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(Re-accredited by NAAC with A Grade)

Policy Document on
Seed Money Grant (SMG)

MAHATMA GANDHI UNIVERSITY, KOTTAYAM, KERALA

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Preamble

The Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU), Kottayam, Kerala promotes the faculty members to do cutting edge research, extension and consultancy programmes apart from the teaching and learning process. Both interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary approach of MGU envisages to promote its faculty members to focus on quality research in the frontier areas of their domain. The concept of seed money grant (SMG) is to facilitate preliminary research and nurture research culture among the newly recruited faculty members for achieving the vision and mission of the University. Most of the funding agencies are expect the applicants to have some prior experience in carrying out research work. Hence, faculty members who are at the early stages of their career find it difficult to get funds for their projects. SGM of MGU will help the newly recruited faculty members to do a preliminary research work/creation of facility or other academic work as an initial step for further development of their career.

1.   **Definitions/Terms**

'**MGU/University'**: Refers to Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU), Kottayam.
'**Seed Money Grant (SMG)'**: 'Funds provided to the newly recruited faculty members by the University for initiation of research or to facilitate the preparation of a formal research proposal for funding'

'**Research**': 'Systematic intellectual investigations aimed at discovering, interpreting and revising human knowledge' (NAAC Manual for Universities, December 2019, p. 134). Research work shall include (but is not limited to) funded projects, sponsored research, papers accepted in conferences for publication and/or presentation, papers in peer-reviewed journals of a good standard, writing research proposals, contributing to book chapters, writing textbooks and monographs, guidance for dissertation (UG/PG/Ph.D.), development of new courses and teaching material etc.

IQAC refers to Internal Quality Assurance Cell of the MGU

Seed Money Review committee: The committee constituted by the Vice Chancellor for review the seed money grant proposals. Two Professors of the IQAC and members of NAAC Criteria III will be as committee members, in which the Director of IQAC as Convenor.

'**Principal Investigator (PI)'**: The coordinator (applicant) of a research project.

All other terms carry their usual meaning or as defined by the University.

2.   Objectives of the Seed Money Grant:

The main objective of SMG scheme is to inculcate and nurture research culture among newly recruited faculty members by providing small grants for development of research ideas, basic facility creation or related academic/extension works. The SMG provides guidelines to carry out research/create ecosystem for research/facility creation or upgradation/e-content development/MOOC course / other research related activities for developing their career at MGU. Through SGM, it is envisaged to develop novel ideas as well as building confidence among the newly recruited faculty members to prepare and apply for national and international fundings/collaborations/ other academic activities in future.

3.   **Eligibility**

All newly recruited permanent faculty members of the MGU are eligible for SMG and preference will be given to Assistant Professors. The newly recruited Faculty members may apply for the SMG within TWO years of joining the University. If exceeded, the Vice Chancellor can permit him/she to apply based on request by the faculty member but within 4 years of their joining at the university. Based on merit, suitability and relevance to the society and the institution, funding through SMG can be given to any regular faculty member with no ceiling, which is subject to the decision of the Syndicate of the University.

4.   **Nature of SMG**

The Seed Money Grant shall be a one-time Grant for one year which covers support to procurement of Equipment, Software, Consumables, etc. based on the proposal by the newly recruited faculty members.

5.   **Procedure of SMG.**
   ➤ The University may set aside a certain sum of money earmarked for seed money grants as part of its budget planning.
   ➤ The IQAC of the University may invite proposals by the Newly recruited faculty members as "Seed Money Grant' Proposal invitation and the same should circulate among the various Schools of the university through proper notification.
   ➤ Interested faculty must submit their proposal (format as Annexure I) to the Director, IQAC of MGU with necessary supporting documents including a financial budget.
   ➤ Faculty members can also submit a proposal jointly with other newly recruited faculty member for a collaboration work; however, only one of them can be designated 'Principal Investigator'. In such cases, the SMG will be given to PI only.
   ➤ The Chairman of IQAC (Vice Chancellor of MGU) will constitute a screening committee to review the proposals. The committee can call the PI for face-to-face interview/presentation if necessary.

- The report of the screening committee will be submitted to the Chairman, IQAC along with the recommendation of Director, IQAC. The Chairman can approve or reject the proposal.
- If the proposal is rejected, the faculty member may reapply after incorporating the suggestions/recommendations of the screening committee.
- If the proposal is approved, it will be forwarded to the office of the Vice Chancellor for final approval. Once approved by the Vice Chancellor, the proposal will be forwarded by the office of the Vice Chancellor to the Finance Section for the release of funds. Similarly, the required orders will be issued by the Registrar and circulate the necessary sections as well as to the PI. A copy of the order should keep at the office of the IQAC.
- After issuing the University order, the PI can commence their research work.
- The sanctioned amount will be transferred directly to the account of the PI. The PI has to spend the amount as per the budget provision and if any excess amount required, PI has to find alternate ways for the same and if balance amount in the account after completion, it should remitted to the MGU account. The PI should complete the settlement of SMG in the existing academic year itself and if couldn't, PI has to request to Vice Chancellor for extension. The extension may not exceed another three months and have no further extension permitted.

6. **Evaluation**
- The Chairman, IQAC, shall set up committee members /two Professors to conduct a half yearly review of all research work carried out under the SMG. This shall include the review of the accounts related to the project too.
- The PI must submit a half yearly report to the IQAC detailing the progress of the research
- The Chairman, IQAC is authorized to withhold the funding at any stage.
- In rare cases where the progress of the research work is wholly unsatisfactory, the review committee may recommend to the Vice Chancellor that the grant be withdrawn and the funds allocated till then be refunded.
- At the end of the project, a detailed report must be submitted to the IQAC by the PI. The report must include the work done, the output produced (in terms of publications, books, data collected etc.) and future scope of the research.
- The period of the grant shall not exceed one year in general. However, as per the decision of the Chairman, IQAC the grant may be extended for another one year based on the request of PI and report of the review committee.
- Generally, an amount of up to ₹ 1 lakh may be granted as seed money for a project proposed by a science faculty member and ₹ 50,000/- to other subject areas . The decision to grant more is left to the Vice Chancellor as per the UGC Regulations, 2018. If the amount exceeding Rs. 5 lakhs, the approval may be permitted by the Syndicate of the University.
- A faculty member may not be the PI for more than one projects funded as per SMG. If the principal investigator of a project leaves the University or the project, it may be transferred to someone else who desires it or is acting as an Associate Researcher in that project. But before that, the PI has complete the official proceedings for transfer of the project.

7. **General Guidelines and other Terms of References**

Through the SMG, the faculty members are expected to

- Convert the SMG project into a significant research project by applying to various external funding agencies like UGC, ICSSR, DST etc.
- The PI may not use the seed money for their Ph.D. work.
- The PI may not recruit research associates, assistants or students for the SMG research work. Though students may be a part of the project, the PI is expected to carryout a significant portion of the work by their own.
- The PI may not use the SMG to attend conferences, seminars or workshops (for both travel as well as registration fee).
- Likewise, the PI may not use the SMG for organising conferences, seminars, webinars and other such events. But SMG can be used for e -content development for MOOC/content creation/ digital archiving etc.
- If the PI chooses to leave the project or the University when the project under the Seed Money Grant Scheme is ongoing, the entire amount minus the money already spent towards the project shall be refunded to the University. For example, the physical purchases made for the project/research shall not be levied upon the faculty since proprietary rights for such items belong to the University and such shall be surrendered to the University before hand. The HoD of the PI's School has to receive the items and should enter in the stock register mentioning that those items were the part of SMG grant of concerned PI. The existing stock file keeping rules of university have to be follow for the same.
- All items procured (books, equipment, stationery, furniture) under the Seed Money Grant Scheme shall be the property of the University and the PI will be custodian of such items until he /she transfers them to concerned School/Department stock register.
- Any intellectual property generated during the course of SMG project shall be subjected to the general rules and guidelines of the University regarding intellectual property.
- The members of the faculty may not demand seed money as their right. The SMG depends on the funds allocated for the scheme for the given financial year and also on other factors such as the number of applications, quality of proposal etc.
- All expenses related to Seed Money Grant shall be maintained in a separate file by the PI.

8. Expected Outcomes of SMG

- Initiation and leading research on thrust areas of their domain which have Global relevance or upgradation of the existing knowledge
- Outcome as peer reviewed publications in journals/ book/book chapter/ e content/ MOOC course or other academic scholarly outputs / digital archives or as upgradation of facilities for research.
- Formulation of research clusters or data generated through SMG project can be used for the formulation of new project proposals to apply and avail sanction of Sponsored Research Projects

The Mahatma Gandhi University is envisaged to inculcate the research culture among its faculty members to engage consistently, continuously and proactively to conduct cutting edge high quality and transformational research for the development of society in general.

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