

2020

MUHIMBILI UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES OF OFFICE OF THE SPONSORED PROJECTS

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ACRONYMS

AOR	Authorized Organization Representative
DRP	Directorate of Research and Publications
DVC - ARC	Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic Research and Consultancy
FOA	Funding Opportunity Announcement
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MUHAS	Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Health Sciences
NOA	Notice of Award
OSP	Office of Sponsored Projects
PFC	Planning Finance Committee
PI	Principal Investigator
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Research administration is an institutional support function found at most academic institutions. This support function facilitates research activity, promotes the integrity and quality of research activities, manages resources (e.g., people and funds) and demonstrates institutional commitment to research. Research administration generally encompasses activities that support faculty to engage in research. Such assistance can include identifying possible sources of funding for researchers' proposals; helping draft administrative components of research proposals; drafting and submitting letters of intent and institutional review; organizing institutional sign-off and submission of proposals; negotiating agreements (e.g., contracts and grants); and managing and closing out those agreements.

The unit responsible for research administration can organize training for faculty in areas such as: a) responsible conduct in research; b) research policies and procedures; c) compliance to university policies and sponsor requirements; and d) proposal writing. A centralized research administration function can often help the university expand research activities by more fully engaging faculty and making it clearer and easier for them to develop new research.

Funding agencies and donors are increasingly requiring that universities have procedures in place to ensure that the funding provided for research is effectively utilized and monitored. The research administration function improves accountability and protection of donor resources as well as protecting the university and individuals from real or perceived misuse and misappropriation of funds. An effective research administration function can also help leverage resources to the combined benefit of the institution and the research endeavour.

A centralized research administration function can enable an institution to better account for and oversee its research enterprise. This includes monitoring research funding to ensure research integrity, financial oversight and compliance (both research and fiscal). A centralized function may also enable the institution to better manage and account for indirect cost revenue and

position the institution to better justify and generate increased indirect cost revenue necessary for continuation of the university research mission.

These Standard Operating Procedures are in line with strategies and other existing policies at MUHAS that include MUHAS Corporate Strategic Plan (2014/15 and 2018/19), MUHAS Research Guidelines (2020), MUHAS Effort Reporting and Time Compensation (2016), MUHAS Institutional Policy and Procedures for Sponsored Projects (2017).

1.2 Rationale

To achieve research excellence, researchers need to devote time and focus efforts primarily on the science of their research projects rather than research management. The implementation of research projects requires ethical, scientific, and financial oversight. The University shall establish a dedicated office of sponsored programs (OSP) that runs the research management and administration functions at MUHAS.

1.3 Purpose and Context

To streamline research management, enhance and facilitate the university's scholarly activities, an administrative office providing service to all persons involved with externally sponsored programs in a timely and professional manner and by protecting the university's investments in scholarly activities is essential. These Standard Operating Procedures provides guidance for management of sponsored research which is fundamental to the conduct of ethical and fiscally responsible research activities.

1.4 Scope of the Sponsored projects' management Standard Operating Procedures

These standard operating procedures are applicable to all MUHAS' staff and students, all MUHAS's campuses and all sponsored research projects. These Standard Operating Procedures, and their implementation, shall be kept under regular review by the Directorate of Research and Publications.

1.5 Standard Operating Procedures Objectives and Outcomes

The main objective of these Standard Operating Procedures are to lay down principles and procedures for managing sponsored projects at MUHAS and to provide appropriate protection

for the university's scholarly activities. To achieve these goals, the specific objectives of the SOPs are to:

- i. Aid faculty during grants application and award management as well as general oversight of research activities at MUHAS
- ii. Facilitate communication between principal investigators (PI's) involved in sponsored program activities and the external sponsors on activities such as administrative reporting and submission of progress as well as final reports of the research projects.
- iii. Provide assistance for financial, procurement, human resource, and administrative support to sponsored projects at MUHAS.

It is expected that the following outcomes will be attained upon full implementation of the SOPs.

- i. The University will implement an effective program for efficient utilization of administrative tools and processes to conduct sponsored projects.
- ii. The University will have a model sponsored programs administration operation with proactive operations and meeting research community needs.

2.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS

a. Award

Financial assistance that provides support to accomplish a purpose.

b. Close date

The deadline set by the agency designated for submission of a particular grant application.

c. Closeout

Completion of internal procedures and sponsor requirements to terminate or complete a research project.

d. Contract

A mechanism for procurement of a product or service with specific obligations for both the sponsor and recipient.

e. Due date

The date that an activity is set to be accomplished. This can be application or report submissions.

f. Funder

An agency providing fund for specific project or activities

g. Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

A publicly available document by which a funding agency makes known its intentions to award grant agreements, usually as a result of competition for funds.

h. Indirect costs

Expenses incurred in conducting research or other activities but not directly attributable to a specific project.

i. No-cost extension

An extension of the period of performance beyond the original expiration date but with no additional fund. This is usually allocated to provide time for completion of project activities.

j. Notice of award

A legally binding document that serves as a notification to the awardee and others that a grant has been made.

k. Notice of Intent

A letter submitted by prospective applicants to donor prior to the submission of a grant application, notifying of the intent to submit an application.

l. Post-award

The period after award is given to the applicant. This covers all activities during project life time to close out.

m. Pre-award

The period before an application is funded. This covers all activities from finding funding opportunity to submission and follow up of a grant application.

n. Principal Investigator

Individual with final responsibility for the conduct of research or other activity described in a proposal or an award.

o. Sponsor

The organization that funds a sponsored program received by the institution.

p. Sponsored Program

A grant, contract or other agreement awarded to accomplish a specific goal or project.

q. Standard Operating Procedure

Is a procedure developed specifically to the operation that describes the activities necessary to complete tasks in accordance with institutional regulations, governing laws and guiding policies.

r. Sub-award

A document written under the authority of, and consistent with the terms and conditions of an award (a grant or contract), that transfers a portion of the research or substantive effort of the prime award to another institution.

3.0 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE STATEMENTS

The SOPs statements are presented in seven thematic issues followed by the operational procedures under each statement.

3.1 SOP Statement I: Pre-funding review

Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences shall have an office of sponsored projects which is able to review all the proposals to be submitted for funding by its researchers for

budgetary adequacy, funders' compliance, and adherence to MUHAS and government regulations.

3.1.1 Pre-funding review procedures:

- i. All faculty and staff intending to pursue external funding opportunities are required to submit a hard copy of the Notice of Intent letter to the Office of Sponsored Programs at least 14 business days before the proposal due date.
- ii. PIs are encouraged to notify OSP in advance regarding their intentions to write proposals to facilitate assistance and adherence to institutional requirements.
- iii. Completed proposals (with required signatures) should be submitted to the OSP at least five (5) working days prior to the closing date.
- iv. OSP staff will review and provide feedback on the proposal's content/context, budget(s) and research risk assessment, as well as compliance with funder, MUHAS and government regulations.
- v. Negotiate with the sponsor regarding terms of the award as applicable- including funding proportions devoted for Institutional overheads.
- vi. OSP staff will review budget and budget justification to ensure accuracy, completeness, and compliance with sponsors' requirements and with applicable accounting and cost guidelines.
- vii. Upon finalization of the review process, the proposal will be routed to the authorized organization representative (AOR) for final endorsement and submission.
- viii. Submission will be done electronically or by paper.
- ix. For electronic submission, AOR will use his/her electronic signature.
- x. The OSP will ensure that any proposal submitted electronically has been successfully received by the sponsor in time to meet the sponsor's deadline.
- xi. Any proposal not submitted as stipulated in the guidelines and procedures of the Office of Sponsored Programs will not be processed.
- xii. The PI should ensure that every effort is made to follow the stated guidelines and procedures to avoid risks of submission delays and rejection.
- xiii. It is the responsibility of PI to follow the guidelines for proposal development as stipulated by the funding agency.

- xiv. MUHAS reserves the right to decline funding if the university guidelines are not met by the PI.

3.2 SOP Statement II: Post-award processes

The OSP will have mechanisms in place to provide administrative support for all proposals which have been awarded.

3.2.1 Post-award procedures:

If a proposal is favourably assessed and earmarked for funding by the sponsor, the OSP will:

- i. Receive the notice of award (NoA) by authorized organization representative (AOR) and inform the PI about the award.
- ii. Scan and store the NoA into the OSP database.
- iii. Arrange a meeting with MUHAS legal officer and PI for verification of the NoA.
- iv. Sign and provide a registration number for the sponsored project once the NoA has been verified and compliances are agreed upon by both parties.
- v. Send the signed NoA, including the budget, to the OSP finance manager for allocation of project vote code/opening a separate bank account as per donor's requirements. Other institutional units including procurement, administration and human resources will also be provided with copies of the fully executed NoA as needed.
- vi. Work with the PI in preparing the progress as well as the final financial, auditing, and technical report for submission to MUHAS and the sponsor.
- vii. Facilitate negotiations of no-cost extension, award renewal and processing of award closure.
- viii. This rigorous process will be applicable to all commitments including awards, sub-awards, contracts, and research collaborations.

3.3 SOP Statement III: Funding opportunity detection

The OSP will search for and disseminate appropriate health-related funding opportunity announcements (FOA) to MUHAS faculty, schools, directorates, and research clusters.

3.3.1 Funding opportunity detection procedures:

- i. OSP will search and disseminate appropriate health-related funding opportunity announcements (FOA) to MUHAS faculty, schools, directorates, and research clusters.
- ii. Attention will be paid to FOA's that match MUHAS institutional research agenda, capacity to implement the projects and eligibility.
- iii. FOA's will be consistently posted at the OSP webpage in the MUHAS website.
- iv. OSP will follow up on the disseminated funding opportunity announcements to determine if action has been taken and assistance is needed.

3.4 SOP Statement IV: Research development and sensitization

The OSP will support and coordinate the organisation and facilitation of research development courses to faculty and students.

3.4.1 Research development and sensitization procedures:

- i. The OSP shall keep a list and register of all courses related to research development
- ii. All departments, directorates, and units hosting or running any research development course/training should register the course to OSP
- iii. The OSP will review all research development courses/training to make sure they are inclusive and are according to the university regulations
- iv. The OSP shall schedule and coordinate all research development courses/training to avoid overlap and repetitions
- v. The OSP will support all research administration courses/training

3.5 SOP Statement V: Research database and metrics

The OSP will develop and maintain research database and metrics at MUHAS that should have linkages with national research databases.

3.5.1 Research database and metrics procedures:

- i. The data bases and metrics will adhere to data, human subjects, and research ethics in general

- ii. The Principal Investigators shall provide a comprehensive documentation of their data (for example, metadata, descriptors, schema) so that the OSP can create clear and useful databases that can be shared and used according to data sharing guidelines and procedures.
- iii. The Principal Investigators shall communicate with the OSP under Director of Research and Publication on how codes will be used, annotated, acknowledgements and standard citing of data source.
- iv. The OSP shall engage the ICT, statisticians, PIs and other database experts to create meaningful and useful databases
- v. The OSP shall ensure both internal and external security of all data included in all the data bases.

3.6 SOP Statement VI: Project coordination

The OSP will promote coordination and sharing of facilities and resources available at MUHAS.

3.6.1 Project coordination procedures:

The facilities and resources requestor shall:

- i. Channel an application to the DRP's office stating the title of the study and the description of the facilities requested.
- ii. Provide a brief plan outlining the intended purpose for the requested facilities/resources
- iii. Adhere to all terms of the facilities and resources sharing agreement

3.7 SOP Statement VII: Project indirect costs

The OSP shall be responsible to keep track of the rightful amounts of indirect costs to be deducted from each research project according to MUHAS research policies and guidelines. The amounts deducted shall be reported in fund received from donor funded projects submitted to PFC.

3.7.1 Project indirect costs procedures:

- i. Prior to commitment of University resources to a research project, the Director of Research and Publications requires the inclusion of Indirect Cost in the research

- project budget, except in cases where the granting organization does not allow such provisions.
- ii. Overhead costs will be deducted from research funds received, except in cases where funder prohibits such provisions.
 - iii. Institutional overhead must be included in all applications/proposals for project grants/contracts except where the funding organization does not allow such provisions
 - iv. In very exceptional cases, the DVC-ARC may consider waving or reduction of Overhead rates stipulated in MUHAS Overhead policy when deemed necessary. The Principal Investigator requesting for a waiver must fill in the Research Overhead Charge Waiver Form for approval by relevant authorities listed in the waiver form.
 - v. The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Planning, Finance and Administration shall authorize the distribution of overhead cost recovered into the codes of relevant cost centres on quarterly basis.

4.0 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE STATUS

These are new Office of Sponsored Projects standard operating procedures at MUHAS.

5.0 KEY STAKEHOLDERS

A: The stakeholders who were consulted during formulation of these procedures include the following:

- i. Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellors
- ii. Deans and Directors
- iii. Students and Staff
- iv. Projects Investigators (PIs)

B: The main stakeholders of these Standard Operating Procedures are:

- i. All MUHAS staff and students
- ii. All partners funding research at MUHAS
- iii. Deans and Directors
- iv. Heads of Departments and Administrative units

- v. Collaborating institutions
- vi. Funding organizations

6.0 APPROVAL DETAILS

The procedures were approved by the University Senate at its 71 meeting held on 20th July 2020.

7.0 ENDORSEMENT DETAILS

The University Senate endorsed the procedures on its 71 meeting held on 20th July 2020.

8.0 RELATED LEGISLATION

MUHAS Charter of Incorporation, February 2007;

9.0 RELATED POLICIES

- i. MUHAS Institutional Overhead Policy (2011)
- ii. MUHAS Effort Reporting and Compensation Policy (2011)
- iii. MUHAS Information and Communication Technology Policy (2017)
- iv. MUHAS Human Resources Training and Development Policy (2012)

10.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- i. MUHAS Cooperate Strategic Plan (2013/14 – 2017/18)
- ii. MUHAS Charter (2007)
- iii. DRP Strategic Plans (2013/14 – 2017/18)
- iv. MUHAS Annual Reports

11.0 EFFECTIVE DATE FOR THE PROCEDURES

Unless otherwise determined by the approving body, the procedures shall become effective from the date it is approved by the University Senate/Council.

12.0 NEXT REVIEW DATE

The MUHAS Office of Sponsored Projects Standard Operating Procedures will be reviewed after every three years or when deemed necessary to assess the effectiveness of their implementation and determine areas that need to be revised. The periodic review will ensure the procedures are

in line with the University, national and international changes that might have taken place.

13.0 PROCEDURES OWNER

The University Council shall own the MUHAS Office of Sponsored Projects Standard Operating Procedures.

14.0 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES AUTHOR

The Directorate of Research and Publications of the University.

15.0 CONTACT PERSON

The contact person for issues related to the Office of Sponsored Projects Standard Operating Procedures shall be:

Director of Research and Publications

Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences

P.O. Box 65001

United Nations Road, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

2020

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