University Research Grant Awarding Scheme
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

The University Research Grant (URG) has been intended mainly to promote young and early-career researchers to start and develop their research careers at the University. The three objectives stated below are recognized in governing future allocation and distribution of funds under the URG.

1. To maximize number of grantees from a given allocation each year
2. To provide fair opportunities for early-career researchers while maintaining support for experienced researchers as well
3. To improve fairness in supporting variety of research and in disbursement of grants

Definition of URG Applicant Categories

To assure fairness in competition among all academics of the University, the two URG Applicant Categories are defined as shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Definition of URG Applicant Categories

URG Applicant Category	Criteria
Early-Career Researcher	A research grant applicant who: a. has completed PhD within last five years[1] OR b. has joined the University within the last eight (08) years **AND** has NOT completed PhD[2] OR c. has joined the University within the last five (05) years **AND** has joined University after completing the PhD[3] OR d. has never received URG as the principal investigator.
Experienced Researcher	A research grant applicant who is **NOT** categorized as an **Early Career Researcher** by above is categorized as an **Experienced Researcher**.

Considering any changes in trends of application volumes for the categories, the SRHDC shall amend criteria in Table 1 before calling applications annually in order to achieve the aforementioned second objective.

The new Research Grant Awarding Scheme was approved by the 179th meeting of the Senate held on 19.08.2020.

Total Grant Allocations for URG Applicant Categories

The total allocation of grant by the University for the particular year is first divided to be distributed among the two categories of applicants as given in *Table 2* below.

Table 2: Allocation for URG Applicant Category

URG Applicant Category	Allocation
Early-Career Researchers	$\frac{2}{3} \times Total\ Grant$
Experienced Researchers	$\frac{1}{3} \times Total\ Grant$

Considering any changes in trends of application volumes for the categories, the SRHDC shall adjust the allocation proportions in *Table 2* before calling applications annually in order to achieve the aforementioned second objective.

Evaluation of Proposals

The following procedure is used to evaluate and rank the proposals for awarding

1. Evaluation and awarding for the two candidate categories are carried out separately and independently.
2. Proposals are evaluated and assigned a *Merit Score* out of 100 by the URG Application Evaluation Committee based on disclosed scoring criteria. The minimum threshold *Merit Score* for eligibility to receive a grant is decided for each category separately by the URG Application Evaluation Committee for annually. Any proposal that scores a *Merit Score* less than the minimum threshold *Merit Score* is rejected and removed from further processing.
3. In order to maximize the number of grantees per year, an adjustment to the *Merit Score* is performed based on the budget of the proposal by defining the **Adjusted Merit Score** as:

$$Adjusted\ Merit\ Score = \frac{Merit\ Score}{Budget + 0.5 \times Average\ of\ Budgets}$$

   1. The proposals for each category are separately ranked according to the **Adjusted Merit Score** values to select grantees. Starting from the top rank, the grant amounts are allocated in order until the allocation amount for the category runs out. If there is a remainder of allocation in one category after the awarding procedure, then the remaining amount is transferred to the other category for awarding the rest of its eligible applicants.

Freedom for Budgeting and Disbursement

No particular budget line or budget amount restrictions are imposed due to the concerns below.

1. Nature of research among Faculties is not uniform and therefore it may not be fair to impose restrictions on budget line categories such as equipment, surveys, consumables, traveling.
2. Any budgeted equipment that would be depleted in value due to modifications, use,or total depreciation shall be strongly justified on the proposal itself. Then such items shall be quoted as consumable research items. In such cases, the URG Awarding Committee may choose to request an independent recommendation from a Technical Evaluation Committee before the grants is awarded.
3. Since the merit of research expenditure of each research proposal is evaluated by URG Application Evaluation Committee before awarding grants, no other restrictions should be imposed on spending the awarded grants.

A new University Research Grant Application supplemented with this document is used to call applications and to collect necessary information for proper evaluation of proposal under the new University Research Grant Awarding Scheme.

Footnotes

[1] The period is calculated from the closing date of research grant application to the effective date of the PhD degree certificate.

[2] The period is calculated from the closing date of research grant application to the date of assuming duties as permanent staff member.

[3] The period is calculated from the closing date of research grant application. If the Applicant has left the University and joined again, the earliest date of joining the University is considered.

[4] The figures for Budget and Average of Budgets are entered in million Sri Lankan rupees in to the formula. The Average of Budgets for each category is calculated by considering only the eligible grants for the category.