



SUR UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

كلية صور الجامعة

Research Manual

AY 2018/19

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Preamble

As a Higher Education Institution (HEI), Sur University College (SUC) continues to encourage and support contemporary research with an aim to create new knowledge, theories and models. SUC expects 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 college level Scientific Research Committee (SRC), in collaboration with its stakeholders. Generally, research at SUC is researcher-oriented, however, new policies and procedures are being discussed on a continuous basis to broaden research efforts, for example, by forming research groups at all academic departments and encouraging faculty members to carry out interdisciplinary research. All faculty members 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 for quality teaching. It values the significance of research and its impact on innovative teaching that are key to meet growing challenges of future. SUC therefore promotes and encourages research areas that include but are not limited to Applied, Action, Experimental, Quantitative, Predictive, Exploratory and Strategic Research. The overall aim of research at SUC is to enhance knowledge – base, improve teaching quality, build Research-Teaching Nexus and add to the betterment of the society. SUC aims to adhere with international best practices in research, follow 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 reputed and indexed journals and established international conferences (e.g. Scopus, Web of Science). The Scientific Research Committee (SRC) is responsible for managing research activities at the 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 try 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.

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

Abbreviations

ACM: Association for Computing Machinery

AIS: Association for Information Systems

AY: Academic Year

BoD: Board of Directors

BoT: Board of Trustees

CAB: College Academic Board

HEI: Higher Education Institution

HoD: Head of Department

IEEE: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers

IFP: Institutional Focal Point

IPR: Intellectual Property Rights

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

PG: Postgraduate

SUC: Sur University College

SRC: Scientific Research Committee

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

OAAA: Oman Academic Accreditation Authorities

TRC: The Research Council, Oman

UC: University College

VMOs: Vision, Mission and Objectives

WIPO: World Intellectual Property Organization

Research Ethics and Standard Values

Faculty members and students (here onwards, researchers) are expected to comply with the following:

1. International best practices in research and professional behavior.
2. Undertake any research project after having ethical approval from the respective department's research committee.
3. Ensure that Intellectual Property Rights are observed (Please refer to SUC's IP Policy).
4. Follow research related policies and procedures as set and practiced at Sur University College.
5. Be responsible for maintaining data confidentiality.
6. Ensure that no physical or psychological harm is caused to participants/subjects/clients.
7. Ensure that they do not submit manuscripts to predatory journals.
8. Ensure that any Research Grant or Funding (Internal or External) is solely used for research purposes and that an audit report for accountability is submitted to chair of department level research committee for further action.
9. Secure the collected data in an archive and that the data is kept for no longer than 2 years after the completion of a research project.
10. Collected data shall not be shared with a third party in any case.

Staff Research Funding – External

SUC encourages and supports its faculty members to approach national and international research funding agencies for research projects. On identification of a research funding agency, faculty members shall approach the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs who will liaise with the agency and try to obtain research funds abiding by the Omani Laws, and SUC's Rules and Regulations. Any research funds received will be accounted for and audit reports must be prepared and sent to the external funding agency at regular time intervals. Recipients of research funds shall accept terms and conditions of the research funding agency.

Staff Research Funding – Internal

Sur University College (SUC) encourages its faculty members to apply for internal research funding. As a part of its commitment to develop research culture, SUC expects that the faculty members / active and / or young researchers will make efforts to prepare and submit research proposals based on their area of specialization, and in line with the college's Vision, Mission and Objectives (VMOs).

Each department has its own dedicated budget for research. The research funds are announced by the HoDs to the respective faculty members through department council meetings. The HoDs welcome applications / proposals for internal research funding from all the faculty members and are open to discussion. In a situation where a given department's research funds are exhausted, the funding requests can be made to receive funds from the college level.

The management has agreed to give priority to allocate research funds to those research proposals that are approved by the college level Scientific Research Committee (SRC). The amount of allocated funds for approved applications will be recommended by the SRC to the Dean. Below are some basic procedures¹ that must be followed before submitting a research funding request:

- Preparing a proposal in line with the area of specialization;
- Highlighting the expected impact on the society;
- Keeping the proposal in line with the department's objectives;
- Making a brief presentation at the department level research committee;
- Upon approval from the department level research committee, get the fund request form signed by the respective HoD;
- The HoD to submit the approved proposal and signed fund request form to the Assistant Dean for Academic and Research Affairs.
- The Assistant Dean for Academic and Research Affairs to get the final approval from the Dean and respond back to the respective HoD.

SUC supports its faculty members to be active in research activities. Faculty members who publish their research in peer reviewed, refereed and indexed journals (Scopus Indexed), 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 respective HoD along with soft and hard copies of the publications. The HoD shall make a recommendation to the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research

¹ For details please refer to the Research Related Forms

Affairs. The HoDs when making a recommendation are required to submit a cover letter briefly highlighting the significance of the published research and a hard copy of the same. 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 Research Funding Policy (Please refer to the annexure).

Faculty members cannot claim that monetary rewards as their “right”, however, SUC supports all research-related rewards as a motivational approach. All faculty members are expected to focus on their area of specialization however expanding the area in a logical way is natural and will be appreciated. Financial compensation shall only be granted for publications in Scopus and Web of Science indexed journal and established peer reviewed international conferences. However, publications may be considered for faculty’s 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 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 scope. 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 SRC. All research projects need to get Ethical Approval from the SRC. It is expected that each funded research project will make contribution to the community through publication/s at indexed journals and / or international conferences.

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. Students can frequently visit The Research Council's website (www.trc.gov.om) or contact the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs for further information.

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 significance, 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

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".

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 shall 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 and encouraged to undertake external consultancy services with 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 supports faculty members to commercialize 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 another 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 supports its faculty members to upgrade student 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”.

Conducting Seminars and Workshops

All the departments at SUC are expected to arrange and conduct seminars and workshops in collaboration with external stakeholders. The seminars and workshops shall be conducted either inter departmental or college level. The proposal should be prepared by the respective department scientific research committee and submitted to the respective HoD for further perusal with 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 Department shall 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.

Conducting Symposiums 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 (expense details) must 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). Symposiums and national level seminars should be arranged ideally within 4-6 months 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 related to the department-specific or common for general audience. The department-level internal research and seminar committee shall coordinate with the department head about the planned series of seminars. It shall be the responsibility of the department head to ensure that the seminars are conducted in time. The department head in coordination with the department-level research committee shall keep a record of all such seminars and workshops.

Where internal seminars and workshops are for a general audience, the respective department (conducting the seminar / workshop) shall coordinate with 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 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.

Ethical Issues

SUC emphasizes that strict measures are taken while conducting any research activity that involves, for example, human participants/subjects/clients, animals or interaction with biohazards (Please refer to Research Ethics Policy and Biosafety Policy). Individual faculty conducting a research activity should ensure that no violations occur in ethical considerations. Appropriate steps must be taken while interacting with bio-hazardous materials. Any kind of research where humans, animals and / or biohazardous materials are involved, need to get Ethical Approval from the SRC before starting the research project. Research works such as reviews, commentaries, etc. are exempt from the said.

It shall be a standard procedure for any research ensure that there is no risk of physical or psychological harm for the subjects/participants. Further, any research effort where humans will be involved as subjects, an Informed Consent must be obtained (Please refer to Research Related Forms). Additionally, the aim of the research must be clearly stated in a written format and be distributed to the subjects before commencing data collection. An investigation could be called for research projects that are carried out without the ethical approval from the SRC.

Issues related with Health, Safety and Bio-hazards

SUC understands and emphasized on the significance of health and safety ethics including security at workplace. It is therefore that all academic staff and students undertaking research are advised and expected to take appropriate measures to ensure that their colleagues, students and themselves are following the best practices when it comes to health, safety and dealing with bio-hazards. SUC's Health and Safety Policy (Please refer to Annexures) aims to provide guidance to all its stakeholders. One of the major aims of the policy and its appropriate implementation is to protect both staff members and students from any potential risk. The stakeholders are expected to abide by the Regulations, comply with the Safety and Security Laws of the Sultanate, follow work practices in line with the Health and Safety Policy and seek guidance when they come across any hazardous materials or get injured irrespective of the scale of the injury. Staff and students are required to wear protective overalls, laboratory clothing, gloves, goggles when dealing with any kind of hazardous materials. The said protective materials are available with the HoD Engineering.

Intellectual Property Rights

SUC has a policy to ensure that all its stakeholders follow international best practices related with Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). The Intellectual Property Policy at SUC (Please refer to the Intellectual Property Rights policy) provides guidelines to all faculty, students and stakeholders in terms of the importance of IPR, types of intellectual property, intellectual rights, and other matters related with intellectual property rights. The ultimate goal of this policy is to make sure that creative works are protected in the form of copyrights, trademarks and patents. This policy is developed keeping in mind the standards set by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). All faculty members, students and stakeholders at SUC are responsible to comply with the Intellectual Property Policy. The code of conduct includes:

- (i) Copyrighted materials / works shall not be used without prior permission from the owner.
- (ii) Patents shall not be used or modified without the consent of the patent holder.
- (iii) No one shall attempt to use established trademarks or design similar ones with an intent to cause confusion.
- (iv) No one shall use copied licensed technologies and / or software.
- (v) Disclosure of trade secrets of anyone through any means are strictly prohibited.

Any violation of intellectual property will be considered as a “criminal offence” and may lead to termination of employment.

** While the Intellectual Property Rights Policy will be regularly disseminated at department meetings, through emails and the staff and student proxy, it is however expected that each faculty member will go through the Research Manual to keep themselves updated with it.

Department Level Research and Departmental Objectives

It shall be ensured by each department’s HOD and relevant department level research committee that all research proposals matches the concerned faculty members’ specialization. Each faculty member is encouraged to initiate research projects that are in line with their respective department’s VMOs.

Department Level Research Groups

SUC continuously supports formation and active collaboration in 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 development of local community plays a vital role in its achievements. Faculty members are advised to conduct research activities by focusing on the local community requirements and provide solutions that may be feasible to apply. 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 continuously motivated to conduct research in the specializations offered under the department. The research activities tend to focus on local community and industrial requirements. The inter-disciplinary research activities are highly encouraged as well as research activities that are conducted as per the interest of the Sultanate's national development. Research activities are not limited to certain areas or specifications but that may have impact and effects on international research activities and best practices.

Identified Target Areas for Research

SUC's Scientific Research Committee (SRC), which is the highest body for monitoring and evaluating research activities at the college has taken several initiatives with an aim to enhance research activities. SRC on behalf of SUC expects that all faculty members who are active in research will conduct research activities that are aligned with the college's Vision and Mission Statements.

One of these initiatives is to encourage faculty members to come up with research ideas that align with the priority areas highlighted by the Research Council (TRC), Oman. After a number of meetings, the SRC has agreed upon a list of target areas for future research. This particular list of targeted research areas is in line with the Vision and Mission Statements as well as the priorities that are set by the TRC, Oman. The list of identified research target areas was developed after a great deal of deliberations and was disseminated to all the academic departments through their respective HoDs.

This initiative indicates SUC's commitment to carry out research that contributes to existing knowledge base. SUC has a track record of encouraging and supporting its faculty members to develop a culture where both individual and collaborative research is performed. One of the major aims of research at SUC is to enhance existing teaching and learning environment so that there is a link between teaching and research at both undergraduate and graduate levels, making a significant contribution towards indigenous and international communities, form partnerships with industry and practitioners in a way that SUC can play its part in reaching the Oman Vision 2020. SUC has therefore planned to support such research activities.

The general aim remains to promote state-of-the art research by developing new frameworks, ideas, and theories that would lead to better scholastic and industrial practices. SUC has taken numerous initiatives to not only recognize, but to encourage its faculty members in carrying out applied research that shall have a contribution both towards the region and beyond. At present, different academic departments have formed department level research groups that are driven by faculty members' areas of expertise and research interest.

Research publications that have been confirmed by the faculty members are scrutinized by the SRC to identify the likely impact of publications. SUC has been conducting a series of internal research seminars that has created a platform for the faculty members to share their existing and / or future research. All these efforts have been made to guarantee that faculty members are aware of what are the research activities being performed and, how they could form collaboration from within Oman and internationally to further their research endeavors.

In general, research publications over the last academic year have targeted several areas where majority of the work has been carried out in the fields of Mechanical Engineering, Artificial Intelligence, Computer Vision, Health Information Systems, Information Sciences, Finance and Marketing. To ensure that the faculty members make an active research contribution, the SRC acts as a college-level monitoring body. The aim of monitoring research by the SRC is to provide necessary advice, mentoring and support to all researchers. The college level SRC has a standing agenda on on-going research projects at each department.

SUC appreciates the significance of research that has a direct and positive influence on the development of local and regional communities. It is therefore that all faculty members are regularly advised to prioritize their research efforts in a way that local and regional communities receive maximum attention. However, there are no obligations for faculty members whatsoever to restrict their research. Faculty members have the intellectual freedom to carry out research in the area/s that they see relevant, however, in line with the college's Vision and Mission and, to adhere with the ROSQA requirements, they are regularly encouraged to study areas of highest importance in the local and regional context. These areas have been identified as Information Technology, Information Systems, Marketing, Management, Accounting, Engineering and Education.

As mentioned earlier, there is a mix of research interests shared by faculty members at SUC. Each department has faculty members with their own areas of expertise and research interests that add to the strength of SUC as a higher education institution. Below are the identified research directions for all the departments at SUC. It is expected that the identified areas will receive appropriate attention and that there will be significant number of research projects leading to published articles in the said areas:

General Foundation Program (GFP)

The General Foundation Program (GFP) and General Requirement Unit (GRU) at SUC are the founding units that prepare new students for their undergraduate studies by focusing on English, Mathematics and Computing skills. Both GFP and GRU are working towards the college's Vision and Mission through quality education and research, support services, and an environment of individual and group learning. In line with the GFP's Vision and Mission as well as research interests of the faculty members, below are the future research directions:

- ✚ To develop novel teaching methodologies that could lead to enhanced learning skills of Omani students;
- ✚ To examine and implement instructional support systems for English learners at SUC;
- ✚ To identify and understand the needs and preferences of English learners at SUC;
- ✚ Whether applying multimedia in an ESL classroom setting leads to better understanding among local students;
- ✚ Exploring the best practices for teaching English in Oman.

Information Systems & Technology (IST)

The Department of Information Systems and Technology (IST) comprises of experienced and self-driven faculty members who are keen to make research contributions at both local and international level. The department continuously encourages both the students and faculty members to carry out research that could highlight identified gaps between theory and practice and to come up with evidence-based propositions to overcome those gaps. Recent research publications and current research projects that are mainly being led by individual faculty members aim to form a synergy between multiple disciplines. Over the past many years, IST department's faculty members have successfully completed various research projects that are now part of the literature. In line with the department's vision and mission, below are the future research directions:

- ✚ To develop augmented algorithms by investigating non-invasive patterns;
- ✚ To examine how prevalent machine-learning frameworks could be improved for computer vision-based technologies;
- ✚ To develop bio-metric security;
- ✚ To investigate how wireless sensor computing could be used to enhance energy saving in Oman;
- ✚ To examine how information systems and technologies could be used to improve desirable healthcare practices in Oman;
- ✚ To investigate whether assistive technologies can help Omani nationals who suffer from mental disorders;
- ✚ To improve Artificial Intelligence algorithms especially in the area of Scatter Searching;
- ✚ To create a framework that could lead to a better understanding of Natural Language among Omani Academia and Practitioners;
- ✚ To investigate the area of E-commerce in Oman and the Gulf.

Business Administration

The Department of Business Administration strongly believes in the impact of research on improving high quality education. The department has therefore developed a strategy to make intellectual and academic contribution for its students, the college and beyond. The strategy aims at making research progress and share the knowledge through journal publications, high quality regional and international conferences, and workshops/seminars. In addition, the department has taken an initiative to provide consultancy services to the local community and has recently established several research groups. At the Department of Business Administration, research is seen as an integral part of its Vision and Mission. The department is working in line with the current scientific views in order to form a synergy between multiple research areas to come up with solutions to complex problems. At present, the department is working on a number of research areas that include but are not limited to Technology and Human Resource Management, Consumer Behavior, Islamic Accounting, Taxation Practices in Oman, and

Marketing practices in Oman. The department has formed a number of research groups based on mutual expertise and shared research interests. These are preparing new project proposals that largely aim at contributing to the research knowledge in the region. Future research directions for the department of Business Administration are listed below:

- ✚ Accounting practices in Oman and the Gulf Region;
- ✚ Islamic Banking;
- ✚ Conventional Banking;
- ✚ The impact of technology on Human Resource Management in the Gulf region;
- ✚ Efficient Consumer Response;
- ✚ Effect of Islamic Accounting in Oman and the Gulf States;
- ✚ Marketing;
- ✚ Human Resource Practices in Oman, and
- ✚ Other areas of Business Discipline such as Customer Relationship Management, Entrepreneurship etc.

Engineering Department

The Engineering Department aims to contribute to the college's academic excellence by providing quality education. The department has qualified faculty members who create an interactive learning environment where students are taught both theory and practice. The department is currently providing quality education and carrying out research in areas including Architecture and Mechanical Engineering. Several research initiatives were taken and completed by the faculty members. The outcomes of the research works were disseminated through publications at various international journals. Keeping in mind the vision and mission of the department and the college, the following future research directions:

- ✚ Architectural Design in Oman;
- ✚ Promoting Environmental Sustainability;
- ✚ Structure and Construction in Oman;
- ✚ Energy and Sustainability in Oman;
- ✚ Investigating the Impact of Smart Materials;
- ✚ Manufacturing;
- ✚ Thermo-fluids and Energy;
- ✚ Green Technology.

Post Graduate Studies

The department of Post Graduate Studies (PGS) is a relatively new addition to SUC's academic services. SUC recognizes the importance of research-oriented studies at the graduate level. It is therefore that the college is working in collaboration with its affiliates to impart taught and research-based modules for the students. This provides an ideal

platform for both the students and faculty members to carry out joint-research that addresses indigenous research gaps. The department's vision focuses on both teaching and research and aims to contribute to the society at large. Based on the students' research projects, research expertise of the faculty and Vision and Mission of the department, the following research directions have been identified:

- ✚ Human Resource Management from an Omani Perspective;
- ✚ Electronic Human Resource Management;
- ✚ Improving Hiring Practices in Oman;
- ✚ Performance Appraisal System in the Gulf;
- ✚ Customer Relation Management & its Impact on Businesses;
- ✚ Entrepreneurship in Oman;
- ✚ Managing Diversity at work;
- ✚ Information Systems and Small Businesses;
- ✚ Business Performance Enhancement;
- ✚ Impact of Technology on Human Resource Management.

Annexure

Annexure 1: Procedure for Applying Conference Fund for Presenting

A faculty member who would like to apply for funding request for a conference paper presentation shall follow the following procedures. Funding request for a conference shall be made upon acceptance of the manuscript in advance.

Eligibility:

1. The faculty shall be either single author or one of the authors of the paper to be presented.
2. There is no limit for the maximum number of authors of a given accepted manuscript however; the faculty member must be either the first or the second author.
3. The co-authors may be from inside or from outside the college.
4. The faculty member would have completed the Probation Period and signed the contract as the faculty member of Sur University College.
5. The manuscripts shall be published highlighting the faculty member's affiliation with SUC.
6. The conference should be related to the area of specialization.
7. If the conference themes are not related to area of specialization, then the conference should have high standing and organized by professional bodies such as AIS, ACM, IEEE, OQNH etc.

Application Process:

Upon receiving an acceptance of a manuscript for a conference, the faculty member shall apply for the conference funds with a written request to the department-level research committee. The faculty should provide detailed request regarding the fund requirements with the particulars of the conference and acceptance letter.

Duties and Responsibilities of Department Level Committees

The department level research committee shall meet within 3-5 working days to evaluate the request. The committee shall verify for the following:

1. The conference type and reputation.
2. Significance for SUC's promotion / marketing.
3. Relation to field of study.
4. Relation to the area of specialization of the faculty member.

5. In case the conference themes are not related to field of study then expected impact on local and international community shall be considered.
6. List of previous conferences funded by the college.
7. Conference dates do not clash with the final examination dates or summer teaching period.
8. The conference venue is not the hometown or place where the presenter family lives currently. In a situation where a highly reputed and dedicated / established international conference is going to be held at a faculty member's hometown, accommodation allowance may not be provided. However, the final decision on accommodation allowance rests with the college Dean.
9. The paper is not presented in-absentia or by any other author / colleague / relative.

Selection and approval process

Based on the above checklist, the department level research committee shall approve the required conference fund and forward the request to the HoD. The committee should comply with the following rules in such cases:

1. Sufficient research fund should be available in the department.
2. All the faculties of the department should be given equal opportunity.
3. In case of repeated participation, the committee shall check with other faculties for their possible participation within the available research fund.
4. If the conference has high reputation and highlights SUC's research strength, but the research fund is either not available or insufficient, then the committee chair shall contact the other departments for possible funding support.
5. In such cases, the chairs of committee shall request for a meeting with the Head of PG Studies and Research Department and Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs. Based on the discussions, the final decision shall be taken. Such decisions should be attached to the fund request letter.
6. If a greater number of staff members apply for the conference fund and sufficient funds are not available, the committee shall take decisions based on any one of the following criteria in given order:
 - (i) The conference significance and importance;
 - (ii) The first preference should be given to those who have not utilized such conference support for the current and previous years;
 - (iii) If the applicants fulfill the above criteria (i) then the rank of the applicants;
 - (iv) If they are of same rank, seniority of the applicants at "SUC";
 - (v) Otherwise, invite the applicants for a meeting for possible withdrawal;
 - (vi) If they are not willing to withdraw, the chair of the committee shall call for a meeting with HoD of the respective department, HoD PG Studies and Research and Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs. Based on the majority of voting the applicant may be selected.

Duties and Responsibilities of HoD

On receipt of the approval from the department level research committee, the HoD shall call for a department council meeting or if sufficient time duration is available, in the forthcoming departmental council meeting and discuss the approval. The HoD must ensure that not a greater number of faculties go for conferences in the same time period and ensure proper conduction of the classes. During the department council meeting, the faculty member should provide proper substitutes for the classes he / she teach during the semester until otherwise the conference falls on the other semester or during non – teaching period. On approval of the department council, the HoD shall forward the request to the Assistant Dean for Academic and Research Affairs for further action.

Maximum amount for each faculty member

Each faculty member is eligible to claim up to (Maximum of) OMR 1000 for such participation. This ceiling may change based on the BoT and BoD decisions. The Dean shall be the final decision-making authority of finalizing the amount.

On Return from the Conference

On return from the conference, the faculty should provide a hardcopy of his / her published manuscript from the conference proceedings. S/he should make an internal seminar presentation on the same. S/he should submit the invoices to the department level research committee's chair, in turn, who will submit the same to finance (and keep a copy for official records) department for audit purposes.

Annexure 2: Research Ethics Policy

Article 1: Policy Statement

This policy aims to cover research ethics for all staff (Academic and Admin) and students at Sur University College. Main contents of this policy are extracted from the related policies in SUC Ordinances 2015.

Article 2: Objective

The objective of this policy is to support staff and students in carrying out research following international best practices and adhere with research ethics.

Article 3: Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students at Sur University College (SUC).

Article 4: General Guidelines for Academic Staff and Students

1. All staff and students shall initiate any research project after obtaining ethical approval from the Scientific Research Committee (SRC).
2. Follow international best practices in research and professional behavior.
3. Ensure that SUC's Intellectual Property policy is observed.
4. Ensure that they follow all research-related policies and procedures set by Sur University College.
5. Remain responsible for maintaining data confidentiality.
6. Ensure that no physical or psychological harm is caused to participants/subjects/clients.
7. Ensure that they do not submit manuscripts to predatory journals.
8. Ensure that the manuscripts are submitted to indexed and refereed journals.
9. Ensure that any Research Grant or Funding (Internal or External) is solely used for research purposes and that an audit report for accountability is submitted to chair of department for further action.
10. Be responsible to secure the collected data in an archive and that the data is kept for no longer than 2 years after the completion of a research project.
11. Not share collected data with a third party under any circumstance.

Article 5: Procedures:

5.1 Professional Ethics in the Scientific Research

All academic staff and students shall:

- 5.1.1 Conduct research with integrity, professionalism and intellectual honesty.
- 5.1.2 Direct research to what is useful for community and humanity.
- 5.1.3 Ensure scientific honesty in carrying out research studies.
- 5.1.4 Endorse the source of information accurately avoiding any inconsistencies.
- 5.1.5 Not omit any part of quotations.
- 5.1.6 Cite all published work accurately.
- 5.1.7 Specify their roles clearly in joint research studies.
- 5.1.8 Gather information carefully and accurately.
- 5.1.9 Present information clearly and write research papers in complete detail so that other researcher can further verify the findings for future research.
- 5.1.10 Be open to receive views and opinions for constructive debate.

5.2 Professional Ethics in the Supervision of Scientific Research

All research supervisors shall:

- 5.2.1 Guide students in choosing appropriate research topic.
- 5.2.2 Provide logical scientific help to students, neither excessive, such that the student cannot cope with it nor too little such that the student cannot benefit from their supervisor.
- 5.2.3 Guide students so they can improve their abilities to be able to conduct literature review, data collection and analysis, and presenting results and being capable to defend their research.
- 5.2.4 Train students on independent assessment of information sources while doing research and to be responsible for their decisions.
- 5.2.5 Help develop students' abilities on scientific thinking and knowledge creation in their research areas.
- 5.2.6 Continuously monitor scientific honesty and confidentiality of the research.

Article 6: Responsibilities:

A. RESPONSIBLE BODY

- (i) Students.
- (ii) Individual Staff members.
- (iii) Head of Departments.
- (iv) Scientific Research Committee.

Article 7: Related Guidelines:

- 1. Credibility and Ethics Policy.
- 2. Intellectual Rights Policy.
- 3. Research Mentoring Policy.
- 4. Research Manual.

Annexure 3: Research and Publications Rewards

Preamble

SUC is determined to create a culture of research and publications among its faculty members and motivate them to be actively involved in research activities. For a journal publication, reward request should be made upon actual publication of the manuscript in a journal. To implement this, the following actions will be taken

1. Commencement of a Yearly Bulletin (Effective from AY 2017/18) on the aforesaid activities in order to document, publicize and appreciate the faculty members.
2. Letter or Certificate of Appreciation to all the faculty members who contribute to research, publications and consulting services.

Article 2: Monetary Rewards

- a) Publishing papers in Scopus indexed journals or higher volumes from reputed publishers indexed in leading indexes or fees payable for publication: 300 OMR
- b) Publish papers in leading peer reviewed international journals cited in leading Indexes or fees payable for publication: 200 OMR
- c) Publishing papers in leading national journals/Practitioner magazines or fees payable for publication: 100 OMR
- d) Presenting and publishing papers in leading International conferences/proceedings: 100 OMR
- e) Presenting and publishing papers in leading national conferences/proceedings: 50 OMR
- f) Publishing articles in local dailies or magazines or fees payable for publication: 25 OMR
- g) Research reward for conducting research which ought to lead to development of software product or publications in a leading international journal
- h) Fees for promotion evaluation by external referees: 300 OMR

Article 3: Allocation of Research Rewards

- a) Faculty members need to produce evidence of either the acceptance letter or publication (or evidence for paying fees in case of acceptance) in order to obtain rewards or fees for publications.
- b) Authors need to acknowledge SUC's Research reward support in their publications to be eligible for monetary rewards.
- c) Faculty members are encouraged to publish papers in scientific journals from reputed publishers and in higher volumes (4 and above) year wise.
- d) Scientific papers published in lower volumes (below 4) of highly reputed journals with top indexing such as ISI, Scopus, SSCI, SCI or SCI-expanded may be accepted. However, the final decision shall be taken by the SRC.

- e) The faculty members need to provide a detailed proposal and to make a presentation to the SRC in order to obtain research funds.
- f) The SRC will agree on the merit of the research proposal based on its potential to develop software products or publications in top journals.
- g) In case of multiple authors for the papers or conference presentations, if all of the authors are from SUC, the research reward will have to be shared among them. If one author is from SUC, they will be entitled to get a reward based on their author position.
- h) Allocation of research rewards will be subject to change based on the ongoing policies of SUC.
- i) The recommendation of SRC shall be forwarded to the Dean for allocation of rewards.

Annexure 4: Upgrading Student Projects into Research Papers

Preamble:

This policy guides SUC staff members to follow while upgrading students' projects or other related work into research output and publishing in national / international journals / conferences. This policy also guides the staff members for getting patent or copyrights of any such work.

Policy Statement:

“Upgrading the students works into research papers” means significantly modifying and upgrading any work as whole or a part there in, such as projects, studies, design, dissertation work and all other works done either by the students alone and / or in a group either under the supervision of any individual instructor or a group of instructors and publishing them in any international or national journals and / or presenting the paper in any international / national conferences / symposium. It must be ensured that the upgraded research work has no less than 70% of novelty.

Rules and Regulations on Upgrading:

1. The project or work title may be maintained as it is.
2. At least there should be 70% of changes with respect to the original work.
3. The supervisor's name shall appear as the last author.
4. In case of any fees payable for the presentation or publication, the college is not responsible for those expenses before the publication.
5. After the publication, the paper needs to be submitted to the department level research committee. The department level research committee will submit the same to the respective HoD. The HoD will submit the published research articles to the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs for further action.
6. Based on the quality of publication, the college shall decide either to pay the fees or award amount to the researcher according to the “Research Fund” policy.
7. If the students do not agree to add their names as the co-authors, then the supervisor should add their name in “Acknowledgement” area and get the written consents from the students for the same.
8. If the supervisor upgrades the projects with more than 65% contents, then he or she may decide to add the students as the coauthors. But, in any case, the students' names should be included in “Acknowledgement” area.
9. The above rules apply for patents and copyrights also. The designs and patents should be obtained carefully with at most care.
10. The supervisor upgrading the project is responsible for any disputes in future.
11. If any violations found or any complaints received in future, the supervisor is liable to punished according to the “Academic Conduct”.

12. If any supervisor is applying for academic promotion, one such upgraded paper shall be considered for application.

Responsibilities:

1. The Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs is responsible for finalizing any academic and research related issues.
2. A committee may be formed in case of any violations and/or complaints that arise at any point of time.
3. The Dean is the final decision-making authority in all cases.

Final Decisions:

The students should be given first preferences to be benefited in case of any complaints and status quos.

Annexure 5: Research Funding Policy

Article 1: Policy Statement

The Research Funding policy is developed to define and outline eligibility for applying research funding in order to carry out research at Sur University College. No faculty member is allowed to conduct funded research in a way that she / he gains personal financial benefits and it is mandatory that all measures are taken to avoid any potential conflicts of interests. Those whose applications for Research Funding requests are approved, shall sign a "Consent Form". Successful Research Funding applicants will update their research progress on a regular basis to the department level research committee, their respective HoD and the Assistant Dean for Academic and Research Affairs.

Article 2: Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

1. To disseminate research funds pertaining to the funding application;
2. To make sure that the research funds are properly utilized.
3. To ensure that those who receive research funds will be accountable for audit;

Article 3: Scope

The policy is applicable to all the staff members and students at Sur University College.

Article 4: Definitions

Research: Making of original and novel knowledge and or improving existing knowledge base.

Research Funding: Research money / funds granted to the researchers for research undertakings.

Sponsor: Sur University College or any external funding agency such as The Research Council (TRC) of Oman.

SUC Scientific Research Committee: Highest body at Sur University College to monitor research activities, endorse CAB for research funding and ethical approval for the research activities.

Article 5: Procedures

A. APPLYING FOR INTERNAL (SUC) RESEARCH FUNDS

The staff member / student who would like to apply for any internal research funding request shall follow the following procedures:

(a) Eligibility:

- (i) The applicant shall be either the only researcher or the principal investigator of the research activity.
- (ii) The researcher(s) may be either from Sur University College or from any other HEI approved by the College Level Scientific Research Committee.
- (iii) The applicant should have completed his / her probation period at SUC.
- (iv) The applicant should not be under observation due to general misconduct and / or academic misconduct and / or gross misconduct.

(b) Application Process:

- (i) The applicant shall fill the related research fund forms and submit them to the Head of the Department for further perusals.
- (ii) All the forms should be filled properly and duly signed by the applicant. The co-researchers may be advised to sign the forms if needed.
- (iii) The research project budget must be filled clearly specifying the list of requirements and estimated budget amount.
- (iv) The applicant should ensure that the budget requirements specified are directly related to the research expenses.
- (v) The applicant should make sure that no other research fund request has been applied by any of the co-researcher(s).
- (vi) If any external fund request is submitted, the applicant should clearly provide the details.

Duties and Responsibilities of Department Level Committee

On receipt of the research fund request through the Head of the Department, the department level Scientific Research committee shall meet within 5 working days to analyze the request. The committee shall initially check for the following criteria.

10. All the related forms are clearly filled and duly signed by the principal investigator and co-researchers if applicable.
11. None of the researcher is under probation.
12. None of the researcher is under observation due to any misconducts.

In case of any violation, the committee shall make recommendation to the Head of the Department. Otherwise, the committee shall proceed with further scrutinization.

1. The type and area of the research.
2. Relation to area of specialization / field of interest of the researchers. In case the research area is not related to the area of specialization / field of interest then significance impact or requirement for local community.
3. The research activity is feasible.
4. The probable completion of the research activities in expected time period.
5. The proposed budget is realistic.
6. The author(s) do not travel out of the campus either during exam period or any audit period for research conduction.
7. Alignment to SUC Vision, Mission statements.
8. Significance for SUC's promotion / marketing.
9. Adhere to University College research ethics.

Approval Process:

1. If the Department Level Scientific Research Committee feels that the Criteria 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 are in favor, then they shall proceed further for the approval processes.
2. The Department Level Scientific Research Committee shall check the availability of the research funds in the department.
3. Each applicant is eligible for up to \$3000 equivalent OMR. The committee shall approve the maximum budget request if the request falls within the range. But the overall request should not exceed the eligible amount.
4. If the department has sufficient research funds and no other application has been received then the committee shall allot the maximum budget request up to \$3000 equivalent OMR.
5. If the committee received more application, the committee shall decide the amount based on the following criteria:
 - a) Maximum fund shall be allotted for the research activity that has high significance impact on SUC promotion.
 - b) If all the research activities have equal importance, then the applicant who has not utilized any research fund before shall be allotted with maximum research funds.
 - c) If all the applicants are utilizing the research funds first time then SUC seniority at SUC shall be considered and the senior applicant shall be allotted maximum funds.
 - d) Otherwise, the available fund may be divided equally to all applicants.
6. If there are no sufficient research funds available at the department, but the committee feels that the research is worthwhile for the promotion of SUC, it shall recommend to College Level Scientific Research Committee for the college level research funds.

7. The department level Scientific Research Committee shall forward the recommendation(s) to the department council for further approval.

Duties and Responsibilities of Department Council

On receipt of the recommendation(s) from the Department Level Scientific Research Committee, the HoD shall either call for a department council meeting or discuss the issue in the nearest department council meeting. The discussion should not exceed more than 5 working days. The department council is responsible for ensuring the research activity is aligned to department objectives and sufficient funds are available. The department council shall endorse the recommendation(s) to Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs for the College Level Scientific Research Committee approval. The department council shall take the decision based on the majority of the votes. The applicant(s) are not eligible for voting. On tie, the HoD shall cast two votes.

Duties and Responsibilities of College Level Scientific Research Committee

On receipt of the endorsement(s) from the Department Council, the Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs shall either call for a college level committee meeting or discuss the issue in the nearest meeting. The issue should be discussed within 5 working days from the receipt of the endorsement. The college level committee should ensure all the related forms are filled clearly and the research activity follows all the ethical considerations. Also, the committee should make sure that the research activity clearly supports SUC at its promotion and marketing. The committee shall endorse the fund request and forward to CAB for fund allotment. The committee shall make decision based on majority voting. If any applicant presents in the meeting, he / she is not eligible for voting. The chairperson shall vote twice if there is tie.

When a research fund is approved at all levels, the College Level Research Committee shall follow up with the researchers on their budget expenses. The committee shall collect the evidences on the expenses and audit the documents.

Duties and Responsibilities of College Academic Board

The College Academic Board shall ensure that the approval processes are clearly followed and instruct the Senior Manager for Admin and Finance to allot the amount for the particular research activity. The College Academic Board shall receive reports from the College Level Scientific Research Committee on the research activities and research fund utilization.

B. Applying for External Research Funds

The researcher(s) shall contact any funding agencies for the research funding support. The member should adhere with the funding agency and SUC's policies and procedures. The Assistant Dean for Academic & Research Affairs shall act as the resource person for advising the researchers for applying external research funds.

GENERAL CODES

All the researchers (Staff and Students) are expected to:

- i) Familiarize themselves with these protocols;
- ii) Observe the stated guidelines;
- iii) Implement research practices that are bereft of personal gains;
- iv) Implement research practices that are bereft of conflict of interest;
- v) Keep a record of all the financial expenses with invoices;
- vi) Update the SUC Scientific Research Committee (SRC) on the progress of the research project
- vii) Request support if and when needed, and
- viii)** Participate in meetings, training workshops pertaining to research activities.

Article 6: Responsibilities:

All stakeholders are expected to abide by the procedures as stated in the regulation.

Article 7: Related Procedures & Policies (If any):

- (i) SUC Ordinance
- (ii) SUC QA Manual

Article 8: Related Forms / Guidelines (If any):

SUCQAU_Form_R01 (Research Project Proposal)

SUCQAU_Form_R02 (Intellectual Property)

SUCQAU_Form_R03 (Research Consent Form)

SUCQAU_Form_R05 (Research Proposal Approval)

*** College-level research funds will be allocated for approved proposals when the department – level funds are exhausted.*

Annexure 3: Research Mentoring Policy

Article 1: Policy Statement

Sur University College (SUC), as a higher education institution (HEI) with University College status, emphasizes on research and professional development activities. SUC aspires to motivate the young / junior academic staff members joining the college with the aspiration to be an active researcher to enhance the research skills with appropriate research supports through active senior researcher mentorship. This policy guides such young researchers to gain required research expertise from the active researchers in the college.

Article 2: Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- (i) To help young researchers improve their research skills be more active in research activities.
- (ii) To ensure required professional development activities to keep research active.
- (iii) To support the young / junior researchers to enhance their research capabilities through mentorship with senior researchers.

Article 3: Scope

All Academic Staff Members should follow this policy.

Article 4: Definitions (If any):

Young / junior Researcher: Any academic staff member with minimal research exposures.

Senior Researcher: Any academic staff member who is an active researcher either at SUC or at their previous institutions (Irrespective of the position / rank).

Research Mentoring: Supporting and guiding the young researcher in developing research proposals, conducting researches and obtaining research funds.

Article 5: Procedures:

A. RESEARCH MENTORING PROCESSES

- (vi) The research mentoring depends on the individual interest and the area of research interest.
- (vii) The research mentor should have a solid research background in his/her area of specialization. In addition, the research mentor should have a track record of publishing at Scopus, ISI and / or Web of Science indexed journals.
- (viii) The mentor should provide necessary supports to the young / junior researcher in writing the research proposals.
- (ix) The mentor should guide the young / junior researcher in conducting research at the stated environment without violating the research related policies, procedures and codes.
- (x) The mentor should support the young researcher to secure research funds from various funding agencies including from the college.
- (xi) If the young / junior researcher would like to conduct a research that is not the area of the mentor, the mentor shall provide general guidelines for conduction of research and she / he shall recommend him / her to the specialist senior researcher sharing the same research interest, if the young / junior researcher agrees.
- (xii) The mentored shall have an amicable understanding with the mentor to meet and discuss the issues at regular intervals.
- (xiii) There should be no conflict of interest between the mentor and the mentored. If any conflict of interest arises, the mentor shall report to the chairperson of the department level research committee for redress. In case, the conflict persists, the college level Scientific Research Committee shall be approached for the redress.
- (xiv) The mentor should not ask for any pecuniary benefits either from the mentored or from the college.
- (xv) The mentor should ensure that the young researcher gets the required resources for successful conduction of the research.
- (xvi) The mentor shall be one of the authors of the research output based on the mutual understandings. If co-authorship is agreed, then the mentor should have a significant contribution to the work.

Article 6: Responsibilities:

A. RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUNG RESEARCHER (MENTORED)

- (i) Choose the appropriate mentor with a significant research background in his / her area of specialization.
- (ii) Submit a request letter for mentorship to the Department Level Research Committee.
- (iii) Meet the mentor at regular interval as agreed during the initial discussions on mentorship.
- (iv) Report to the mentor without any prejudice about the development in the research activities.
- (v) Ensure no conflict of interest arises at any point of time.
- (vi) Acknowledge the mentor with significant positions as agreed during the initial discussions on authorship.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTOR

- (i) The mentor should provide sufficient time slots to the mentored in advance.
- (ii) He / she should provide clear and proper guidance on research related activities as agreed during his / her initial mentorship agreements.
- (iii) He / she should ensure an appropriate research output.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE

- (i) Department Level Research Committee shall suggest the potential senior research-active academic staff for the mentorship.
- (ii) The committee shall conduct meetings with the senior faculty and the young researcher for initial agreements if any.
- (iii) In case of any conflict of interest reported at any time, the committee shall investigate and provide necessary redress.
- (iv) The committee shall ensure that the research output will fulfill the department and the college vision and mission statements.

Article 7: Related Procedures & Policies (If any):

- (iii) SUC Constitution Handbook

Article 8: Related Forms / Guidelines (If any): None

Annexure 6: Credibility and Ethics Policy

1. Policy:

This is to ensure that high credibility and ethics are followed at Sur University College (SUC) by their stakeholders at all levels.

Credibility and ethics in the educational institutions work on ensuring the responsibility of honesty, legality, fairness, openness, conserving resources, social duties and mutual respect. They are the common factor for intellectual property, fair practices, non-discrimination and professional ethics.

This policy shows how the stakeholders at work in SUC (Faculties, students, administration) are committed to dealing with ethical issues in their daily work. It also portrays the approach taken by SUC on matters of credibility and ethics. It is divided into three sections:

1. Intellectual Property Rights.
2. Providing fair practices and non-discrimination.
3. Ensuring the commitment to the public ethics, objectives and professional ethics.

2. Scope of the policy:

This policy aims to anchor ethical standards, basic principles and rules for professional ethics, values and higher professional culture for all stakeholders in SUC. It also provides the basics framework for ethics through giving awareness to the employees and stakeholders of the SUC and guiding them to the right professional ethics and self – discipline which are aligned with the rules and regulations. That is through demonstrating to them their reinforcing ethics at SUC. This policy is extracted from the related policies in SUC Ordinances 2015.

3. Definitions of Terms:

- 3.1. Intellectual Property:** It is the right granted to an inventor, a designer, an artist or an author to control their works in the different fields of knowledge such as inventions, designs, ideas and art works.
- 3.2. Categorized Workbook:** It is the source of knowledge that contains a created work of literary, scientific or art production.
- 3.3. The Author/composer:** A person who publishes a categorized work belonging to them either with their real name or any other pseudonym if there is evidence of this.

- 3.4. **Author's property right:** The material and moral benefits given to an author on their created works.
- 3.5. **Patent:** A certificate granted by the government to the inventor whereby they can monopolize their invention financially for a specific period of time (20 years). The owner of this certificate has the right to use or exploit the invention.
- 3.6. **Fair practices and Non-Discrimination:** It can be a public ethic or a scientific objectivity. As a public ethic, scientists should have the same equality of chances like other members of the community. As a scientific objectivity, fairness, equal opportunities, openness and open doors and welcome of new innovators, new ideas and new comers from different social and cultural environments to reach the progress needed in the discipline.
- 3.7. **The Ethical Charter:** A group of higher values that SUC and its stakeholders seek to commit to while performing their duties. This charter determines the rules to be adhered to and prohibited behavior whilst stakeholders are embarking on their duties at SUC.

4. Procedures of protecting intellectual property

4.1. Intellectual Property

- 4.1.1. SUC has the principle of "Copyright is renewable." It is committed to it through allowing using all protected intellectual sources inside SUC. These include:
 - The original source
 - The new printed source
 - The new edition
 - The derivative source from the original one.
- 4.1.2. SUC follows the principle of legal prosecution when its copyrighted intellectual sources are violated by:
 - Piracy
 - Cheating
 - Copying and distribution
- 4.1.3. SUC has contracts with academics to produce work which have intellectual property rights. SUC commits to protect the intellectual property rights that it shares with some of its academic staff. These rights are:
 - Reproduction
 - Distribution
 - Public Display
 - Returning derivative works that are copyrighted

4.2. Patent

- 4.2.1. SUC acknowledges the principle of "A patent is granted to an inventor for a genuine work" and it is a legal certificate that gives the patentee the right to control the production and usage of their invention in return for money or not, for a period of time determined by law. The college also realizes that the patent cannot be renewed and when it ends, it becomes a public property.
- 4.2.2. According to the international agreements, SUC does not acknowledge, encourage or protect patents of individuals who have theories, principles, equations, or abstract outcomes that aim to transform public property to private property.
- 4.2.3. SUC acknowledges the right of the patentee to produce their invention without permission from the SUC. It also acknowledges their right to permit others to use the invention with or without pay. SUC does not have to give permission for this. SUC helps patentees against exploitation of the invention by other people without their permission.
- 4.2.4. SUC does not prevent its members from studying inventions to find out how they work. This can be a project in the law of the trade secret if it does not violate the copyright or the patent.
- 4.2.5. SUC acknowledges that "the trademark gives its owner the name, the logo, the slogan, or the design to differentiate his/her product from others.

4.3. Procedures of protecting the copyright, composing and publishing rights

- 4.3.1. The SUC posts warning signs in every computer lab stating that "All computers in this place are installed with licensed software. Anyone who violates this will be subject to disciplinary actions. Installation of pirated software is not allowed."
- 4.3.2. SUC posts warning signs next to the photocopiers and the scanners stating that "all photocopiers and scanners shall be used not to reproduce more than 10% of any published material. Anyone who violates this shall be subjected to disciplinary actions."
- 4.3.3. In the Learning Resources Centre there are warning signs stating that "The shelves in this library contain copyrighted material. Anyone who violates this will be subject to disciplinary actions."
- 4.3.4. SUC indexes the references in any guide or any printed item. The indexes are handed to students with the warning sign," These references are copyrighted. Be aware not to copy any part."

4.4. Procedures of legal prosecution and penalty for the violation of Intellectual Property rights

- 4.4.1. Subsequently to the above-mentioned warnings, SUC subjects to disciplinary action and can also legally prosecute those who violate these rules as criminal offense.
- 4.4.2. SUC legally prosecutes those who advertise any sources that have intellectual property rights inside or outside SUC for promotion without permission.

4.5. Procedures for giving awareness to the benefits of protecting intellectual property rights

- 4.5.1. SUC posts varied informative signs in the computer labs and next to the photocopiers and scanners stating that:
 - (i). Protect the intellectual property of the others so that they can continue in their efforts.
 - (ii). You promote the investment in science and technology when you protect the intellectual property.
 - (iii). Economic prosperity is guaranteed with the protected intellectual property rights.
 - (iv). Considering the trademark as a guarantee for the good quality of products.

4.6. Procedures of spreading the culture of intellectual property.

- 4.6.1. Every year there are workshops in SUC to discuss the intellectual property to educate the academic staff, students and the administrative staff and technicians associated with intellectual property.
- 4.6.2. SUC supplies the Learning Resources Centre with varied publications about intellectual property.

5. Fair Practices and Non-Discrimination Procedures

5.1. Fair Practices and Non-Discrimination

- 5.1.1. SUC commits to implementing and providing fairness and non-discrimination in all its practices and activities. For example:
 - Appointing the academic staff
 - Mandating, transporting and sending members of the academic staff to missions, conferences and forums.
 - Distributing lectures and experiments to the academic staff.
 - Distributing invigilation of exams and forming examination committees.
 - Appointing supervisors for assessing and discussing research and granting masters degrees.

5.1.2. SUC is committed to implementing the fair practices and non-discrimination with students.

5.2. Examples of fair practices and non-discrimination being carried out by SUC.

5.2.1. Appointing academic and administrator staff are based on the department plan and the commitment to the appointment rules available in the regulations of the SUC.

5.2.2. Nominating academic staff for missions and conferences is done by the department council depending on pre-determined criteria and the SUC regulations.

5.2.3. For examinations committees, the allocation is done by the department council according to the specializations and experience.

5.2.4. Regarding the supervisors of Masters Degrees, the department council nominate them, considering not having an up to 4th class relativity relation between any two members of the committee or between the student and any member.

5.2.5. Allocating lectures and experiments is done after nominating the academic staff by the department council according to the specializations and experience.

5.2.6. Distributing the moral and material support to students is done by the Assistant Dean for Students Affairs after assessing students' cases.

5.2.7. The student participation in the cultural, social and artistic activities is done when SUC announces these activities through the Student Affairs, giving the chance to students to choose and to attend the activities they like.

5.2.8. SUC notices when there is a member who has a conflict of interest between their personal matters and their professional obligations.

5.2.9. SUC monitors members of academic staff when they do not conduct good quality work or do not give a consultation in a specific subject.

5.2.10. SUC notices if there is a conflict between an employee practicing the work inside or outside SUC with the rules and regulations followed in the career practices.

5.2.11. SUC monitors if a member of the academic staff teaches their relatives at any level.

5.2.12. SUC monitors the formation of committees supervising and assessing masters' researches to ensure there is no personal relationship between faculty members and students that leads to any conflict of interest.

5.3. Commitment of SUC to the credibility in promises given as responses to complaints, suggestions and preventive procedures.

- 5.3.1. SUC commits to responding to the complaints of students and employees and works on ensuring that the causes of complaints are not to be repeated.
- 5.3.2. SUC discusses the outcomes of the complaints and grievances of the students and employees and determining the procedures and ways to guarantee the instant removal of the complaints and grievances.

6. Professional Ethics and its procedures

6.1. Professional ethics in the teaching field.

- 6.1.1. A member of the academic staff should prepare the lessons well in advance. They take care of preparing the teaching aids and make sure they are suitable so as to achieve the objectives of the lesson.
- 6.1.2. The academic staff should be aware of their ethical responsibility, be informed of new developments in their subject and improve the lessons according to these developments.
- 6.1.3. A member of the academic staff should commit to the quality standards in determining the contents of the lesson, the teaching methods and class activities.
- 6.1.4. An academic staff member is responsible academically and ethically for clarifying the curriculum, objectives, teaching method, and assessment and exams. They are also responsible for communicating with their students and passing their points of view to the management if necessary.
- 6.1.5. The academic staff is ethically responsible for his / her students. It is his /her duty to provide them with every chance for learning through:
 - The honest and efficient use of the lesson time.
 - Developing the student's ability to think freely and form independent opinions.
 - Developing the curiosity of students.
 - Accepting the student's different opinion when there is evidence
 - Allowing objection and discussion in a democratic atmosphere
 - Avoiding oppression during discussion in class.
- 6.1.6. In general, it is the responsibility of the academic staff to provide students with opportunities for learning.
- 6.1.7. The academic staff should do their best to master their teaching skills and find the different teaching methods and aids.
- 6.1.8. The academic staff should direct their students to the knowledge sources and train them on how to use them and how to review the information.
- 6.1.9. An academic staff member has to distribute his / her effort equally for all students. They have to make sure that all students take part in learning. They

- should take special care of weaker students even if it is out of the lesson time. This is an ethical responsibility.
- 6.1.10. It is not right when a parent knows suddenly at the end of the semester that their son's/daughter's level has been low without being informed by the academic staff throughout the semester. This is an ethical duty.
- 6.1.11. The relationship between the student and the academic staff should not go to the extent that the student hires or employs an academic staff member and pays them for their time spent with the student. This relation contradicts entirely with the position of the member.
- 6.1.12. The academic staff should treat students fairly. This fairness is part of the education system.

6.2. Ethics in Assessment and Examinations

- 6.2.1. Taking care of the continuous assessment of students.
- 6.2.2. Paying attention to the fairness and quality in designing the examinations. Examinations should reflect what had been taught and should be relevant to the levels of students fairly.
- 6.2.3. It is fair for a student to be aware of the basics of an assessment and examinations.
- 6.2.4. Committing to the accuracy and fairness in marking the answers so that students get marks that they deserve. Students should know the distribution of marks written on the question paper, so that a student can allocate time and arrange the answers accordingly.
- 6.2.5. Ensuring the complete confidentiality of examinations until the results are announced.
- 6.2.6. Reviewing the results when there is a grievance.
- 6.2.7. Ensuring the accuracy of assessments. Inaccuracy leads to some students getting marks they do not deserve.

6.3. Professional Ethics in Student Activities and Student Interaction.

- 6.3.1. Participating in student activities is a task of academic staff members. They devote their time, thought and effort to take part in creating, planning and implementing student activities.
- 6.3.2. Being professional and polite when dealing with students

6.4. Professional Ethics in Administration and Interaction with Parents.

- 6.4.1. Creating the right psychological atmosphere for developing students. It is a significant responsibility on SUC including all the academic staff and employees.
- 6.4.2. Using resources and finances wisely. Use of SUC premises and equipment should be for achieving its goals without using insufficient or wasting resources.
- 6.4.3. Developing the abilities of the academic staff especially inexperienced ones.
- 6.4.4. Monitoring the impact of their training through evaluations and peer observation.
- 6.4.5. All employees to be on best professional behavior when interacting with parents
- 6.4.6. Applying the rules accurately and ethically, considering the spirit of this document as much as possible.

6.5. Professional Ethics in the Scientific Research

- 6.5.1. Directing research to what is useful for community and humanity.
- 6.5.2. Scientific honesty in carrying out research and studies. A researcher should only own their thought and work.
- 6.5.3. Accrediting the source of information accurately avoiding the ethical contradictions.
- 6.5.4. The source of quotation should be clearly identified and the amount of quotation should be explicit not implicit.
- 6.5.5. No deletion of quotations should be done so as to distort what the original author meant.
- 6.5.6. Regarding the joint research, the role of each participant should be shown accurately.
- 6.5.7. Gathering information carefully and accurately. Honest scientific research requires dealing with the subject regardless of the persons involved.
- 6.5.8. Presenting information should be clear and writing the research in sufficient details so that the researcher can repeat experiments to verify the results.
- 6.5.9. Updating the information given to students.

6.6. Professional Ethics in the Supervision of Scientific Research

- 6.6.1. Guiding students in choosing the research topic.
- 6.6.2. Giving rational scientific help to students, neither excessive, such that the student cannot cope with it nor too little such that the student cannot benefit from their supervisor.
- 6.6.3. Improving students' abilities to be able to conduct research, data analysis and presenting results and being capable to defend their research.
- 6.6.4. Training students on independent assessment of information sources while doing research and to be responsible for their decisions.
- 6.6.5. Not under-mining students and their abilities while doing the research or during the discussion sessions. This can be perceived as a disruption of the ethical responsibility by the academic staff towards the contribution to the knowledge development of students.
- 6.6.6. Developing students' abilities on thinking and knowledge creation in their research areas.
- 6.6.7. Verifying continuously the scientific honesty and confidentiality of the research.
- 6.6.8. Fair and accurate assessment to research which he/she supervises or invited to take part in assessing.

6.7. Professional Ethics for Students

- 6.7.1. A student should care about benefitting from the academic staff during lectures.
- 6.7.2. A student should care about benefitting from the academic staff as much as possible even outside the classroom through questions, consultations and discussions.
- 6.7.3. A student applies what they learn to public service.
- 6.7.4. Student learning is not limited to what they get in classrooms. They should demonstrate the impact of their learning through being aware of books, circulars, forums and programs related to their area of study.
- 6.7.5. Avoiding private tuition but studying the syllabus they get in SUC.

6.8. Professional Ethics for Community Service

- 6.8.1. The academic staff have to associate what they teach with the needs of the community. They should spend a great deal of their effort and their knowledge on solving problems in the community.
- 6.8.2. The academic staff should care about preparing the human resources required in the society and providing them with the latest knowledge and experience.
- 6.8.3. The academic staff should care about developing the applied research and connecting them to the needs of the community.

6.8.4. Developing the relationship with the different organizations leads to direct interaction. The academic staff can contribute to solving the problems face by these organizations.

6.9. Professional Ethics in Technical and Administrative Works

6.9.1. The academic staff members do their work honestly and accurately, according to the law, regulations and individual and group contracts. They do complete their work on time.

6.9.2. Be always on time to work and follow known procedures in case of absence.

6.9.3. Maintaining and keeping all equipment or documents under their responsibility safe.

6.9.4. Respect their higher authorities and colleagues and cooperate with them to achieve the goals of SUC.

6.9.5. Work with dignity and behave well.

6.9.6. Promote the safety system to protect SUC.

6.9.7. Keep SUC information confidential and not share the information related to work with unauthorized personnel.

6.9.8. Follow the systems SUC set to promote their skills and experience professionally and culturally to match the technical development in SUC.

6.9.9. Care about the public interest in all professional matters, including respect of ethics and variety in the professional community.

6.9.10. Provide the best service according the available facilities.

6.10. Professional Ethics of Librarians and Information Specialists

6.10.1. Giving the chance to access information and presenting the creative ideas and works.

6.10.2. Caring about having balance between the needs of users and SUC requirements.

6.10.3. Fair treatment of all stakeholders.

6.10.4. Integrity and non-partisan in getting and providing information.

6.10.5. Respecting the confidentiality and privacy in dealing with the stakeholders.

6.10.6. Respecting and realizing the value of the information sources and the intellectual efforts.

6.10.7. Caring about developing and maintaining the knowledge and the professional skills and abilities.

6.10.8. Respecting the skills and abilities of others,

6.10.9. Making the process of access to information and the procedures regulating this process clear and transparent.

- 6.10.10. Dealing quickly and fairly with the complaints of users and informing them continuously with what is going on with the complaint.
- 6.10.11. Verifying the efficiency of the information and services which they provide in responding to the needs of the users according to the available resources.
- 6.10.12. Defending the needs and interests of the users of information putting the protection of intellectual property in consideration.

6.11. Procedures to Guarantee the Commitment to the Professional Ethics

- 6.11.1. The dean informs all participants (academic staff, students and administrators) about the professional ethics charter via (the College display boards, the department notice boards, workshops, the college website, brochures and posters).
- 6.11.2. The dean forms a disciplinary committee for professional ethics, comprising of the academic staff and the administrative staff in each department. This committee monitors unethical practices in the departments. The disciplinary committee for student's related issues shall comprise the student council member for fairness.
- 6.11.3. The responsibility for overseeing violation incidents in any department lies with the head of the department.
- 6.11.4. The disciplinary committee in the department investigates the incident and reports it with its opinion to the head of the department.
- 6.11.5. The head of the department raises the issue to the dean to make the decision. The issue can either be kept or transferred to the disciplinary committee of SUC.
- 6.11.6. In case the issue of the incident was raised to the college level committee, the committee gives its opinion in a report to the dean.
- 6.11.7. The dean takes a decision either to solve the issue or to transfer it to the governing bodies in SUC for final decisions.

Extracted from SUC Constitution Handbook 2015:

- 1. Policy III: Policy on Equality and Diversity – Page 123 - 124
- 2. Policy XI: Policy on Research Ethics – Page 133 – 134
- 3. Policy XVIII: Policy on Intellectual Property Rights – Page 143 – 144

Annexure 7: Intellectual Property Rights Policy

Article 1: Preamble

Intellectual Property Rights policies are among the best practices in education and research sector across the globe. These policies help ensuring interests of intellectual rights, intellectual property and other matters related with the ownership of intellectual work. The goal of this policy is to make sure that creative works are protected in the form of copyrights, trademarks and patents etc. This policy is developed keeping in mind standards set by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). This policy is developed to make sure that the academic staff, admin staff and students are aware of SUC's commitment to protection of Intellectual Property Rights. Having a clear Intellectual Property Rights Policy is essential for protecting creative work (Inventions, Publications, Research Work etc.)

Article 2: Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to make sure that intellectual rights of Sur University College (SUC) and the stakeholders and protected. Further, the policy will help academic staff, admin staff and students to comply with Intellectual Property Rights. These objectives are in line with SUC's appreciation of intellectual work, for example, copyrights, patents, software, and any other intangible assets that have a value for the owner.

Article 3: Scope

All Academic, Administration Staff, and students (Undergraduate and Postgraduate) should follow this policy.

Article 4: Definitions

IP: Intellectual Property

WIPO: World Intellectual Property Organization

Intellectual Property Ownership: Creative work, novel ideas, published research, and / or consultancy activities.

Article 5: Procedures:

A. GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT

- (xvii) Any kind of novel scientific work are automatically protected by the Omani Copyright Laws.
- (xviii) Copyrighted materials / works shall not be used without prior permission from the owner.
- (xix) Patents shall not be used or modified without the consent of the patent holder.
- (xx) No one shall use established trademarks or design.
- (xxi) No one shall use trademarks and/or designs that are similar to the already established ones with an intent to cause confusion.
- (xxii) Economic Rights shall be respected and followed as per the Omani Laws ("Article 6 of the Law for the Protection of Copyright and Neighboring Rights". Royal Decree 65/2008)
- (xxiii) No one shall use copied licensed technologies and / or software.
- (xxiv) Both academic staff and students at SUC shall abide the guidelines as highlighted in the Sur University College's Plagiarism Policy.
- (xxv) Disclosure of trade secrets of anyone through any means are strictly prohibited.
- (xxvi) In case of further guidance, SUC will refer to the Royal Decree 65/2008 and its amendments and will apply if and when needed.

B. COPYRIGHT LICENSES AND USAGE

- (i) Any new documented knowledge or tangible product created by the SUC staff members through the scholarly activities when they are under SUC's employment contract comes under SUC's ownership and copyright, until otherwise agreed.
- (ii) Any new teaching materials and / or resources developed by the individual staff member for their educational purposes, the copyright lies with SUC.
- (iii) Any new documented knowledge or tangible product created by students while studying at SUC and for which the student has been financially supported comes under SUC's ownership and copyright, until otherwise agreed.
- (iv) Any new documented knowledge or tangible product created by a student while studying at SUC that are not financially supported by SUC, the copyright lies within him / her.
- (v) The inventor / creator should submit a duly signed "Copyright Transfer Form" to SUC which will give permission of ownership.
- (vi) The "Copyright Transfer Form" shall clearly state the years of ownership.

- (vii) If SUC would not like to own the new knowledge / product created by the staff member or student, it shall inform the creator in writing about the ownership within 60 days from the date of receipt of request from the inventor / creator.
- (viii) In case of any discrepancy arises in any cases, the Royal Decree 65 / 2008, Royal Decree 67 / 2008 and its later updates whichever is applicable will be considered as final.

C. PATENT REGISTRATION AND USAGES

- (i) If the inventor would like to register his / her invention as a patent, he / she discuss and finalize with SUC on registration, application and ownership of the patent.
- (ii) The inventor should discuss with SUC prior to registration, if he / she requires any financial compensations.
- (iii) The patent shall be registered either inside Sultanate of Oman or in any other country.
- (iv) The patent registration should follow the rules and regulations of the registration agencies.
- (v) If SUC would not like to own the patent, then SUC should inform the inventor in writing within 60 days from the date of application received from the inventor. If the inventor did not receive any such written information, then he / she shall be the owner of the patent where SUC should claim any financial implications in future.

D. APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

- (i) The inventor(s) should submit the duly signed application before applying for patent registration to SUC College Level Scientific Research Committee through department level Research Committee for considerations.
- (ii) The College Level Scientific Research Committee shall discuss and recommend to College Academic Board on the financial requirements.
- (iii) The College Academic Board shall decide on the requirements and endorse to the Board of Directors.
- (iv) The Board of Directors shall make final decisions based on the impact of the documented knowledge / patent / tangible product on SUC's development, Vision and Mission Statements.

E. COMMERCIALIZATION

- (i) SUC is responsible for any commercialization of the documented knowledge / tangible product.
- (ii) The creator / inventor would like to commercialize the invention, he / she shall discuss with the owner on such cases, including financial implications.

F. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- (i) SUC should bear all the expenses that occurred during the knowledge / product creation.
- (ii) If SUC does not bear any expenses, the inventor / creator shall decide the ownership of the knowledge / product subject to discussion and negotiation with SUC.
- (iii) Any income raised by SUC through the ownership of the explicit knowledge / tangible product shall be shared at 1:2 (Creator: Owner) proportion, until otherwise agreed, on net income of the product commercialization.
- (iv) Any issues related to financial transfers and related issues should be purely dealt in accordance with Royal Decree 67 / 2008 and the related updates.

G. VIOLATION/S OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Any violation of intellectual property rights will be considered as a “criminal offence” and may lead to strict sanctions and / or termination of employment.

H. EXPECTED OUTCOME

Following the International standards and guidelines set by WIPO, the expected outcome of this policy is that intellectuals will continue to carryout innovative works without fear of losing any kind of benefits that are associated with their works.

Article 6: Responsibilities:

A. RESPONSIBLE BODY

- (v) Individual faculty members.
- (vi) Students.
- (vii) Department Level Scientific Research Committee.
- (viii) SUC Scientific Research Committee.

Article 7: Related Procedures & Policies (If any):

- (iv) SUC Ordinance
- (v) SUC Research Manual
- (vi) SUC Plagiarism Policy

Article 8: Related Forms / Guidelines:

- 1) Copyright transfer Form
- 2) Patent Funding Request Form