

King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals
Deanship of Scientific Research

**GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNDING OF
RESEARCH GROUPS
AT KFUPM**

March, 2009 (20 Rabi I, 1430)

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A. Preamble

1. Introduction

In order to attain and maintain excellence and leadership in research areas of National importance and emerging fields of knowledge, the research efforts and capabilities of KFUPM researchers need to be nurtured, enhanced, focused and properly directed. *Achieving focus that will lead to excellence is the main scope of this new research funding scheme.* This funding scheme is devised to encourage building teams of researchers that will focus on a specific field of knowledge. The funds can be utilized for compensating faculty, and support staff, for attracting graduate students and post doctoral fellows and for establishing and developing research capabilities. In addition, the funds can be utilized for building linkages, attending conferences, inviting experts, and writing books and manuscripts.

Research can be directed to a particular priority area by establishing focused research groups composed of a team of specialized researchers with established track records that will conduct research in the priority area and will eventually achieve excellence and global leadership.

2. Definition

A research group working on a priority research area consists of a structured research team hosted by a department or a group of departments and made up of expert faculty, researchers, Post-Doc, graduate students and technicians. The group must satisfy the following conditions:

1. The group comprises of four or more faculty members/researchers from KFUPM,
2. The group members do research effectively in clearly defined areas of specialization,
3. The group works under the direction of a coordinator from KFUPM (hereinafter called “director”, if transformed to a Center).
4. The group has an executive team of 3 to 4 members in the area of the group.

3. Coordinator

The Coordinator is a reputed full or associate professor with a well established track record of quality and leadership in the research field of the group. The coordinator will be the grant contact with the Deanship of Scientific Research (DSR) and has overall responsibility for coordinating all research and administrative activities of the research group, including:

1. Set directions and develop plans for the group research in consultation with group members.
2. Facilitate and initiate collaborative research among group members.
3. Assist, guide, and advice junior group members.
4. Promote innovation, creativity, and excellence within the group.
5. Report and coordinate progress of activities to the DSR

4. Objectives

The research group members should commit to:

1. Establish Excellence and carry out fundamental, applied and/or interdisciplinary research of high quality in key cluster areas of relevance to KFUPM and of importance to the Country and emerging fields of knowledge and promote research of high international impact.
2. Build research capacity and provide high quality training and a conducive research environment for promising young faculty, postdoctoral researchers and graduate students.
3. Provide a high quality research environment for the development and enhancement of graduate programs as well as the enhancement of undergraduate teaching at KFUPM
4. Develop links and collaboration with renowned National and international research groups and attract leading researchers.

B. Criteria

1. A research group must have at least preferably four members with experience in the field of the group. Evidence of experience can be assessed by:
 - a) Research papers in the group field of research by group members that are published or accepted for publication.
 - b) Completed or ongoing funded research projects by group faculty members.
 - c) PhD/MS theses supervised by group members.
 - d) Published papers produced from supervised PhD/MS theses.
 - e) Impact and Citations of group members research output.
 - f) Memberships on the editorial board of a professional publication

- g) Organization of conferences/symposia/workshops (within or outside KFUPM).
 - h) Attendance of different conferences/symposia/workshops.
2. A faculty member/researcher cannot be a member of more than two research groups.

C. Activities of a Research Group

Expected contributions and activities of a research group include:

1. Developing specialized graduate courses in the field of the group
2. Publishing a number of jointly authored research papers and patents in high quality ISI journals
3. Conducting or participating in funded research projects
4. Building, equipping, maintaining and operating research facilities whenever applicable
5. Writing/editing/translating research books in the field
6. Organizing lecture series by members and invited speakers
7. Participating in teaching and supervising graduate students
8. Enhancing undergraduate education
9. Holding regular seminars/meetings
10. Hosting visits by distinguished scholars
11. Organizing workshops, symposia and conferences at and/or outside KFUPM.
12. Recommending hiring promising researchers in the field.
13. Utilizing sabbatical leaves, summer travel programs and international scholarship programs to build links with leading international experts and research centers in the area of the group.
14. Representing KFUPM in international events, workshops and conferences in the field.
15. Establishing a network with leading research centers in the field through exchanging visits, joint supervision of graduate students, joint organization of events and joint research projects.
16. Building and maintaining an efficient website that lists information about the group members, activities and accomplishments.

D. Evaluation and Renewal

Every year, the group coordinator submits a self-evaluation report to the DSR. The report should:

1. Provide and detail group achievements.
2. Indicate modifications, if any, in group coordination and directions for the next two years.

If renewal is requested by the group coordinator, the DSR will evaluate the progress report and make a decision for renewal or cessation of the support of the research group. The decision will be mainly on the performance of the group and the resulting outcomes.

E. Benefits

Based on the evaluation report as well as the evaluation of individual group members, the DSR provides the following support:

1. Financial Compensation

- a) The regular compensation for research projects by DSR
- b) One month summer assignment for eligible members as approved for each project proposal in the group research program (until the regular compensation is improved which is under revision by the Ministry of Higher Education).

2. Other benefits:

- a) Allowance for establishing research facilities for the group
- b) Recommending the recruitment of new faculty members in the group areas of specialization.
- c) Recommend for recruiting Post-Doctoral Fellows (one for each group) in the group area of specialization.
- d) Allowance for exchange of scientific visits as approved for proposals of the group research program.
- e) Allowance for seed money. The approval and amount will be determined based on need and provided justifications.
- f) Flexibility on managing up to 10% of the fund by the coordinator for spending on research related expenses other than manpower compensation as approved in the group research program.

F. Procedure for Establishing a Research Group

1. Any group of faculty members and researchers, led by a coordinator, can initiate a request for the establishment of a research group. The involvement of junior faculty members and graduate students whenever possible is highly encouraged.
2. The group should have designated coordinator and an executive team of 3-4 members in the area of the group.
3. The coordinator submits to the DSR a group establishment proposal including the items discussed in Appendix A.
4. Upon receiving the application file, the DSR reviews the proposal to ascertain fulfillment of all requirements for establishing the Group.
5. Approval for the establishment and funding of a research group will be based on merit. Proposals for research groups which do not qualify as a research group but have all the ingredients and potentials for success could be approved as Research Group In-Development with less funding and less incentives than a full research group. This will be a transitional phase for promotion to a full research group based on a two-year performance assessment. Decision on such cases will be based on proposals review results and will be on a case-by-case basis.

G. Funding Schemes

1. All major research funding proposals will only be accepted by the Deanship of Scientific Research and coordinated through research groups with all benefits outlined in this guideline. This applies to those groups which prove to be full research group.
2. Fast Track (FT) and SABIC Grants will be increased to SR. 100,000 and will remain for faculty/researchers to apply directly to the Deanship of Scientific Research.

H. Assessment Criteria and Guidelines

Progress Assessment Criteria and Guidelines will be developed and made available to all groups in due time.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH GROUP PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

Cover page

Summary

1: Introduction

2: Vision, Mission and Objectives of the Proposed Group

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2.2 Mission

2.3 Objectives

3: Members of the Research Group

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3.2 Permanent Researchers

3.3 Collaborating Researchers

4: Current Strength

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4.3 Physical Resources

4.3.1 Teaching Laboratories

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4.4 Achievements

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4.4.2 Projects

4.4.3 Graduate Outcomes

4.4.4 Other Scholarly Achievements (Patents, Awards, Recognition, etc.)

4.5 Current Undergraduate and Graduate Courses in the Area of the Group

5: Proposed Research Program

Appendices

Appendix A: Resumes of Coordinator Executive Members

Appendix B: Resumes of the Permanent Researchers

Appendix C: Resumes of the Collaborating Researchers

Appendix D: Other Supporting Documents