Version 1.0

# BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE PILANI, K K BIRLA GOA CAMPUS

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)

Grants Consultancy & Industrial Research (GCIR)

innovate achieve lead

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# Section-1: Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP):

The purpose of the Grants Consultancy & Industrial Research (GCIR) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) at BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus, is to establish a clear, consistent, and systematic framework for the management and execution of activities related to grants and industrial research. These SOPs are designed to ensure that all processes are conducted efficiently and transparently, in compliance with institutional policies and external regulations. By providing detailed guidelines, the SOPs aim to enhance the quality, accountability, and effectiveness of GCIR activities. This structured approach supports the strategic goals of the institute and fosters strong collaborations with industry partners and funding agencies, ultimately benefiting faculty, researchers, and the broader academic community.

## 1.2 Scope of the SOP:

The SOPs apply to all faculty members, researchers, administrative staff, and other stakeholders involved in GCIR activities at BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus. They cover the entire lifecycle of research and consultancy projects, including the preparation and submission of new project proposals, management of consultancy and industry proposals, and post-approval processes for sanctioned projects. Additionally, the SOPs encompass the appointment of research scholars and project staff, financial management, and utilization of project funds, as well as procurement and asset management related to research projects. By adhering to these procedures, stakeholders can ensure compliance with institutional, funding agency, and governmental regulations, thereby facilitating smoother project execution and optimal resource utilization.

# Section-2: Guidelines for Submitting New Research Proposals

This section outlines a structured approach for submitting new research proposals **to government and private funding agencies**, emphasizing the accurate and timely compilation of all required documents. The objective is to facilitate a smooth and efficient submission process that ensures compliance with institutional guidelines and funding agency requirements, while also expediting the approval process.

## 2.1 Access the GCIR Website:

Begin by visiting the Grants Consultancy & Industrial Research (GCIR) website of BITS Pilani, KK Birla Goa Campus. You can access it via the following link: https://www.bits-pilani.ac.in/goa/grants-consultancy-and-industrial-research/

## 2.2 Navigate to the Proposal Submission Section:

Once on the website, click on the 'PROPOSAL SUBMISSION' tab. This will redirect you to a Google Form specifically designed for the submission of new project proposals for GCIR office record and obtaining the Endorsement Certificate/Declaration required to be submitted to the funding agency.

## 2.3 Complete the Proposal Submission Form:

In the Google Form, you will need to provide detailed information regarding the project for which you are seeking funding. Ensure that all required fields are accurately filled out, as this information is crucial for processing your submission.

## 2.4 Upload Required Documents:

You will be asked to upload two key documents as part of your submission:

- **Project Proposal:** A comprehensive document outlining the project, including all budgetary details.
- **Endorsement Certificate/Declaration Draft:** A draft version of the Endorsement Certificate or Declaration, as mandated by the funding agency. This document should be in Microsoft Word (.doc) format.

### 2.5 Issuance of Endorsement Certificate/Declaration:

After you have completed the proposal submission process, the GCIR office will issue the official Endorsement Certificate or Declaration. This document will be prepared on the institute's letterhead and signed by the Head of the Institution. The processing time for this step is typically 2-3 working days, considering this it is advised to initiate the process of proposal submission well in advance before the deadline of the proposal call.

### 2.6 Additional Document Requests:

If the funding agency requires any additional documents beyond those initially submitted, please send an email to the GCIR office at gcir.office@goa.bits-pilani.ac.in. Clearly state the additional documents required (include formats as specified by the funding agency) and any specific instructions from the funding agency.

### 2.7 Final Submission:

It is the **sole responsibility** of the respective PI to submit the Final Project Proposal along with required to the funding agency as per guidelines of the funding agency.

# Section – 3: Consultancy Proposal Submission

This section outlines the procedures and guidelines for submitting consultancy proposals. It is designed to ensure that all consultancy proposals are prepared and submitted in accordance with institutional policies, consultancy rules, and legal requirements. This section includes consultancy rules, scope and norms, steps for initiating the Note for Approval (NFA) process, adhering to consultancy guidelines, managing time and funding related to consultancy projects.

## 3.1 Consultancy Rules, Scope, and Norms:

**3.1.1. Overview and Scope:** This policy applies to all faculty and staff at BITS Pilani. Consultancy services may be offered to industries, service sectors, government departments, and other national and international agencies in niche areas of expertise available at the Institute.

### 3.1.2. Consulting Restrictions:

No consulting activity should:

- **Interfere with Faculty Obligations:** Detract from the faculty's ability to fulfill BITS Pilani's obligations.
- **Restrict Academic and Research Activities:** Restrict or limit the faculty's ability to pursue their academic and/or research activities at BITS Pilani due to confidentiality terms, limited access to intellectual property, or other constraints.
- **Impair Intellectual Property Rights:** Give away rights or assign intellectual property that is already owned by and assigned to BITS Pilani.

Faculty members should be vigilant about any provisions, such as confidentiality, intellectual property (IP), or non-competition clauses, that might restrict their current or future research and academic activities as institute faculty members.

### 3.1.3. Consultancy Services and Ethical Requirements:

Consultancy services offered by BITS Pilani may include, but are not limited to, feasibility studies, technology assessments, material and energy evaluations, product design, process development, software development, and troubleshooting. These services must adhere to ethical and professional obligations as outlined in the standard terms and conditions.

#### 3.1.4. Testing Projects:

Testing projects refer to evaluating a component or product against standards (e.g., concrete strength, soil compaction, pressure gauge calibration, chemical or drug identification). Testing services will be provided based on available facilities and must not interfere with teaching or research activities. Faculty may initiate testing jobs once requests are received, following procedures similar to those for consultancy projects.

#### 3.1.5. Services and Standardization:

Consultancy services may also include standardization, calibration testing, and evaluation where facilities are available or can be augmented. Such services should be supported by periodic calibration and standardization of laboratory equipment used for these purposes.

### 3.2 Initiate the NFA Process:

The Principal Investigator (PI) must initiate the Note for Approval (NFA) process for any consultancy proposal. The PI should prepare and submit the appropriate NFA, along with a draft of the consultancy proposal, to the Director for approval. Template for NFA is available on the GCIR website. Accurate completion of the NFA is essential, as this approval is a prerequisite for any further action on the project.

Consultancy form: Link to Consultancy NFA

### 3.3 Adhere to Consultancy Guidelines:

While preparing the proposal, the PI must adhere to the consultancy guidelines. These guidelines cover various aspects such as the scope of consultancy services, process flow for consultancy projects, time allocation for such projects, responsibilities of PIs, engagement of staff and students, financial aspects, tax implications, IPR, legal aspects, and conflict of interest considerations. These guidelines ensure better transparency, efficiency, and accountability in our consultancy activities while fostering a conducive environment for researchers, staff, and students to engage meaningfully with external stakeholders. The detailed guidelines are available on the intranet page.

Link: Consultancy Guidelines

### 3.3.1 Breakdowns of Various Budget Heads for Consultancy Projects:

| | **Head with Description** | **Charges** | **Amount (Rupees)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | Expenses – Recurring | Manpower | |
| | | Consumables | |
| | | Honorarium* | |
| | | External consultants | |
| | | Travel | |
| | | Contingency | |
| | | Sub-Total (Recurring Expenses) | A |
| B | Expenses – Non-Recurring | Equipment | B |
| C | Consultancy Fee (for consultant faculty members) | Scientific and Technical Advice# | C |
| D | Direct Charges | Expenses and Consultancy Fee D = A+B+C | D = A+B+C |
| E | Institute Charges (Campus Development Fund) | 30% of Direct Charges (A+B+C) | 30% of D |
| F | Total Charges | F = A+B+C+E | A+B+C+E |
| G | GST (18% of F) | 18% of F | 18% of F |
| H | Gross Charges (F+G) | F+G | F+G |

* The honorarium will be directly credited to the salary accounts of the PI and Co-PIs, and income tax will be levied on it.
#The consultancy fees charged will be credited to the PDF account of the respective PI and Co-PIs.

In cases where a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), or Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) is required between the institute and the consulting firm, the PI should contact the Associate Dean of GCIR. The PI will then be directed to the legal team of BITS Pilani to complete all the formalities required for executing the MoU/MoA/NDA.

Generic Template & Guidelines for processing for MoU/MoA/NDA are available on the R&I intranet page: [ **LINK** ].

## 3.4 Submit the Proposal Post-Approval:

Once the NFA has been approved by the Director, the PI is authorized to submit the project proposal to the respective Consultancy partner. This submission should align with the terms and guidelines established in the NFA.

## 3.5 Communicate Grant Sanctions and Releases:

The PI is responsible for keeping the GCIR office informed of any communications received from the funding agency regarding the sanctioning or release of grants. This includes forwarding emails, letters, or any official documentation that outlines the funding status or any conditions associated with the grant. This step ensures that the GCIR office can provide appropriate support and documentation as needed.

## 3.6 Allocation of Time on Consultancy Projects;

### 3.6.1 Time Commitment:

Faculty members engaged in consultancy projects must ensure that their time commitment does not interfere with their primary academic responsibilities, including teaching, research, and administrative duties. The time allocated for consultancy work should be clearly defined and approved as part of the NFA process.

### 3.6.2 Time Limit:

The time spent on consultancy and related assignments shall be limited to 52 working days a year, preferably one working day per week. Additionally, consultants may be permitted to utilize, on average, one non-working day per week for consultancy activities.

### 3.6.3 Leave for Consultancy During Working Hours:

In cases where consultancy requires an onsite visit or absence from campus during working hours, the consultant must obtain prior permission from the concerned Head of Department, with intimation to the AD, GCIR. Such absences will be treated as 'Consultancy Leave.' However, the total consultancy leave should not exceed 52 days per year (approximately one day per week) and should not be taken more than four times a month in continuation, to prevent any dilution of teaching or research work.

## 3.7 Nature of Funding Released:

Any Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds received through alumni will be routed through the Pilani alumni bank account and then transferred to the Goa campus. For any CSR funds received, the accounts office will issue either an invoice or an 80G certificate—only one of these documents will be issued, not both. For funds received through the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) account at Pilani Campus, purchases will be routed through Pilani, and bills will be forwarded for reimbursement/ direct payment to the vendor to Pilani Campus. Please ensure that all tax invoices are raised to BITS Pilani at the Pilani address.

## Section – 4: Industry Research Proposal Submission

Industry research projects are collaborative initiatives between BITS Pilani and industrial partners aimed at conducting in-depth research to solve complex problems, innovate, or develop new technologies. These projects often involve a combination of theoretical and applied research and are typically of a longer duration than consultancy projects. This section details the steps for submitting industry research proposals.

### 4.1 Identifying Research Opportunities:

Faculty members should actively engage with industry partners to identify research opportunities that align with their expertise and the strategic objectives of both parties.

### 4.2 Draft Proposal Preparation:

A comprehensive research proposal must be prepared, including research objectives, methodology, expected outcomes, timelines, and a proposed budget.

#### 4.2.1 Breakdowns of Various Budget Heads for Industry Sponsored Projects:

| **Sr No.** | **Budget Head** | **Year1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Equipment | | | |
| 2 | Consumables | | | |
| 3 | Contingency | | | |
| 4 | Manpower | | | |
| 5 | Travel | | | |
| 6 | Overhead* | | | |
| 7 | Total including overhead | | | |
| 8 | Service Tax | | | |
| 9 | Total Amount (Rs.) | | | |

For the distribution of overheads, refer to Section 11.

### 4.3 Initiate the NFA Process:

The Principal Investigator (PI) must initiate the Note for Approval (NFA) process for any industry-related project. The PI should prepare and submit the NFA, along with the draft proposal, to the Director for approval. The NFA template is available on the GCIR website. Accurate completion of the NFA is essential for further action on the project.

Industry form: Link to Industry Research NFA

### 4.4 Collaborative Agreements:

Depending on the collaboration, agreements such as Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) or Research Collaboration Agreements (RCAs) may needed to be drafted and reviewed. In such cases PI should contact the Associate Dean of GCIR. The PI will then be directed to the legal team of BITS Pilani to complete all the formalities required for executing the MoU/MoA/NDA/RCA. These agreements outline the terms of the collaboration and ensure clarity on responsibilities and expectations.

Generic Template & Guidelines for processing for MoU/MoA/NDA/RCA are available on the R&I intranet page: [ **LINK** ].

### 4.5 Submission to Industry Partner:

Once the proposal and NFA are approved internally, the final proposal can be submitted to the industry partner for their review and approval.

### 4.6 Negotiation and Finalization:

Conduct negotiations regarding the scope, budget, intellectual property rights, and other terms with the industry partner. Finalize the project once a mutual agreement is reached.

### 4.7 Communicate Grant Sanctions and Releases:

The PI is responsible for informing the GCIR office of any communications from the industry regarding grant sanctions or releases. This includes forwarding emails, letters, or documentation related to funding status or conditions.

### 4.8 Nature of Funding Released:

Any Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds received through alumni will be routed through the Pilani alumni bank account and then transferred to the Goa campus. For any CSR funds received, the accounts office will issue either an invoice or an 80G certificate—only one of these documents will be issued, not both. For funds received through the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) account at Pilani Campus, purchases will be routed through Pilani, and bills will be forwarded for reimbursement/ direct payment to the vendor to Pilani Campus. Please ensure that all tax invoices are raised to BITS Pilani at the Pilani address.

# Section – 5 : Post-Approval Procedures and Guidelines for Project Execution

This section details the post-approval steps required to initiate and manage a research project. It ensures that all necessary documentation is in place, funds are properly managed, and project activities align with the funding agency's guidelines. The objective is to provide a clear roadmap for PIs to follow, ensuring that projects are executed smoothly, from receiving funds to making purchases and appointing research scholars.

## 5.1 Submit Required Documents to GCIR Office:

Once the project has been approved by the funding agency, the Principal Investigator (PI) must promptly email the necessary documents to the GCIR office. This includes all relevant paperwork associated with the project's approval.

## 5.2 Share the Sanction/Release Order:

A copy of the sanction order or release order issued by the funding agency must be shared with the GCIR office. This document is essential for tracking the status of the project and ensuring compliance with the funding agency's terms. The start date of the project will be considered as either the date of receipt of the first installment of the project fund from the funding agency or the date mentioned in the sanction order by the funding agency. Based on the information received, the GCIR office will announce the details of the sanctioned projects through email and publish the same on social media platforms.

## 5.2 Request for Additional Documentation:

If any additional documents are required for the release of the first-year grant following the project's approval or sanctioning, the PI should notify the GCIR office via email. This may include documents such as Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), invoices to be raised, bank mandate forms or bank account details, and any other documents necessary to complete the formalities.

## 5.3 Research Scholar Appointment Advertisement:

Advertisements for the appointment of research scholars should only be issued after the sanction order has been received. This ensures that the project is officially recognized and that the necessary funding is in place. A format for the same is available on the GCIR website.

Link: [Advertisement Format for Research Scholar]()

. The PIs may use this as a guideline and modify the same to include all details related to the sanctioned project as appropriate.

### 5.4 Communicate Grant Release Information:

The PI is required to inform the GCIR office of any communication received from the funding agency regarding the release of grant funds, including details of the fund transfer. This information is crucial for the proper management and utilization of the project funds.

### 5.5 Purchases and Research Scholar Appointments:

Any purchases using project funds, as well as the process of conducting interviews for the appointment of research scholars, may only proceed once the funds have been received from the funding agency. This rule is in place to ensure that the project has the financial resources required before committing to expenditures or appointments.

### 5.6 Process Overhead Deduction Form:

After the funds are received, the PI must complete and submit an Overhead Deduction Form, which is available on the GCIR website. This form is necessary for transferring the overhead amount to the PI's PDF, DDF and CDF accounts, ensuring that all financial aspects of the project are properly accounted for. The Overhead Deduction Form must be submitted annually year after the release of funds, as specified in the sanction letter under overhead. For more details please refer page no: 26 and follow the Link : [Overhead Distribution Policy]()

### 5.7 Commence Purchases and Interviews:

Following the receipt of funds from the funding agency, the PI may begin making purchases for the project and initiate the interview process for the appointment of research scholars. This marks the transition from planning to active project execution.

## Section – 6: Process for Appointment, Term Extension, and Upgradation of Research Scholar

This section provides guidelines for the appointment, term extension, and upgradation of research scholars involved in sponsored projects. It aims to ensure that the recruitment process is transparent and efficient, that term extensions are based on clear justifications, and that upgradation of research scholars is conducted according to their progress and project needs. This structured approach helps maintain consistency and compliance with institutional and funding agency requirements.

### 6.1 Advertisement for Position:

Advertisements for research scholar positions in sanctioned projects should be posted upon receipt of the sanction order from the respective agency. The advertisement must be published on the BITS website and other social media platforms and should specify the project title, sponsoring agency, project duration, fellowship amount, and the qualifications and experience required as per the funding agency's terms or the official memorandum (OM). PIs are requested to use the template available on the GCIR website but modify it according to the funding agency's requirements. The draft advertisement should be forwarded to the GCIR office for uploading on social media.

### 6.2 NFA for Conducting Interviews:

The Principal Investigator (PI) must initiate a Note for Approval (NFA) for conducting interviews at least one week before the scheduled interview date. The NFA format is available on the GCIR website.

Link: NFA for Approval of Interview Panel

The NFA must include the following enclosures:

- A list of shortlisted candidates, selected based on the qualifications specified by the funding agency.
- A copy of the advertisement.
- A copy of the sanction letter from the funding agency.
- The interview panel should consist of:
  - PI
  - Co-PI
  - Convener DRC
  - Head of the Department
  - External Expert (for Government sponsored project)/Internal

Subject Expert (for institute-funded projects)
- Associate Dean GCIR

### 6.3 Approval and Scheduling of Interviews:

Once the NFA for conducting interviews is approved, a copy of the approval will be shared with the PI. Following this, the PI can proceed to notify the shortlisted candidates and interview panel members of the interview date, time, and venue.

### 6.4 Post-Interview Appointment NFA:

After the interviews, the PI must submit an NFA for appointing the selected candidates. The PI may also include the names of waitlist candidates if any. The NFA format is available on the GCIR website.

Link: Post Interview Candidate Selection NFA

The following documents should be enclosed with the appointment NFA:

- CVs of the shortlisted candidates.
- A list of candidates who attended the interview.
- The approved copy of the interview NFA.

### 6.5 Determining Position and Fellowship:

The Principal Investigator (PI) should recruit the research fellow for the position as sanctioned by the funding agency or as mentioned in the proposal. The PI must ensure that the selected candidate fulfills the required qualifications stated in the office memorandum issued by the funding agency for the sanctioned research personnel position and fellowship.

If, after the interview process, the PI is unable to find a suitable candidate who meets all the requirements specified in the office memorandum, but identifies a good candidate who fulfills only the educational qualifications but no other requirements, the PI should write to the funding agency to request approval for downgrading the designation and fellowship. Upon receiving approval, the PI can then select a research fellow from the shortlisted candidates.

If no specific instructions are provided by the funding agency, the PI may follow the institute's guidelines for recruiting Non-NET/GATE students for sponsored projects, but only after obtaining approval from the funding agency.

Link: [Institute Guidelines for Recruitment of Non-NET/GATE students under Sponsored projects]

### 6.6 Issuance of Offer Letter:

Upon approval of the appointment NFA, the GCIR office will generate and send the offer letter to the selected candidate within 2-3 working days, with a copy to the PI, Co-PI, HOD, and Associate Dean GCIR. This letter officially confirms the candidate's selection and provides the terms of the appointment.

### 6.7 Hostel Accommodation NFA:

If the selected research scholar opts for hostel accommodation, the PI should initiate an NFA for hostel accommodation after the candidate accepts the offer letter and confirms their date of joining. This need to be completed before student reports to campus. The format for this NFA is also available on the GCIR website.

Link: [NFA for Hostel Accommodation]

### 6.8 Joining Documentation:

Once the research scholar accepts the offer letter, the GCIR office will inform them of the documents required at the time of joining. The required documents include:

- Self-attested copies of all educational qualification certificates (from 10th Standard to the highest qualification, including mark sheets and degree certificates).
- NET/GATE Qualification Certificate, if applicable.
- Permanent address proof.
- Present address proof.
- Work experience certificates, if applicable.
- Relieving letter from the previous employer, if applicable.
- Bank account details (copy of the passbook/cancelled cheque).
- Passport-size photograph.

The selected research scholar must report to the GCIR office in the forenoon on the joining date to complete formalities. At the time of joining, they will be given two forms: a joining report and a personal data sheet, which the research scholar will need to fill out, get signed by the respective PI/Co-PI, and submit to the GCIR office. The PI should inform the candidate that original documents must be presented for verification.

The candidate will be issued an ID card, Email ID, and details for internet access. The ID card issued at the time of joining will be temporary for six months. If the candidate joins a Ph.D. program, a permanent ID card and Email ID will be issued by the concerned department (AGSRD). The candidate may apply for an ID card renewal after the validity expires if they have not joined the Ph.D. program.

### 6.9 Fellowship Disbursement Procedure:

The GCIR office will process the Salary Advice for the release of fellowship to research scholars at the end of each month. This Salary Advice will be forwarded to the Accounts Department based on the attendance history provided by the respective departments. It is crucial for all research scholars to sign the attendance register maintained by their respective departments to ensure timely processing of their fellowship. The fellowship amount will be credited directly to the bank account provided by the research scholar at the time of joining.

### 6.10 Term Extension for Fellowship:

To extend the fellowship term for a research scholar, the respective PI should submit a Term Extension NFA at least 15 days before the scholar completes one year from the date of joining. This submission must include a brief Annual Assessment Report to justify the extension. The draft NFA format for term extension is available on the GCIR website.

Link: NFA for term Extension

Upon approval from the Director, the GCIR office will issue a term extension letter to the research scholar for the period recommended by the PI.

### 6.11 Upgradation to SRF/Project Associate II:

Research scholars who have completed two years in the project as a Junior Research Fellow (JRF) or Project Associate I are eligible for upgradation to Senior Research Fellow (SRF) or Project Associate II, based on the terms and conditions mentioned in the Office Memorandum (OM) issued by the funding agency. The PI must constitute a review committee, including an external expert, and obtain the Director's approval for the same.

To initiate the upgradation process, the PI should submit an NFA for the research scholar's assessment interview. Once the assessment is conducted and approved, a separate NFA for the upgradation must be submitted, Link: Upon receiving the Director's approval, an upgradation letter will be issued to the research scholar.

Links: Interview NFA for upgradation of Research Scholar

Three Members Assessment Committee Report For JRF

Post Interview NFA for Fellowship Upgradation

### 6.12 Completion of Project Tenure:

Upon completion of the project tenure or fellowship, the research scholar who has not joined the BITS Ph.D. program must clear all dues from the project. The No Dues form should be collected from the GCIR office by the research scholar, and after all the signatures are obtained, the form should be submitted back to the GCIR office to complete the exit formalities.

### 6.13 Resignation of Research Scholars from the Project:

A resignation letter from the research scholar must be submitted to the Director for approval by the research scholar/PI. The letter should be addressed to the Director, BITS Pilani, K.K. Birla Goa Campus, and signed by the Research Scholar, PI, Co-PI, HOD, Associate Dean GCIR, and Director. The No Dues form must be collected from the GCIR office by the research scholar, and after all the signatures are obtained, the form should be submitted back to the GCIR office to complete the exit formalities.

### 6.14 Experience Certificate/Relieving Letter/ Bonafide Certificate:

An experience certificate or relieving letter will be issued to the research scholar after completing the project tenure or resignation, following approval of the resignation letter and clearance of NO DUES by the GCIR office. The bonafide certificate will be issued based on the request of the research scholar. The form for approval is available on the GCIR website. Link: Application for Bonafide/Experience Certificate

### 6.15 Student Internship for SSR Activities:

If the sanctioned letter specifies SSR (Scientific Social Responsibility) activities, these must be completed before the closure of the project. The PI may hire undergraduate engineering or postgraduate science students from other institutes on a temporary basis for up to two months or as advised by the funding agency, as part of the SSR activities. For remuneration guidelines, please follow the funding agency norms.

# Section – 7: For Travel Using Project Funds

This section outlines the procedures for using project funds for travel, including obtaining approvals and submitting expense claims. The aim is to ensure all travel expenses are managed effectively, aligning with the project's budget and the funding agency's guidelines. It provides Principal Investigators (PIs) with the necessary steps to secure pre-approvals and process reimbursements, ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of project funds for travel.

## 7.1 Eligibility for Travel:

Travel expenses are permitted under the project only if specific funds for travel have been sanctioned by the funding agency. The PI must ensure that travel is in accordance with the approved budget and guidelines of the project. Travel expenses can be claimed only for PI, Co-PIs and the Research Scholar associated with the project. Other PhD students working with the PI cannot use the travel fund if they are not formally associated with the project.

## 7.2 Approval for Travel:

Before undertaking any travel, the Principal Investigator (PI) must submit a Note for Approval (NFA) for travel. This NFA should be prepared using the format available on the GCIR website Link: Projects andd must include comprehensive details such as the budget for travel, the destination, duration (number of days), travel dates, and information about the traveler(s). The approval of this NFA is mandatory before any travel arrangements are made.

## 7.3 Submission of Travel Bills:

After the travel is completed, all related travel bills and expenses must be documented and submitted using the Travel and Daily Allowance (TA/DA) form available on the GCIR website, supported by a detailed annexure of the bills. The submitted bills will be processed for reimbursement or accounting under the project’s travel budget.

Link: TA/DA format

## 7.4 Travel for Research Scholars:

Travel expenses for research scholars will be governed by the specific guidelines of the funding agency. The PI must ensure that any travel undertaken by research scholars adheres to these guidelines, and the necessary approvals are obtained in advance.

# Section – 8: Purchase of Recurring/Non-Recurring Items

This section details the procedures for purchasing recurring and non-recurring items using project funds. It aims to ensure all procurement activities comply with institutional policies and funding agency terms, focusing on competitive pricing, quality assurance, transparency, and accountability. This section guides Principal Investigators (PIs) through the steps of initiating procurement, obtaining quotations, negotiating with vendors, and processing payments, ensuring an efficient and compliant purchasing process.

Link to Purchase Policy: SOP Purchase & Stores

## 8.1 Raising the Indent:

The Principal Investigator (PI) must initiate the procurement process by raising an indent though an email to the purchase team. This document should clearly specify the complete technical specifications or Bill of Quantities (BOQ) required for the items to be purchased. For technical advice on the purchase of computers, servers, printers, etc., the Faculty In Charge (FIC) of the Computer Center (CC) should be consulted before raising the indent.

## 8.2 Purchase Requisition:

Upon receiving the indent, the Purchase Team will raise a purchase requisition, which formally begins the process of acquiring the items listed.

## 8.3 Request for Quotation (RFQ):

The Purchase Team will float an inquiry to prospective vendors by issuing a Request for Quotation (RFQ). This step is crucial in gathering competitive bids from different suppliers.

## 8.4 Vendor Responses:

The Purchase Team will collect responses from vendors. A minimum of three quotations is required to ensure competitive pricing and quality. However, for proprietary items or Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) supplies, a single quotation may be acceptable as per the Standard Operating Procedure -Purchase and Store (SOP)

## 8.5 Preparation of Comparative Statement (CS) Before Negotiation:

Before entering negotiations, the Purchase Team will prepare a Comparative Statement (CS) that evaluates the different quotations received. This document helps in comparing prices, terms, and conditions from various vendors.

## 8.6 Negotiation with Vendors:

The Purchase Team will negotiate with the vendors based on the guidelines outlined in the SOP. The goal of this negotiation is to obtain the best possible terms and pricing.

## 8.7 Preparation of Comparative Statement (CS) After Negotiation:

After the negotiation process is complete, the Purchase Team will update the Comparative Statement (CS) to reflect the final terms and prices agreed upon with the vendors.

## 8.8 Note for Approval (NFA):

Principal Investigator (PI) will be required to prepare a Purchase Note for Approval (NFA) to be submitted to purchase office enclosing the quotations and comparative statement. Format for the purchase NFA is available on the GCIR website

Link to NFA for Capex: NFA for Purchase of Equipment

Link to NFA for Opex: NFA for Purchase of Consumables/Contingency items

**For purchases exceeding ₹25,000 and up to ₹1 lakh, the NFA must be signed by the Dean of Administration. For purchases exceeding ₹1 lakh, both the Dean of Administration and the Director will sign the NFA.*

## 8.9 Issuance of Purchase Order (PO):

Once the NFA is approved, the Purchase Team will prepare and send a Purchase Order (PO) to the selected vendor.

## 8.10 Receipt of Goods:

The vendor will deliver the goods to the stores. The goods will be stamped with a receipt entry and formally received by the PI. In case if the material is received directly by the PI; entry stamp shall be obtained on priority from stores. In case if the goods are received on a non- working day the receipt entry stamp should be taken on the next working day.

### 8.11 Bill Submission:

The PI must forward the original bills, duly signed and stamped by the vendor (digitally signed in the case of e-invoices and copy of the email form the vendor to be attached), and delivery challans/courier docket along with a Bill Forwarding Note (format available on GCIR website) to the stores for the preparation of the Goods Receipt Note (GRN). Bills need to be submitted within seven working days of receipt of materials/services; failing this, justification for late submission must be provided along with the Dean of Administration's approval.

Link: Bill Forwarding Format

### 8.12 Forwarding Bills to Accounts:

The stores will then forward the bills to GCIR office for signature of Associate Dean GCIR and then forward to the accounts department for processing the payment.

### 8.13 Vendor Payment:

The accounts department will process the payment to the vendor as per the agreed terms.

## Section – 9: Direct Purchase for Items up to ₹25,000

This section outlines the streamlined process for making direct purchases of items costing up to ₹25,000. The goal is to enable swift and efficient procurement of necessary items while ensuring accountability, quality, and adherence to institutional policies. It provides guidelines for direct purchases, self-certification by Principal Investigators (PIs), handling bills, and payment processing, ensuring that all small-scale procurement activities remain transparent and within set limits.

### 9.1 Purchase of Goods Without NFA:

Goods may be purchased without a Note for Approval (NFA) for amounts up to ₹25,000 (Twenty-Five Thousand Only) on each occasion. For direct purchases up to ₹25,000, the responsibility of ensuring appropriate procurement lies with the PI.

### 9.2 Procedures for Direct Purchase and Handling of Materials:

#### 9.2.1 Direct Receipt of Materials by PI:

Materials received through online portals like Amazon, Flipkart etc or other vendors, through direct payment made by the PI, should not be routed through Central Stores. PIs shall receive the materials directly from the vendor. For processing such bills, PIs must self-certify as “material received” on each invoice, mentioning location and usage details. The PI must also ensure that the billing address on the invoice clearly shows the office address of BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus rather than a personal or home address. The PI should ensure that the invoice or delivery challans are stamped by the stores.

The entry stamp shall be obtained on priority from stores by the PI. In case if the goods are received on a non- working day the receipt entry stamp should be taken on the next working day.

#### 9.2.2 Materials Received Through Stores:

For materials received through the stores, invoices or delivery challans will be stamped by the stores and forwarded to the PI for the bill forwarding process.

## 9.3 Bill Forwarding and Payment Processing:

### 9.3.1 Submission of Bills for Processing:

Bills should be forwarded along with a Bill Forwarding Note (format available on GCIR Website) and a self-declaration (format included in the Bill Forwarding Note) to the stores for Goods Receipt Note (GRN) preparation.

### 9.3.2 Approval and Payment Workflow:

- The stores will forward the bills to the GCIR office for the signature of the Associate Dean, GCIR, and then to the accounts department for payment processing.
- The accounts department will process the payment to the vendor or PI as mentioned in the remarks section of the Bill Forwarding Note by the PI.

## 9.4 Terms and Conditions for Direct Purchase Up to ₹25,000:

### 9.4.1 Rate Contract and Splitting of Bills:

- Rate contracts must be implemented wherever applicable.
- Splitting of the bill for an item above ₹25,000 is not allowed. Payment for such cases will be put on hold.

### 9.4.2 Restrictions and Limitations:

- Staff welfare expenses are not allowed.
- A limit of ₹1.5 lakh per semester must be followed for direct purchases.
- All capital expenditure (capex) purchases must be made in the name of BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus and not in a personal name.
- Bills from the previous financial year will not be accepted under any circumstances.

### 9.4.3 Documentation Requirements:

- Original bills are mandatory for processing any payment. Online wallet (e.g., GPay, PayU, Paytm) payment screenshots will not be accepted in lieu of original bills. No declarations for missing bills will be entertained.
- The purpose of expenditure must be clearly filled out, including the details of the person to whom the amount is to be reimbursed.

# Section – 10 : Project Management and Operational Guidelines

This section provides comprehensive guidelines for the effective management and operation of research projects. It covers the essential responsibilities and procedures that Principal Investigators (PIs) must follow to comply with institutional and funding agency requirements, manage project finances, and ensure timely project completion. The objective is to prevent common issues such as project delays, budget overruns, and negative balances, thereby ensuring successful project outcomes.

## 10.1 Completion and Budget Management:

The Principal Investigator (PI) must ensure that the project is completed efficiently, on time, and within the allocated budget to avoid any negative balance. If an extension or budget revision is granted by the funding agency, the PI must communicate this to the GCIR office.

## 10.2 Negative Balance Management:

If the projects go into a negative balance due to delays in disbursing the grant tranche by the funding agency. The following points highlight key aspects of managing negative balances in projects. These are taken from the Guidelines to Minimize Negative Balance and are not comprehensive. For more detailed information, PI should refer to the full guidelines.

Link: Policy for Reducing Negative Balance for Projects

### 10.2.1 For Existing Negative Balance in Completed Projects:

PIs will communicate with the funding agency (with a copy to the GCIR office) requesting the release of the pending grant. PIs should send such reminders once every month.

### 10.2.2 For Negative Balance on Ongoing and Future Projects:

PIs should communicate with the funding agency (with a copy to the GCIR office) requesting the release of pending grants. Reminders should be sent once every month.

### 10.2.3 Expenditure Control:

No expenditure will be allowed less than 30 days prior to the project end date unless it is related to project review and supported by a letter from the funding agency.

#### 10.2.4 Student Fellowship:

Student fellowship will be kept out of the purview of the negative balance, and students will be supported even if the project balances are negative (above 50% of the recurring cost).

### 10.2 Financial Documentation:

For government-sponsored projects, the Utilization Certificate (UC) and the Statement of Expenditure (SOE) need to be submitted to the funding agency either at the end of every Financial Year (FY) or upon completion of one year of the project, or as per the funding agency's requirement. PIs may contact the GCIR office for assistance in preparing these documents.

### 10.3 Project Closure:

Upon project completion, a copy of the project closure documents, including the final UC, SOE, and project closure report, must be shared with the GCIR office for record-keeping.

# Section – 11: Overhead and Professional Development Fund (PDF)

This section outlines the updated policies and procedures for allocating and utilizing overhead funds received from Sponsored R&D Projects at BITS Pilani. Recent revisions reflect a strategic shift in fund allocation, with additional resources now directed towards the Campus Development Fund (CDF). This adjustment aims to enhance research infrastructure and support the development of new facilities, thereby strengthening the overall research environment at BITS Pilani. The guidelines provided ensure that overhead costs and professional development activities are managed effectively to contribute to the institution's research excellence.

## 11.1 Overhead Costs for Unspecified Costing:

Unless otherwise specified, Principal Investigators (PIs) must include at least 20% overhead charges in their proposals. This additional amount is crucial for covering various indirect expenses essential for the smooth execution of the project. Overhead costs help address administrative support, facility maintenance, and other indirect costs related to project management and operational efficiency.

## 11.2 Distribution of Overhead Costs:

To ensure the optimal utilization of resources from Sponsored R&D Projects at BITS Pilani, overhead costs are strategically distributed among three key funds: the Professional Development Fund (PDF), the Department Development Fund (DDF), and the Campus Development Fund (CDF). The table below outlines the specific allocation percentages for each fund, depending on the total overhead amount in the project.

| Sr.No | For | Fund Name | Distribution | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | A* | B# |
| 1 | Faculty | Professional Development Fund (PDF) | 40% | 60% |
| 2 | Department | Department Development Fund (DDF) | 20% | 20% |
| 3 | Campus | Campus Development Fund (CDF) | 40% | 20% |

* For Projects with ≤10% overhead of the sanctioned amount: as per column A.

# For Projects with >10% overhead of the sanctioned amount, the distribution will be as follows:

- Until 10% - as per column A
- The excess amount beyond 10% - as per column B

## 11.3 Guidelines for Utilization of Professional Development Fund (PDF);

The Professional Development Fund (PDF) supports various activities that enhance the research capabilities and professional growth of faculty members and research scholars. The PDF can be utilized for the following purposes:

### 11.3.1 Membership and Conferences:

- Membership fees for professional bodies.
- Participation in conferences, workshops, symposia, and seminars both in India and abroad. This includes international air travel, visa fees, registration fees, local conveyance, food, and lodging for the duration of the conference plus two additional days (one day before and one day after the conference). Local travel and medical insurance are also covered.
- Attending workshop tutorials associated with the conference for up to two days.

### 11.3.2 Educational Materials and Equipment:

- Purchase of books, stationery, computer accessories, and other professional materials.
- Expenses for professional memberships, journal page charges, consumables, and software tools.
- Acquisition of minor lab equipment.

### 11.3.3 Hardware Purchases:

Purchase of essential hardware like printers, laptops, tablets, or cell phones used for academic purposes. A maximum of ₹2.0 lakhs can be spent on these items, limited to one-time purchases within a five-year period. Such purchases must adhere to the Institute's purchase protocols.

### 11.3.4 Research Assistance:

Engagement of research assistants, associates, or undergraduate students for research and data collection, typically for up to two semesters.

### 11.3.5 Local Hospitality:

Local hospitality charges for hosting visitors at BITS Pilani.

### 11.3.6 Short-Term Courses and Training:

Fees for attending short-term courses or training programs for faculty members and their research scholars, including online courses and programs.

### 11.3.7 Travel Support:

Support for travel of registered BITS Pilani students to conferences in India or abroad for jointly authored papers with BITS Pilani affiliation. This also includes travel for workshops, seminars, symposia, and visits to other institutes for collaborative work. Support for travel of a colleague involved in academic collaboration may be covered, subject to supporting documents. Advances, if any, should be settled with appropriate documentation.

### 11.3.8 Experimental Work:

- Costs for animals used in experimental work and fabrication of experimental setups.
- Other consumable materials required for experimental studies.

### 11.3.9 Professional Development Programs:

Registration or examination fees for participation in professional development programs.

For more details, please refer to Revised Guidelines: Utilization of Overhead from the Sponsored R&D Projects.

Link: Overhead Distribution Policy