

Guidelines for Proposal Writing

Research Center and Invention and Innovation Center (RC-II),
Gandaki University (GU), Pokhara, Kaski

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Gandaki University—established in 2019 by Gandaki Province, hereafter called GU, is the first provincial university in Nepal. It has mission to provide world class higher education and to produce highly skilled graduates in key disciplines, with a major focus on meeting the demand of 21st century in keeping with the most recent international trends in university education involving research-based teaching. To meet with this mission, faculty members need to carry out relevant research as a part of their job so as to provide benefits to students. So, relevant research proposals from faculties are expected to link teaching with generation of science continuously and solve burning problems/issues through action and problem-solving research.

Being an institution of learning at higher level, GU has developed Research Center and Invention and Innovation Center (hereafter called RC-II) as a core unit to engage itself and GU's faculties in generating scientific knowledge through basic as well as advance research and cater science and community from a new perspective.

In most of the cases, university funded research grants are seed money to the faculty (i.e., mini-research grants) to inspire and continue their research works. However, receiving mini-research grants will not restrict its faculty members in seeking larger individual research grants and/or long term, national, and international collaborative research grants. Indeed, it is expected that, GU granted small research grants can help researchers/faculty members to establish larger research projects by generating research agendas and by publishing research facts to the national and international arena.

Points to be considered:

1. The Fund is comprised of money received from the Gandaki Province Government as part of the regular budget of the Gandaki University. Seeking other sources of fund is a continued attempt of the GU.
2. Awards are in the form of small grants to the projects submitted by its faculty members selected through a peer reviewed processes based on certain limit of total fund that are subjected to change for each call for each fiscal year. The applications for competitive grants should confirm to the agreed formats, criteria and priorities based on theme and focus areas for each call.
3. GU provides small grants to basic and problem solving, strategic, and short-term action research in the field of theme listed above. The research works should comply with the vision and mission of GU and falls within the broader national interest as defined and suggested by the criteria set forth for this purpose.
4. The Vice- Chancellor of the University provides periodic suggestions to improve guidelines and help establishing appropriate research environment to generate standard research outputs.
5. Director of RC-II will work shall be responsible to carry out daily works including management of financial and technical part of the research projects through its separate office system.

6. RC-II will help to disseminate developed systematic body of knowledge by GU's faculties and staffs in the diverse field of interest through workshops, conferences, and publications.

Overall, RC-II provides space for all faculties and staffs of GU who are keen to research in diverse research fields and contribute to science and society.

Peer reviewing

1. All proposals submitted for seeking GU research grants are subjected to the peer review process. The panels of peer reviewers identified based on the standard norms and criteria will provide recommendation to whether the given proposal will have to be accepted or rejected. Based on the review of the proposal manuscript, reviewers have to provide the principal investigator all necessary reasons (i.e., review comments) of the recommendation to either cases of acceptance or rejection.
2. The reviewers will be identified based on qualification of having minimum of PhD degree, or, Master's degree and having at least proven record of publication of more than five paper as first author in the peer reviewed journals in the relevant field. Priority to select as peer reviewer will be given to those working at GU, other universities, or related organizations in Nepal.
3. The full proposals are sent to the reviewers on the condition of anonymity. If reviewer identifies the proponent or the proponent approaches (i.e., non-investigator supporting to write proposal), he/she should return the proposal to the RC-II without going through a peer review process.
4. Reviewers are required to submit an evaluation report based on provided pro-forma that will be retained as confidential whereas only required part will be informed to the applicant.
5. A peer reviewer will be paid an honorarium for each proposal reviewed completely and timely.

Reporting

RC-II requires submitting a six-monthly technical report of all projects supported by GU. Logical Frameworks will be the bases of evaluating the reports (if it is relevant) and to go for further action-budget release and completion of the proposed activities. Similarly, all grant recipients need to submit final technical report to check whether the proposed activities are conducted and the expected outputs are achieved. The sum of unused money shall be automatically retained at the university account.

Chapter 2: Thematic areas

RC-II has wide scope of research ranging biochemical, molecular to ecosystem characterization and their utility for the sake of socio-economic development of Nepal. It

covers all burning issues in different areas. For the convenience, the research themes have been organized into the following groups:

1. Pharmacy and allied subjects
2. Sport Science and Sports Management
3. Information Technology and allied subjects
4. Fundamental Sciences and Social Sciences

Aforementioned theme should be compatible with key drivers and enablers of prosperity set up by Gandaki Provincial Policy and Planning Commission of Gandaki Province Government (www.ppc.gandaki.gov.np; <http://ppc.gandaki.gov.np/programdetail/1/2020/16299952>).

The submitted proposals should have:

1. Increased inclusion of issues to ascertain research output contributing in teaching, policy development, and national economy directly or indirectly.
2. Increased documentation of local practices, which are potential to be promoted as small and large industry/entrepreneur.
3. Multidisciplinary research and associated team with students' involvement.

Chapter 3: Guidelines for the concept proposal

Medium term: 6–12 months

(a) Cover page and its format

The computer-typed application (i.e., cover page) should include:

Thematic areas (as mentioned in guidelines):

Title of the proposed research project	Write a title which concisely and accurately address the scope of the work and an abbreviated version of the project title
Principal Investigator	The person with overall responsibility for the application to the research project and the implementation of the project
Executive summary/Abstract	Executive Summary/Abstract (250 words) The Executive Summary should provide a brief overview of the rationale for proposed research project and its objectives, methods to be used, expected outcomes briefly, why results are relevant to RC's research thematic areas and how the results will be reported and applied while scaling up of the findings.

Project Location	If there is more than one location, all locations should be displayed herein and the plan of work should indicate where research activities would be undertaken.
Start and Completion Dates (DD.MM.YYYY)	Starting and Completion Dates The duration of the project should be appropriate to achieve the expected outputs. The fund will not support proposals requiring funding for more than 12 months. Accordingly, dates should be carefully defined.
Mailing Address	Contact details for the Principal Investigator
Telephone	
e-mail	
Collaboration/Partners (if any)	Collaborating organizations /person, and or partners: Please, mention detailed contact address including name and address of the faculty member, name of the Faculty/Department).

(b) Format of main body of the proposal

A. Title of the study:

Any efficient research proposal needs to define working title (i.e., study topic) through rigorous review of a problem.

B. Introduction (500 words)

Introduction section should reflect and following items as concisely and precisely as possible:

1. The nature of the problem
2. Why is this problem important?
3. What has been done before in the area of research interest and knowledge gap should be illustrated.
4. How the proposed research will contribute to find a solution to the stated problem (i.e., practical benefits) should be highlighted.
5. It should reflect potentiality of providing a rewarding investigation/output.
6. Overall, it should highlight the suitability and vision of the research project.

Note: It is also required to review the relevant literature and their citation and referencing appropriately.

B.a. Literature review (600 words)

Describe any relevant work, which has either been done or is currently being done elsewhere in the relevant context. Briefly explain how this project will relate to the proposed work. Provide a brief literature review to relate this project to other relevant research activities. The main objective of this review is to provide the scientific facets to the proposed project. It is

important to establish that previous knowledge has been inadequately addressed and knowledge gap exists.

B.b. Description of the hypothesis

Introduction should lead into research hypothesis or the objectives of the proposed research (if hypothesis is not required). Hypotheses may be stated in a way that will let investigators know whether they have proved/disproved the hypothesis.

B.c. Objectives

Objectives are the actions that investigators intend achieving the stated goal(s). While structuring objectives, investigators shall address following key points:

1. Each objective should state a specific action, not an allusion to some loosely defined goal.
2. Each objective should be achievable. The outcome(s) of each objective should be measurable.
3. Overall, objectives shall ensure expected outcomes, thus giving the funder a yardstick with which peer-reviewers assess achievement from the proposed study.

B.d. Justification/rational (300 words)

Write a paragraph logically explaining why this research is essential. Justification should cover briefly about existing knowledge on to the proposed research areas and knowledge gap that proposed work shall help in fulfilling the gap. Rational should be written based on technical as well as budgetary justification by defending the need of such research project.

C. Materials and Methods (500 words)

This section should be in details so that other investigators can follow up/repeat the study and understand what is intended to do.

- i. In addition to the duration of the study, list of materials and resources needed, and justification of study site selection, investigators should define the study design (qualitative, quantitative, or both), type of research (experimental, cross-sectional, longitudinal, survey, etc.), sampling techniques, and data collection methods. It is better to explain briefly about rationale for the use of a particular method/s or design/s.
- ii. Appropriate explanation of method of data analyses after accomplishing data collection.
- iii. Check whether the study design/ method is compatible with the method of data analyses.

C.a. Ethical consideration

Proposed research area may have ethical considerations. If it is appropriate, the proposal should outline the ethical considerations which will need to be addressed and identify the professional body (e.g., Ethical Review Board of Nepal Health Research Council) which will oversee ethical practice.

C.b. Budget

All research activities need certain expenses. Therefore, preparing a budget is necessary. It is important to note that the costs of research should meet with the provided/expected research grant/s. If not, it is necessary to reduce the scope and scale of research.

C.c. Timeline of operation

This section should specify the time frame within which aforementioned objectives are met. It includes an outline timetable for the completion of objectives (including the writing final report) and specify expected dates at which each stage is to be completed. Use a Gantt chart to graphically present these timeframes or provide time line by month that indicates the major activities expected to perform or research outputs that will be achieved.

D. Expected outputs

In this section, investigators should link the outcome (that will come after completing the project) of each objective with the benefits to the funder, policy makers, scientific community and the locals. Simply, what the project intends to achieve should be highlighted.

E. Composition of the team

Describe the team composition and their roles and responsibilities in proposal being submitted. Indicate what roles students will have in the planning, monitoring and implementation process (if necessary).

F. References

Provide full and correctly cited references for all the literature being cited in proposal. American Psychological Association (APA) style of referencing is suggested.

Chapter 4: Budget

The total budget should be produced under the following broad headings:

- a. Materials and equipment
- b. Supplies (questionnaire preparation/their print and photocopies, stationery, and associated supplies, etc.)
- c. Labor/ research assistants
- d. Travel and field visits
- e. Progress reports/final report preparation
- f. Monthly remuneration of researchers/research assistants including 5% contingency costs

Budget allocation and release

- a. The budget of the approved proposal will be released first as 50% of the total costs.
- b. After successful presentation of 6 monthly progress report, remaining 30% of the budget will be released for the completion of further research work.
- c. The remaining 20% of the budget will be released upon the completion and submission of final report.

Note: The first release of 50% budget and subsequent release of 30% budget should cover items from (a to e) whereas remaining 20% budget should not exceed the items from section (f) and (g) of the budget heading.

Annex 1. Evaluations

Following points will be considered for evaluation of the submitted proposals:

- a. Precise and specific objective
- b. Understand the context of the research
- c. Originality
- d. Is the proposed methodology sensible, workable, and accurate?
- e. Are adequate resources available?
- f. Is there clearly documented indication of the need of proposed research project?
- g. Have uptake pathways been identified and suggested?
- h. Whenever it is pertinent, what is the relevance and importance of gender roles and related issues in the proposal? How it has been addressed?

Specific criteria	Scored weight (100)	Scored obtained
a. Compliance with content and format requirements as specified in the suggested guidelines	10	
b. Clear and measurable objectives that are achievable in the study period	10	
c. Quality of study design and methodology	15	
d. Quality of plans to evaluate the impact of the project	10	
e. Prospects for near-term implementation	10	
f. Project is innovative, problem solving, and action oriented	15	
g. Budget appropriate to the proposed project	10	
relevant to the policy of Gandaki Province Government	5	
h. Addressed issues related to programs currently run by GU	5	
i. Prior experience of PI/coordinator with subject matter	5	
j. Team composition and their expertise	5	

Annex 2. Results evaluation form

√ Please	Results	Reasons
	a) Recommended to accept with minor amendments	
	b) Recommended to accept with major amendments	
	c) Recommended to Reject	

Name of the evaluator:

Proposal CODE:

Signature:

Date:

Annex 3. Project completion report

The project completion report should be produced in a scientific research article format which could be later used in the compilation of the research project and would have possibility to publish in the scientific journals. It is thus important to be accurate and concise. It should include all relevant information and be organized in a standard scientific format.

Suggested headings for the expected format of final technical report

Title of the paper followed by name and affiliations of the author(s), e-mail

- a. Abstract
- b. Introduction
- c. Materials and methods
- d. Results (3-5 sub-headings)
- e. Discussion (of the key results)
- f. Conclusions
- g. References (using APA format)