



The Workforce Development Applied Research Fund (WDARF) Grant Call Singapore – 2020

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

Revised March 2020

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Workforce Development Applied Research Fund (WDARF), a national-level research fund offered by the SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG), aims to foster high quality and rigorous applied research to support the SkillsFuture’s key thrusts and national-level policies on workforce development and lifelong learning. Offered on a competitive basis to eligible Singapore-based institutions, it encourages inter-disciplinary research and seeks to strengthen research capabilities, through leveraging both local and international expertise. To be considered for funding through the WDARF, researchers’ proposed projects must be in at least one of the three key research priorities articulated in the document, “Research Focus”.
- 1.2 The WDARF Grant is administered by the Institute for Adult Learning (IAL), an autonomous unit of the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), on behalf of SSG. All matters relating to the WDARF such as grant application, evaluation, contract, fund disbursement, submission of deliverables, will be managed directly by IAL. Research proposals submitted for the grant will be reviewed by a technical expert panel and approved by the SSG Research Committee.

2. Key Timeline of the Grant Call

Open Call for Proposals	1 April 2020
Closing Date for Proposal Submission	3 August 2020
Expert Review	August – November 2020
Selection and Approval	December 2020
Announcement of Call Results	January – February 2021

3. Application

- 3.1 Host Institutions (with the exception of the Autonomous Universities, Polytechnics and Institute of Technical Education (ITE) are to complete the 'Application for Eligibility for Workforce Development Applied Research Fund' (Form A1).
- 3.2 Application for each research proposal is to be submitted using the prescribed WDARF Application Form (Form A2). All applications have to be verified by the Host Institutions' Office of Research (ORE) (or equivalent) and endorsed by the Director, Office of Research (or equivalent) before it can be accepted for evaluation.
- 3.3 All applications shall be duly completed. Proposals will be rejected for incomplete submissions (e.g. missing documents, missing signatures, sections left blank and so on) and failure to adhere to templates provided (e.g. proposal template, timeline and so on).
- 3.4 Applicants shall identify stakeholders who could benefit from the findings of the research and seek their support and/or inputs on the relevance of the proposal and expected outcomes. This shall be included in Section 6c of Form A2.
- 3.5 Applicants shall ensure that all information provided in the proposal is complete, accurate and not misleading at the point of submission.
- 3.6 All applications have to be submitted through the Host Institutions' ORE (or equivalent) to IAL.
- 3.7 Host Institutions shall send all documents (in both word and pdf versions) to research@ial.edu.sg by 6pm (GMT+8) on 3 August 2020. The documents shall comprise of:
 - a. Application for Eligibility for Workforce Development Applied Research Fund (Form A1), (not required for the Autonomous Universities, Polytechnics and ITE);
 - b. All endorsed research proposal applications (Form A2); and

c. Summary listing of all research proposals (Form A6).

- 3.8 SSG reserves the right to reject late submissions of proposals.
- 3.9 Principal Investigators will be notified of the results of their applications through the Host Institutions' ORE. Appeals for unsuccessful applications will not be entertained.
- 3.10 Rejected applications may be invited to resubmit at the next grant call. Re-submitted proposals must provide point-by-point response to and address any concerns raised by the Expert Review Panel's comments and the Research Committee. Changes to the original proposal must be tracked for easy reference. Rejected proposals that are not invited for resubmission will not be reconsidered in the following grant calls and ORE should ensure that Principal Investigators do not submit the same proposal for consideration.

4. Eligibility

- 4.1 The research must be conducted in Singapore, and on Singapore, but comparative studies with other countries are acceptable. Research proposals can cut across the different research thrusts.
- 4.2 The WDARF Grant Call is open to Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) such as universities, polytechnics and educational institutions who have their campuses in Singapore.
- 4.3 Foreign institutions and researchers may partner a local Host Institution for the grant call. Foreign researchers may participate as Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator, Collaborator or Expert Researcher (an established authority in the relevant field of research).
- 4.4 SSG reserves the right to disqualify or reject any project team in the event of the withdrawal of any member from the project team.
- 4.5 The WDARF Grant allows for joint submissions from eligible institutions. However, the disbursement of the grant will be made only to the primary Host Institution.

- 4.6 The Principal Investigator may submit more than one (1) proposal, but funding a Principal Investigator for more than one (1) proposal at a time will only occur under exceptional circumstances.
- 4.7 Research proposals already funded by other funding bodies will not be considered under the WDARF Grant. Similar version of part(s) of the research proposal shall not be submitted to other agencies for funding prior to the outcome of the current grant call process.

Host Institutions

- 4.8 All Host Institutions have the following responsibilities:
- a. Support the grant application and review the application to ensure complete and quality submission;
 - b. Allow the project to be undertaken by the research team and on its premises;
 - c. Support the Principal Investigator's project in terms of providing other support outside of the WDARF, if necessary, to ensure its success. This could include the hosting of foreign researchers; and
 - d. Provide the resources and infrastructure to effectively carry out operational processes for the administration of any grants received, including the procurement of services, management of funds, asset inventories, collation of project reports, etc.
- 4.9 By endorsing the grant application(s), the Host Institution is confident that the proposed research team has the necessary competencies and track record to bring about the successful completion of the proposed project and its deliverables. The Host Institution is responsible for putting in place research collaboration agreements where and when applicable.
- 4.10 For each awarded research project, the Host institutions would be required to enter into a service agreement/contract with SSG for the duration of the research project.

Research Team

4.11 The Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator must fulfil the following requirements at the point of application:

- a. Hold a primary full-time appointment (defined as a minimum commitment of 9 months/year) or an affiliation with an institution (may be local or foreign);
- b. Hold an EdD or PhD qualification;
- c. Has at least five (5) years of research experience, and having assume the responsibility of a Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator for at least one (1) research project;
- d. Has managed project grants of the magnitude requested in the application; and
- e. Has a track record of leadership ability in leading research projects and providing mentorship to research team, as well as having productive research outcomes.

4.12 The research team can comprise international researchers but must include at least one Singaporean or Singapore Permanent Resident. The researchers or research partnerships would be expected to have a mix of skills including:

- a. A strong understanding and appreciation of Singapore and the broad policy context in the area of workforce development and lifelong learning, and its linkages to the SkillsFuture and workforce development practices and policies;
- b. Research and analytical expertise in one or more social, economic or behavioural science disciplines, and the use of multi-disciplinary approaches where appropriate.

5. Research Term

5.1 Project duration shall be up to 18 months, and adhere to the approved timeline committed in the proposal.

5.2 Projects longer than 18 months may be funded in phases and subject to approval.

5.3 For research programmes, funding period shall be up to three (3) years.

6. Funding Support

6.1 Research projects must be costed appropriately and reasonably according to the methodology proposed and overall size of the project. Applicant shall exercise due diligence to ensure that the budget is value for money. Upon in-principle approval of the research proposal, the WDARF Secretariat will embark on a budget assessment and phasing exercise before finalising the budget to be supported.

6.2 The fundable components are:

a. Research Manpower

a. Manpower expenses for personnel engaged for the research project, and can include personnel to conduct research, research management and research administration. Supported costs include the full remuneration package per Host Institution's Human Resource policy, and shall be pro-rated based on the personnel's direct involvement in the project.

b. Funding of research staff under the WDARF must comply with the prevailing and consistently applied Human Resource guidelines of the employing Host Institution.

c. The salary cost (or engagement fee, where applicable) of Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator, Collaborator and Expert Researcher are not funded if they are employed by the Host Institutions. However, if these resources are from foreign partner institutions and there are direct costs to the Host Institutions to engage and collaborate with them, the relevant costs could be funded. Funding for these resources must comply with the prevailing and consistently applied engagement policies of the Host Institute.

b. Other Operating Expenses

These are direct costs for the execution of the research project and could include:

- a. Survey administration and logistic costs (e.g. data collection related costs, printing of survey forms, incentives to garner responses); and
- b. Purchase of survey or administrative datasets.

Refer to Annex A on the list of fundable / non-fundable components.

- 6.3 All items claimed must comply with the Host Institution's internal procurement processes, guidelines and policies.
- 6.4 It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigators to ensure that all travel expenses are in line with the Institutions' consistently applied policy on travel, regardless of the source of funds. The Host Institution and Partner Institutions are to ensure that any travel undertaken is in relation to the approved proposal only and for no other purpose, and justify the need to travel, including why no other modes like conference call or online discussion is suitable.
- 6.5 Indirect costs in research are those costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular sponsored project, but contribute to the ability of the Host Institution to support research projects, such as providing research space and administering the activities. WDARF will support indirect research costs (IRC) at a flat rate of **20%** of the total qualifying direct costs of each approved project. **Principal Investigator will need to budget for the IRC within the overall project cost if this is required.** SSG reserves the right to adjust this rate. The Grantor does not directly manage the indirect cost funding. Principal Investigators should refer to their Host Institutions for their policy of managing indirect cost funding
- 6.6 Only items specified and approved in the Grant Agreement will be funded.

7. Evaluation Criteria

- 7.1 Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Area	Sub Area	Criteria
Relevance and Impact	Alignment to Research Thrusts	Research questions to be answered are within the scope of WDARF research focus
	Contribution of Research	Has potential to inform policy formulation, better current practices or develop best practices; and make a contribution to the area of workforce development and lifelong learning
Technical Merits	Clarity of Research Topic and Relevant to Research Outcome	Research problem is clearly stated, and research questions are relevant to the problem defined
	Relationship between Conceptual/theoretical Framework and Problem of Study	There is a logical relationship between the problem and the conceptual/theoretical framework (supported by adequate review of current literature)
	Clarity and Adequacy of Research Method(s)	Methodological approach is appropriate to address the research questions/objectives and is clear and adequate in terms of design, and analytical framework
Project Team and Execution	Manpower and Quality of Research Team	Resource is adequate to meet the timeline and researchers have the relevant expertise and experience
	Timeline	Reasonable and achievable, with the findings timely produced
	Budget	Budget is itemized with realistic estimates and is value for money

7.2 The proposals will be evaluated by an expert panel appointed by SSG. The panel may be informed and supplemented by expert reviews in the relevant specific fields, if it deems that more inputs are needed to aid its evaluation.

7.3 The proposals and inputs from the expert panel will be submitted to SSG Research Committee for consideration and approval.

7.4 Principal Investigators will be notified of the results through their Office of Research (or equivalent). The SSG Research Committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted without being obliged to give any reason thereof. Appeals will not be entertained.

8. Intellectual Property Management

- 8.1 The ownership of the Intellectual Property (IP) created as a result of the research funded by WDARF is subject to the prevailing Intellectual Property policies and guidelines of the Host Institution.
- 8.2 The Host Institution shall pay all costs and legal fees in connection with IP registration and management, where applicable.
- 8.3 The Host Institution undertakes to grant to the Singapore Government and public sector agencies, free of any additional charge, a worldwide, perpetual, irrevocable and non-exclusive licence to use, modify, adapt, publish and reproduce for any purpose whatsoever all IP created from the WDARF for non-commercial, R&D and/or educational purposes.
- 8.4 The Singapore Government and public sector agencies shall be entitled to grant its contractors sublicenses out of any of its rights.
- 8.5 The Host Institution may publish at any symposia; national, regional, international professional meetings; or in any journals, dissertation, newspaper or otherwise. All publications shall acknowledge the funding support by SSG by citing the Grant name 'Workforce Development Applied Research Fund' and SSG's official name; grant number for the project. It is the Principal Investigator's and Host Institution's responsibility to ensure that the protection of any IP is not compromised as a result of the publication of the research project.
- 8.6 Except for articles or papers published in scientific, technical or professional journals, the following disclaimer must be included in all publications arising from the funded research: 'Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SkillsFuture Singapore or the Singapore Government.'
- 8.7 The Host Institution shall ensure that the project, its outputs and all peer-reviewed publications arising from the Research is made publicly available no later than twelve (12) months after the official date of publication. A copy of the

publication shall be deposited in the Host Institution's open access repository (or any other institutional/subject open access repository), in accordance to the Host Institution's open access policy.

- 8.8 All publications and any other outputs arising from this grant shall be made known to SSG and a copy to be made available to SSG upon request.
- 8.9 Information on policy or industry advisory/consultancy, disclosures of new IP, patents and publications arising from the funded research should be provided to SSG as part of the regular annual and final progress reports submitted.

9. Data Sharing Policy

- 9.1 Subject to restrictions related to research ethics and confidentiality and intellectual property, all anonymised data generated from research funded by WDARF will be made available to user communities (such as other researchers, analysts, policy makers) at the earliest feasible opportunity, which shall be no later than 12 months after the completion of the project or official date of publication or in line with established best practices in the respective fields, whichever is earlier.
- 9.2 Applicant shall outline a plan to manage research data to meet the following:
 - a. Submit final datasets, anonymised data, to SSG. SSG may:
 - i. Use the data for analysis and published derived statistics;
 - ii. Use data for research purpose;
 - iii. Share data with its research collaborators or parties commissioned by SSG; and
 - iv. Acknowledge the data source if data is used.
 - b. Manage requests from user communities for data.

10. Research Ethics Policy

- 10.1 The Host Institution is responsible for establishing a research ethics policy and enforcing its compliance. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigators,

their Ethics Review Committee (or Institutional Review Board), and the Host Institutions to protect the rights of study subjects and the confidentiality of data, and comply with applicable legislations such as the Personal Data Protection Act.

- 10.2 There shall be an informed consent process. It shall include, where appropriate, information sheet on the research project, and consent form to seek permission on sharing of data for wider or future research use to maximise the value of the data, while providing adequate safeguards for the individual, and allowing participants to withdraw from the research at any point should they wish.
- 10.3 A copy of the ethics approval is to be lodged with SSG **before** commencement of data collection. Disbursement of the grant shall be subject, but not limited to, the securing of the relevant ethics approvals. Breach of ethics by the institution or research personnel may result in the termination of the project and the return of previously disbursed funds.
- 10.4 If there is no ethics review committee set up at the Host Institution, the Principal Investigator can submit the ethics application to IAL's Ethics Committee for ethics clearance.
- 10.5 The period to obtain ethics clearance should be incorporated into the project timeline.

11. Disbursement of Funds

- 11.1 Only items specified and approved in the Grant Agreement will be funded by WDARF.
- 11.2 WDARF Grant is provided on a reimbursement basis. Host institution shall pay for the incurred expenditure for the project first, and subsequently claim for reimbursement from SSG.
- 11.3 Host Institutions shall use WDARF's prescribed reimbursement requisition form (Form A3) to claim for reimbursement. The claims submitted by the Host Institution must be supported by originals or certified true copies of receipts, payment vouchers or invoices by the Chief Finance Officer /Director of the Host Institution.

- 11.4 The Host Institution shall submit requisitions for direct and/or indirect costs that have been incurred and for which funding is permitted, to SSG for approval as follows:
- a. for costs incurred during the months of January, February, March, April, May and June: on the last working day of July; and
 - b. for costs incurred during the months of July, August, September, October, November and December: on the last working day of January.
- 11.5 For manpower-related fund requisitions, updates of all staff employed under the project must be provided, including those whose employment has ended.
- 11.6 As and when directed by SSG, the Host Institution will allow an auditor appointed by SSG to carry out an audit of its financial and related processes/procedures pertaining to the utilisation of the grant.

12. Performance Management

12.1 Progress report

- a. Principal Investigators are to submit soft copies of the half-yearly progress reports (Form A4) for each project via their respective Office of Research (or equivalent) per the schedule stated in the contract. The progress report shall also include obstacles encountered in the implementation of the project, potential issues and delays, as well as any changes to the personnel, projected cash flow and project schedule.
- b. These reports may be reviewed by an appointed panel to assess the progress of the project, and the Principal Investigators may be invited to make a presentation of their research progress/findings to SSG's appointed panel. Principal Investigators may be required to give additional information about the progress of their project if the information submitted is deemed inadequate.
- c. Principal Investigators who fail to submit their progress report may be denied any grant disbursement until such progress report is submitted.

- d. A template of the progress report will be provided after the award of the research proposals.
- e. The final progress report shall be submitted no later than one (1) month from the end of the project term.

12.2 Final report

- a. Principal Investigator is to submit soft copies of the final report within one (1) month from the project completion date (the writing of the final report shall be within the approved project timeline). The final report should minimally consist of a contents page, executive summary, introduction of the research intent and outcomes, methodology, sample characteristics, learnings and findings, and implications/recommendations.
- b. Principal Investigator may be invited to make a presentation on the completed project to SSG/SSG appointed panel to share the findings and potential impact/applications of the research.

12.3 Yearly Audit Report

- a. Principal Investigator may be asked to submit a Yearly Audit Report of the proceeding financial year.
- b. The Yearly Audit Report must be prepared by the Host Institution's internal or external auditors, and certified by the Director of Research or equivalent.
- c. The Yearly Audit Report shall confirm that the Host Institution's requisitions are made in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of a Competitive Grant, and Guidelines.

12.4 Assessment of research impact

- a. Principal Investigator is to provide an assessment of the research impact (as outlined in section 6b of the WDARF application form) 12 months after closure of the project and a comprehensive bibliography of all publications arising from the project.

- 12.5 Principal Investigators who fail to submit any of the above may not be eligible for future WDARF grant applications, unless supported with a valid approval from SSG or has submitted all required reports at the point of application.

13. Grant Variation

- 13.1 Principal Investigators should submit all grant variations through the Host Institution’s ORE, using the appropriate forms:

S/N	Type of Variation	Form
1	Amendments to Project	Form A5
2	Fund Virements	

- 13.2 Principal Investigators should refer to “Guidance for Processing Variation Requests” (Annex B) in their preparation of the variation requests to ensure that all supporting documents have been duly completed.
- 13.3 OREs should evaluate the Principal Investigators’ requests and make decisions on all requests that fall within the Host Institution’s approving authority. For requests that require SSG’s approval, OREs should first evaluate the requests based on the considerations, norms and checks listed in Annex B and make recommendations for SSG’s consideration.
- 13.4 For all variation requests, SSG’s decision is final and appeals will not be entertained. **Retrospective variation requests are not allowed.**
- 13.5 SSG reserves the right to reject any claims that have resulted from the project changes without prior approval from SSG (in specific circumstances as stated in Annex B).
- 13.6 Request for any variation should be made before the last three (3) months of the original end date of the project. Retrospective variation requests will not be allowed, unless there is compelling justification for submission of a late virement request.

14. Closure of Project Accounts

- 14.1 All projects are expected to be completed within the stipulated term as per the Grant Agreement.
- 14.2 Host Institutions and Principal Investigators are to close the research project account **within six (6) months** from the date of project completion. SSG will not reimburse any expenditure incurred after the project completion date. Claims for allowable expenses should be prorated based on the relevant project periods only, and be submitted within six (6) months following project completion. Upon payment of such expenses, Host Institutions and Principal Investigators are to close the research project account immediately.
- 14.3 Host Institution shall close the account for the WDARF Grant projects individually and return any unspent funds to SSG, if any, upon completion of the projects as and when it occurs.
- 14.4 Host Institution must ensure that Principal Investigators are not to issue any new purchase orders after the project completion date, including retrospective orders.

Final Statement of Account

- 14.5 The Host Institution is required to submit a Final Statement of Account **within six (6) months** following the end of the project.

15. Compliance of Administrative Guidelines

- 15.1 In the event of non-compliance of this administrative guidelines, SSG reserves the right to:
- a. withhold or withdraw the funding;
 - b. disqualify the Principal Investigators from subsequent WDARF competitive funding; and/or
 - c. take any action SSG deems appropriate.

16. Financial Regulations on Expenditure and Payment

- 16.1 Host Institutions and Principal Investigators should not commit to any expenditure before receiving the funding approval by SSG.
- 16.2 Similarly, Host Institutions and Principal Investigators should not commit to any expenditure after the project end date, inclusive of any approved extension period.
- 16.3 Host Institutions and Principal Investigators are to follow Host Institutions' procurement procedures and guidelines to ensure that all purchases made using WDARF Grants provide value for money and processes are transparent.
- 16.4 Host Institutions are required to ensure that there are adequate internal financial controls and processes as well as adequate cost control measures to ensure that resources are utilised prudently and cost inefficiencies are minimised.
- 16.5 As and when directed by SSG, Host Institutions will allow an auditor appointed by SSG to carry out an audit of its financial and related processes/procedures pertaining to the utilisation of WDARF Grants.

17. Miscellaneous

- 17.1 SSG reserves the right to revise the administrative guidelines. The Host Institutions will be informed accordingly.

Annex A - List of fundable / non-fundable components

Type of Expenses	Supportable?	Description
Research Manpower		
Principal Investigator (PI), Co-Principal Investigator and Collaborators	<p><u>Not supportable</u> if they are already employed by the Host Institution.</p> <p><u>Supportable</u> if they are from partner institutions, and there are direct costs (e.g. withholding tax) to the Host Institution to engage/collaborate with them.</p> <p>The funding for these resources needs to be specifically justified and provided for in the grant application, and approved by SSG.</p>	N.A.
Salary cost of research assistants, research associates of supporting research and admin staff, specifically needed for the approved project(s).	Yes, but only if deemed necessary to the project, specifically justified and provided for in the grant application, and approved by SSG.	<p>Includes salaries, CPF contributions, skills development levy and fringe benefits including medical, dental, contribution to welfare fund, bonuses, annual leave, staff insurance, etc.</p> <p>Allowed as part of overall compensation to employees provided such costs are incurred under formal established and consistently applied policies of the host institution.</p> <p>The salaries offered to staff shall be reasonable, in line with local market benchmarks and comply with formal established pay scale</p>

Type of Expenses	Supportable?	Description
		<p>of the host institution that is consistently applied regardless of the source of funds.</p> <p>It excludes pre-employment medical check-up, application of employment pass, visa as well as any levy (e.g. foreign workers levy) imposed by the government</p>
Overtime	No	N.A.
Staff relocation cost	No	N.A.
Staff recruitment and related cost	No	Examples of such costs are advertisement and recruitment agency cost.
Student Assistants	Yes	Only full-time students who are residents of Singapore and are enrolled in local institutes of higher learning qualify to be supported as a student assistant. They should be paid on the basis and rates that comply with the relevant Host Institutions' remuneration policy.
Experts honorarium	Yes, but only if deemed necessary to the project, specifically justified and provided for in the grant application and approved by SSG.	Only if specifically provided for in the grant proposal and approved by SSG. The Expert must be identified and indicated his/her agreement to contribute to the project in the areas that must be clearly defined and described in the proposal. The remuneration rates given to the Experts must comply with the Host Institution's standard rates. The budget to be supported will be decided based on the above considerations.
Other Operating Expenses		
Airfare, accommodation, subsistence and local travel expenses	Yes, but should be judicious and only if deemed necessary to the project, specifically	Provided such costs are established as necessary to the project, incurred under formal established and consistently applied policies of the Host

Type of Expenses	Supportable?	Description
	<p>justified and provided for in the grant application and approved by SSG.</p> <p>Include justification of the need to travel, including why no other modes like conference call or online discussion is suitable</p>	<p>Institution, including class of air travel and accommodation, payment for subsistence, airport and local transfers, as well as the applicable cost of visa and employment pass. It could include Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator, collaborators and Experts coming to Singapore to deliver on their agreed roles or Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator travelling overseas for approved purposes</p>
Audit fees	No	This includes both internal and external audit fees.
Books and specialised journals relevant to the research	No	N.A.
Local and overseas conferences	No	N.A.
Development tools	No, unless deemed necessary and pro-rated to the project, specifically justified and provided for in the grant application and approved by SSG.	This includes expenses (services and/or equipment) to conduct experiments or develop tools as required within the scope of the research project. For example video production, printing of research collaterals and so on.
Entertainment & refreshment	No	N.A.
Fines and penalties	No	N.A.
Goods and Services Tax (GST)	Yes	Allowed for approved expenses incurred for the project.
Insurance premiums	No	The Host Institution is responsible for the insurance of the equipment, relevant workmen compensation and professional indemnity insurance which are in

Type of Expenses	Supportable?	Description
		line with the Host Institution's risk policies.
Legal fees	No	N.A.
Overhead expenses - rental, utilities, telephone charges, facilities management, etc.	No	N.A.
Patent application, IP related and commercialisation expenses	No	This includes patent application filing, maintenance and other related cost. Such cost shall be paid by the Host Institution.
Professional Membership Fee	No	N.A.
Professional Fees (including fees to consultants)	No, unless deemed necessary and pro-rated to the project, specifically justified and provided for in the grant application and approved by SSG.	The proposal must show how the required professional service contribute to the research and why the work cannot be performed by the research team. To include credential of the service provider(s) and fee breakdown.
Staff retreat	No	N.A.
Survey related expenses	Yes	<p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost related to survey administration (e.g. printing of questionnaires) and logistics • Purchase of survey or administration database • Incentives to garner responses (in accordance to Host Institutions policy and practices) • Refreshments for focused group sessions.
Training	No	N.A.

Type of Expenses	Supportable?	Description
Transportation, postage & courier services	Yes	Only for expenses directly related to the project. This includes postage, courier and freight charges for bringing in equipment and specialised research consumables and reimbursement for local staff transportation.
Working tools such as IT equipment and software	No, unless deemed necessary and pro-rated to the project, specifically justified and provided for in the grant application and approved by SSG.	<p>Justification for such necessary expenses and already approved in the agreement. Equipment shall be on rental or subscription basis, unless it can be justified that it is more cost effective to purchase the item(s).</p> <p>Purchase of IT equipment must be in accordance with the IT policy of the Host Institution regardless of source of funds.</p>

Annex B - Guidance for Processing Variation Requests

S/N	Type of Request	Key Considerations	Norms	Supporting Documents Required	Types of checks by ORE	Approval Authority
1	Amendment to Project (General)					
General considerations		Stage of project	There should not be any amendments three (3) months from the end of project.	Form A5 (Project variation form)	Form A5 is duly completed and endorsed. All supporting documents attached.	All amendments must be approved by SSG. (See exceptions at 1b, 1c).
				Latest statement of accounts	Fund availability	
	Need for amendments	Amendments should support the original objectives of the project only, not for support of “follow-on” research, changes to scope or research questions.	N.A.	The PI has no outstanding half-yearly/final progress reports and final research reports for any SSG grants. PIs with overdue reports are not allowed to submit variation requests.		
	Amendment to Project (Specific Requirement)					
1a)	Change of PI/Co-PI	Suitability of proposed PI/Co-PI	Ability of the new PI/Co-PI to contribute and achieve the intended objectives of the project.	Form A5 Information on incoming and outgoing PI/Co-PI: last day of work in	Application should reach SSG three (3) months' in advance before PI/Co-PI leaves (for contract expiry/termination	Request for a change in the PI/Co-PI must be made to SSG and be endorsed by the ORE of the existing and new Host Institutions. The

S/N	Type of Request	Key Considerations	Norms	Supporting Documents Required	Types of checks by ORE	Approval Authority
				Institution, name of Institution he will be joining, etc.	cases) and as soon as practicable for resignation cases. ORE should consider working closely with HR and schools to ensure timeliness especially in submitting change of PI request.	new PI/Co-PI must be a recognised expert in that area and possess the necessary expertise to continue with the research work.
		Cost implications	Must be within the approved Research Manpower budget.	CV, Letter of recommendation and credentials of incoming PI/Co-PI	ORE needs to determine whether the proposed PI /Co-PI is eligible based on WDARF Grant eligibility criteria and whether he/she is suitable and has the skills to continue and complete the research work. If in doubt, ORE could request for Letter of recommendation from current employer of proposed PI/Co-PI.	
		SSG reserves the right to terminate the grant if:		Only applicable to Change of PI: Mitigation Plan while waiting for new PI/Co-PI to come in:	ORE needs to assess the feasibility of the mitigation plan	

S/N	Type of Request	Key Considerations	Norms	Supporting Documents Required	Types of checks by ORE	Approval Authority
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No suitable replacement is found; • Proposed PI is rejected; or • New PI cannot achieve the necessary outcomes. • Impact on research outcomes and timeline 		<p>Research Office and new PI should jointly develop a mitigation plan to sustain/resuscitate the project, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reassessing project milestones/KPIs • taking steps to ensure students' graduation is not disrupted • identifying and committing to put in all necessary resources and time where relevant <p>The plan should be signed off by both the dean of department and the current/new PI/Co-PI.</p>		
1b)		Impact on research	The need for the collaborators/experts	Form A5 or equivalent	ORE has to ensure timeliness in submitting	Request involving the removal, replacement or

S/N	Type of Request	Key Considerations	Norms	Supporting Documents Required	Types of checks by ORE	Approval Authority
	Change of Collaborators/ Experts (Removal/ Replacement/ Addition)	<p>outcomes and timeline</p> <p>Relevance and contribution to project outcome</p>	<p>must be driven by the project need and justified accordingly</p>	documentation required by ORE	<p>requests to Director of Research (DOR) for changes in collaborators/experts, such as removal or addition of collaborators/experts.</p> <p>ORE needs to assess the suitability of the collaborators/experts to the proposed role and contribution to the project.</p>	<p>addition of collaborators/experts within the approved budget for collaborators/experts shall be approved by DOR (or above).</p> <p>Written assessment supporting the request for change, including the assessment of impact to the project and justification for the appointment, should be provided to SSG at least 2 weeks before the change is affected.</p> <p>For requests that exceeds the approved budget for fees paid to Collaborators/Experts (i.e. Experts Honorarium), SSG's approval will be sought on fund virement (refer to item 2b). No request to increased budget is allowed.</p>
		<p>Cost implications</p>	<p>Aligned to university's norms and based on the responsibility and deliverables and within the approved budget for collaborator/experts</p>		<p>ORE to assess the reasonableness of the requests, e.g. the job scope is commensurate with the duration, and assess if consultation, if required, can be done via email/ video conferencing.</p>	

S/N	Type of Request	Key Considerations	Norms	Supporting Documents Required	Types of checks by ORE	Approval Authority
1c)	Project Extension	Impact on deliverables and usefulness of final research outcome in view of the delay	To ensure currency of research, extension will be capped at 6 months	Form A5 Evidence of satisfactory progress (e.g. copies of publication arising from the research, abstracts of conferences attended etc.) Justification for the delay(s) encountered and why the mitigating measures taken did not achieve their intended objectives Revised Project Implementation Schedule (Gantt Chart)	ORE needs to assess if it is realistic for the project to achieve closure with the requested extension. Request for extension will not be supported merely due to manpower constraints. Request for grant extension must reach SSG at least six (6) months before end date of project. The PI must ensure sufficient funds in each vote to support the extension request. Any virement requests necessary to meet the extension period must be made known as part of the extension request.	SSG may consider a one-time extension of up to six (6) months with no-cost involvement if the PI is able to demonstrate ability to deliver on the other remaining milestones and furnish strong justifications for the extension. An extension beyond six (6) months may be considered on a case by case basis. No additional funds would be given for any extensions.
		Cost implications	Must be within the approved budget.			
1d)	Change of scope	Change of scope is not allowed as this will amount to a new research project which would have to be separately evaluated by the expert review panel and		N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

S/N	Type of Request	Key Considerations	Norms	Supporting Documents Required	Types of checks by ORE	Approval Authority
		approval is required by the research committee on its own merits.				
1e)	Change of research design and research methodology	That it increases the usefulness of the final research outcomes but that does not affect the approved scope and research questions.	Must be within the approved budget.	Form A5 Details and rationale of the change(s) and how it increases the usefulness of final research outcomes should be included.	Review and support the request. Form A5 is duly completed and endorsed. All supporting documents attached.	Request for a change in research design and research methodology must be made to SSG for approval and be endorsed by the ORE.
1f)	Termination/ Lapse of Project	Alternative options to termination	Other options should be explored to ensure that the best outcome is achieved with the investment already made. Justification why these options are not feasible and termination is the only option.	Form A5 Department report: Department should prepare a report that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of what went wrong for the project • What are the alternatives to terminations and why they are not applicable in this case • Preventive measures to 	ORE to assess the adequacy of the winding-down plan and the Department report.	SSG (Per the termination clause in the grant agreement)
		Automatic Termination	If the original PI has become unavailable (e.g. resignation, passing), Host Institution should propose a replacement PI. If			

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			the replacement PI is not acceptable to SSG, the project is automatically terminated.	avoid future occurrence. The report should be signed off by both the dean of department and the DOR.		
		Orderly conclusion of project	Project accounts should be frozen immediately once termination proceedings are initiated. A separate winding-down budget should be drawn up for SSG's consideration. This covers expenses necessary to effect an orderly conclusion, for a period not exceeding three (3) months from the date of termination.			
2	Fund Virement (General)					

S/N	Type of Request	Key Considerations	Norms	Supporting Documents Required	Types of checks by ORE	Approval Authority
	General considerations	The critical role of the proposed items to project outcomes and the reason they were not budgeted in original proposal	Fund virement is to support the project only, not for support of “follow-on” research.	Form A5	Form A5 is duly completed and endorsed. All supporting documents are attached. Check is done on whether requested item was in the approved budget and whether requested item is within WDARF Grant fundable list, as well as value for money considerations.	<u>Fund virement</u> SSG delegates the approval authority for the virement of funds between approved votes to the Host Institution, subject to a cumulative amount not exceeding 10% of the original total project direct cost value (excluding IRC). SSG is to be notified of any virement made in the progress report.
		Cost-savings principle	It is possible for PI to use cost-savings within approved project cost to purchase essential new items not previously budgeted. However, purchase must be based on needs; availability of savings is not a reason for new purchase.	Latest statement of accounts	Fund availability	For virement cumulatively above 10%, the approval authority remains as SSG.
				Relevant quotations	Justification of need for the purchase. Reasonableness of quotes by cross-referencing similar purchase or independent checks and comply with the prevailing procurement	Inter-institutional virement require SSG's approval and acknowledgement from the DOR (or equivalent) for all institutions involved.

S/N	Type of Request	Key Considerations	Norms	Supporting Documents Required	Types of checks by ORE	Approval Authority
					rules of the Host Institution. Whether proposed purchase items are already available in Host Institution, or can be more cost-effectively leased.	
		Stage of project	Compelling justifications to be provided for virement requests if project is ending in a year or less. Virement would not be approved if project is ending in three (3) months or less, unless in exceptional cases.	N.A.	The PI has no outstanding half-yearly/final progress reports and final research reports for any SSG grants. (PIs with overdue reports are not allowed to submit variation requests.) Justification for virement.	
Fund Virement (Specific Requirement)						
2a	Overseas travel	Only for PIs, Co-PIs and Experts	Follows the travel policies and guidelines of Host Institution	Form A5	ORE has to ensure the institution's travel policies and guidelines are adhered to in PI's amendments to the travel budget during Budget Phasing.	Virement of funds into the Overseas Travel sub-vote is not allowed. Overspending will not be reimbursed.

S/N	Type of Request	Key Considerations	Norms	Supporting Documents Required	Types of checks by ORE	Approval Authority
					Justification for need to travel and why no other modes like conference call is suitable.	
2b	Collaborator and Expert (Beyond the approved budget for engagement of collaborator(s) and Expert(s))	Relevance and contribution to project outcomes	<p>The need for a Collaborator/Expert must be driven by project needs (e.g. not because Host Institution requires Collaborator/Expert to give public lecture or other activities.)</p> <p>Why the need was not identified at stage of proposal submission or before entering the agreement.</p>	<p>Form A5</p> <p>Curriculum Vitae of prospective candidate</p>	<p>ORE needs to assess the role, credentials and expertise of the Collaborator/Experts. If in doubt, to request an independent assessment from the dean of department.</p> <p>Justification for need to travel and why no other modes like conference call is suitable.</p>	Approval by SSG
		Track record	N.A.	Form A5	ORE needs to assess reasonableness of request, e.g. the job scope is commensurate with the duration requested. Particularly, ORE needs to assess if the consultation can be	
		Duration of stay	The job scope and deliverables of Collaborator/Expert must be clear for assessment of the duration required of his/her service	Job scope/deliverables of Expert		

S/N	Type of Request	Key Considerations	Norms	Supporting Documents Required	Types of checks by ORE	Approval Authority
		Fees/Honorarium	Fees/Honorarium for Collaborator/Expert must be aligned with Host Institution's applied policies and guidelines		done via email/tele-video conferencing, rather than through appointment of Expert.	