

# KERALA UNIVERSITY OF DIGITAL SCIENCES, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

## Guidelines for Seed Grant

The Research Office at Digital University Kerala has instituted a seed grant program specifically designed for recently appointed young faculty members. This initiative aims to initiate and support their research endeavors, laying the foundation for securing substantial grants in the coming years.

### **Purpose and Scope:**

#### **Purpose**

1. *Support Early Career Development:* The primary purpose of the seed grant program is to provide financial support and resources to young faculty members who have joined DUK within 2 years from the date of application submission. This support aims to catalyze their early career development by giving them the necessary boost to establish a robust research program.
2. *Facilitate Preliminary Research:* Seed grants serve as a means to facilitate preliminary research and exploration of innovative ideas. This fund allows faculty members to gather initial data, conduct pilot studies, or develop proof-of-concept projects that can be used as a foundation for larger research endeavors.
3. *Promote Independence and Innovation:* Encourage independence and innovation among young faculty members by enabling them to pursue research directions that align with their interests and expertise. The seed grant program should foster a culture of creativity and risk-taking.
4. *Enhance Competitiveness for Larger Grants:* Position the seed grant as a strategic tool to enhance the competitiveness of faculty members when applying for larger grants. Successful implementation of seed grant projects should strengthen their track record, making them more attractive candidates for major funding opportunities.
5. *Build Research Capacity:* Contribute to building the overall research capacity of the university by investing in the development of a new generation of faculty members. The seed grant program aims to nurture talent and cultivate a vibrant research environment.

#### **Scope**

1. *Research Areas:* The research areas should be relevant to the broader research interests of DUK.

2. *Types of Projects:* Projects such as exploratory studies, pilot projects, or initiatives that bridge gaps between existing knowledge and unexplored domains could be funded in this scheme. The end goal of this seed grant is to gather preliminary data to fetch big grants.
3. *Interdisciplinarity:* The university encourages interdisciplinary approaches by allowing collaborations between faculty members from different schools or research disciplines. This can foster the integration of diverse perspectives and methodologies.
4. *Innovation and Risk-Taking:* Emphasis is given to projects that involve unconventional or high-risk ideas, acknowledging that such endeavors can lead to groundbreaking discoveries.
5. *Expected Outputs:* Successful completion of the project should lead to tangible deliverables, such as research publications, pilot data, or prototypes, as well as intangible outcomes such as the development of new research skills and collaborations. A clear plan to fetch big grants should be given in the proposal with its timeline.

**Eligibility Criteria:**

1. The seed grant is limited to faculty members who joined the university within two years from the date of application.
2. A faculty member may serve as the principal investigator (PI) for just one project and as a co-principal investigator (Co-PI) for only one project.

**Grant Amount and Duration:**

1. A faculty member can apply for the seed grant as an individual (PI) or a team with a maximum of 2 Co-PIs. The maximum amount that can be availed is as follows:

<b>Applicant(s)</b>	<b>Max. Amount (INR)</b>
PI alone	10 lakhs
PI and one Co-PI	10 lakhs
PI and two Co-PIs	15 lakhs

2. The grant amount will be disbursed in trenches as per the advice from the review committee.
3. The duration of funding is limited to 18 months. Under any circumstances, this will not be extended.

### **Application Process:**

1. A brief sketch of the proposal is given in Appendix I. The applicant will have to fill in the details and submit the proposal to the research office via email [researchoffice@duk.ac.in](mailto:researchoffice@duk.ac.in)

### **Proposal Review Process:**

1. The Research Office will conduct an initial screening.
2. Dean Research will recommend constituting a review committee with one external subject expert (outside DUK), two DUK faculty members, a representative from the research office, and the dean research himself/herself and conduct a review and provide recommendations.
3. Key evaluation metrics include the project's potential impact, the expertise of PI and Co-PI(s) in the proposed area of research, feasibility, innovation, plans to fetch big grants, and alignment with the university's research priorities.
4. Plans and timelines to fetch big grants will be thoroughly analyzed.
5. The PI will be asked to present the proposal to the review committee after the revision of the proposal is completed.

### **Post-Grant Review**

1. *Interim Progress Reports:* Grant recipients should submit interim progress reports once every six months detailing the achievements, challenges faced, and any adjustments made to the project plan.
2. *Financial Audits:* The Research Office will conduct periodic financial audits to ensure that funds are being used as intended and per the grant agreement.
3. *Project Monitoring Committee:* The Research Office will establish a project monitoring committee comprising experts in the field to provide guidance and oversight. The advisory board will meet at regular intervals to evaluate the progress of the projects funded through seed grants.
4. *Site Visits:* The project monitoring committee will conduct site visits to the project location to assess the actual implementation and impact on the ground.
5. *Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms:* The Research Office will implement surveys and feedback mechanisms to gather input from project participants, stakeholders, and end-users. Use feedback to make real-time adjustments and improvements to the project.
6. *Timeline for Big Grants:* Special attention will be given to ensure that the timeline to obtain big grants is strictly followed. Any deviations from the proposed plan should be informed in writing to the project monitoring committee and obtain consent before making changes to the timeline.

7. Final Evaluation: The Research Office will conduct a comprehensive final evaluation at the end of the grant period to assess the overall success, lessons learned, and areas for improvement. It will also use the findings to inform future grant-making decisions and program development.

**Mentoring and Support:**

1. The Research Office provides mentoring support to seed grant recipients, pairing them with senior faculty members or mentors who can guide them in developing strong research proposals. A special request from the seed grant recipients is needed in this regard.
2. The Research Office will facilitate workshops and training sessions on grant writing, budget management, and project execution.

## **Appendix I - Proposal Format**

### Preliminary information

Project title:

Name and affiliation of the Principal Investigator:

Name and affiliation of Co-Principal Investigator 1 (if any):

Name and affiliation of Co-Principal Investigator 2 (if any):

Abstract [max. 250 words]

Duration of the proposal:

(max. 18 months)

Financial outlay:

## Technical details

Objectives of the proposal (bullet points)

Origin of the proposal [max. 500 words]

State-of-the-art [max. 500 words]

Work plan [max. 1000 words]

(Clearly describe the work plans to achieve each objective mentioned above. Include schemes, flow charts, diagrams, images, etc.)

Expected outputs and outcomes from the project [Max. 500 words]

Domain expertise of the PI & Co-PIs (500 words)

(Briefly explain the expertise of PI and Co-PIs in the domain mentioned)

Project timeline (Gantt chart) [in phases of 3 months]

Plans to fetch big grants through outputs derived from this proposal [max. 1000 words]

(By big grants, we mean project proposals having a value of more than 50 lakhs INR. Give

details of the big grants that can result from this proposal. Provide the details of the potential funding agencies that can fund big grants in your research domain and give strategies for fetching them)

Timeline to fetch big grants (Gantt chart) [in phases of 3 months]

Financial outlay with the item-wise breakup.

References