nominations to the VP for Academic Affairs;
- Faculty members who are primarily associated with NDU Research Centers shall submit their files to the Center Director who shall submit the nominations to both the VPAA and AVPGRS who in turn give their written assessment and send the nominations to the URC for further review;
- All nomination files will be reviewed by a Presidential Review Committee, appointed by the President based upon the recommendations of the VPAA; and
- The President deliberates and takes final action.

E. Suggested Deadlines

- End of fall semester, as indicated in the University calendar, is the deadline for submission of completed nomination files to the head of the unit concerned; and
- Decisions shall be announced before the end of the spring semester, as indicated in the University calendar.

APPENDIX A

**Notre Dame University–Louaize
University Research Committee -
URC - Disclosure Form**

This form is to be completed in the cases of conflict of interest in sponsored research. It is to be submitted to the VPRGS office, and forwarded to the University Research Committee (URC).

Name: _____ Dept: _____ Faculty: _____

Title & Position: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Mobile: _____ E-mail: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Sponsor: _____ Proposal Deadline: _____

Proposal Title:

Please answer the following questions to help in clarifying the case to be investigated:

1- Were you withholding any information for improper personal benefits?

YES NO

2- Did you accept Sponsored Research knowing that the findings are predicated, predetermined, dictated, or influenced by the sponsor or any other party?

YES NO

3- Have you involved students in projects, with outcomes that serve your interests in terms of personal gain or any other personal benefit accruing from such research?

YES NO

- 4- Did you undertake external consulting or other agreements that conflict with NDU's policy or the commitment of the University under sponsored grant or contract?
YES NO

If you have answered **YES** to any of the above questions, kindly provide more information in the box below, or attach an extra sheet. Please note that further specific information might be required.

I have read and understood the **Notre Dame University- Louaize Conflict of Interest in Sponsored Research Policy** and made all required disclosures. I am committed to submit a proposal for a Conflict of Interest Management Plan if requested. I certify that I will comply with all conditions and restrictions imposed by the URC to manage, reduce, or eliminate any situation of Conflict of Interest concerning my research.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE URC

Was any Conflict of Interest situation noted?

YES NO

If **NO**, forward this form to the AVPRGS

If **YES**, recommend action:

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

Title: _____ **Date:** _____

