



## **UR GUIDELINES FOR OPENING AND OPERATING RESEARCHER ACCOUNTS**

**Approved by Senate meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The University of Rwanda (UR) has embarked on a journey in pursuit of its objective of being a research led University as stipulated in its vision. Already a number of policies and enabling frameworks have been approved and are being implemented with the aim to increase research productivity. Among the efforts undertaken is to encourage researchers to apply for research funds from diverse sources. UR is looking at ways of making it easy for researchers to access their research funds with minimum of bureaucracy. For this, UR has introduced the system of Researcher Accounts whereby recipients of Research grants will be required to open such an account. It avoids putting funds into University accounts, for which Researchers have no control of, and from which withdrawal involves a lot of bureaucratic procedures. Additionally, in its Research Strategy, UR has approved an incentive scheme to motivate staff to do more research. All academic/research staff will be required to open a Research Account into which the incentives money can be paid.

There are two types of researcher accounts, detailed as follows:

1. **Researcher Account for Grants:** This is an account opened in the bank by recipients of research grants. The account can either be in Rwandan Francs for local grants or in foreign currency for external grants.
2. **Researcher Account for Incentives:** This account is opened by the College Directorate of Research and Postgraduate Studies for every academic/research staff in the college. The accounts will be used for payment of incentives to researchers who will earn money based on their research achievements as stipulated in the Research Incentive Scheme.

### **A. GUIDELINES FOR OPENING A RESEARCHER ACCOUNT FOR GRANTS**

#### **Opening the Account and funds withdrawal**

Once a Principal Investigator (PI) receives an award notice from the sponsoring agency informing her/ him of an approved grant, he or she will write a letter to the College Director of Finance to request to open a researcher account. The letter will be endorsed by the College Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies.

The following documents must be enclosed with the letter of request to open a researcher account:

1. A complete copy of the awarded grant application (only for funds awarded after application)
2. A copy of the agency's notice of award outlining the project term date, awarded amount, financial reporting requirements, terms and conditions of award; the proposed budget (showing the lines of expenditure) and
3. A letter from the College Director of Human Resources confirming the Principal Investigator's employment conditions.

The following will guide the opening an account and withdrawing money:

1. The College Director of Finance will choose a university approved bank where the researcher account will be opened and will assign an accountant who will be a co-signatory to the account.
2. The Account names will be those of the PI and the Accountant.
3. The researcher account will be opened as per bank conditions.
4. Funds withdrawal will require the two signatures, that of the PI and that of the Accountant. The PI can only withdraw funds based on the grants conditions.

### **Early opening of a researcher account before grant award**

Early opening of a researcher account before grant award might be necessary under certain compelling circumstances. In such circumstances a draft agreement not yet signed can be used so that only if the research to be undertaken early is not anticipated breaching the terms of the fully executed agreement. Such cases might involve pre-financing activities before funds are released. In such circumstances, the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Administration and Finance (DVC-AF) must determine whether the project would not represent undue liability and risk to the University, or if it is not appropriate to incur costs in advance of receipt of project funds. Early Researcher accounts will be opened only with written permission of the DVC-AF.

To open an early researcher account the following must be submitted by the PI:

1. A draft agreement issued by the sponsor.
2. A written confirmation from the sponsor confirming:
  - The project is approved and the funds have been awarded;
  - The total amount awarded;
  - The proposed budget (I think it is important to know that budget to ensure the expenditures of the funds are as budgeted)
  - The project's start and end dates (the period of eligible expenses); and
  - When an agreement will be issued for review/signing by the University.

### **Monitoring the Researcher Accounts**

The College Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies will be responsible for monitoring the projects execution and expenditures. This will be achieved as follows:

1. The budget and activity plan will be approved by the College Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies which will be signed by the PI, the College Director of Finance and the College Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies.
2. Funds will be disbursed in instalments as recommended by the University of Rwanda Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee (UR-RPGS) and approved by the relevant Deputy Vice Chancellors.
3. Before the next instalment is paid, a financial report using a template approved by UR-RPGS Committee and a narrative report will be approved by the College Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies.
4. The College RPGS Committee will meet regularly to assess the projects' progress to ensure that they perform as expected.

5. Reports on the performance of the projects shall be reported on a regular basis to the College Academic Council and the College Management Committee.
6. Expenditures outside the stipulated budget lines shall be on the approval of the Funder and the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Administration and Finance, on the recommendation of the University Director for Research and Postgraduate Studies.

#### **Closure of the researcher accounts**

Researcher Accounts will be closed if:

1. The grant project expires or is terminated before its expiry date
2. There is established evidence of mismanagement funds by the PI

The DVC-FA shall approve the closure of the account on the recommendation of the College Director of Research submitted through the College Director of Finance.

### **B. GUIDELINES FOR OPENING A RESEARCHER ACCOUNT FOR INCENTIVES**

To boost research production, innovation, technology transfer, research dissemination and training of doctoral students, the UR has approved incentives to academic and research staff that will show achievements set in the various UR Research strategy initiatives. These incentives will be paid at the end of a fiscal year beginning with 2015/2016 fiscal year. Funds earned through this scheme shall only be used by the researchers to advance their research endeavours. Research Accounts for Incentives will be used to pay the deserving staff as follows:

1. The College Directors of Research and Postgraduate studies will open “Research Accounts for Incentives” for every academic staff from Assistant Lecturer onwards. The initial amount on the account will be zero Rwandan Francs. The accounts will be opened by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015.
2. Signatories to the accounts will be the College Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies and the Academic/ Research staff.
3. Staff will earn money by meeting the requirements stipulated for each of the Incentive Item within the given fiscal year. The Staff will apply for the earned incentive funds by writing a letter to the College Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies, requesting funds to be paid in his or her account and attaching the following documents:
  - The incentive qualified for
  - Proof for the qualification of the incentive. For example, in the case of a journal article/ a book/ book chapter attach the list of approved journals/ publishers by UR and College. In case of a completed PhD thesis under supervision of the applicant, a degree certificate or an attestation.
4. College Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee will meet twice per year to evaluate the submitted applications for the Incentive Awards.
5. The College Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies shall transfer the earned incentive amounts into the Researcher’s account.

6. A Researcher can withdraw the money by writing an application to the College Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies explaining the use for the money as per the guidelines approved by the UR-RPGS Committee.

  
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**Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research**



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