

**Research Grants**  
**Office of Service-Learning**  
**Lingnan University**  
GUIDELINES 2009-2010

### **1.1 Objectives**

Service-Learning Research Grants is supported by the Office of Service-Learning (OSL). It aims to offer faculty members opportunities (1) to explore the possibility of how S-L elements could be incorporated into their courses and (2) to enhance both teaching and learning.

### **1.2 Eligibility**

- (i) All full-time academic members of staff are eligible to apply. Members of the administrative staff are generally not expected to engage in research work, but are not precluded from applying in special circumstances. The theme of the research should be related to S-L.
- (ii) Visiting scholars are eligible only if they have a full-time appointment in the University covering at least one year or the expected duration of the project, whichever is the longer.
- (iii) Staff members holding short-term temporary appointments are not eligible to apply.
- (iv) No individual may be involved as the principal investigator in more than two concurrent internally-funded projects, with a maximum permissible overlap of one year in respect of agreed project duration, to be counted from the commencement of the first approved project, and taking its progress into account.

### **1.3 Method of Application**

OSL supports S-L related projects costing up to \$30,000 each. An announcement and call for applications is made to all academic staff by OSL prior to each round. Potential applicants please fill in the application form and submit to OSL together with the research plan concerned.

### **1.4 Selection Process**

Applications for research grants will be assessed by TWO SL panel members, including the Director of OSL, SL advisors and programme committee members. The Director reserves the rights to make the final decision.

### **1.5 Assessment Criteria**

Each application is considered in the light of:

- (i) Its academic quality and scholarly merit;
- (ii) Its relation to S-L;
- (iii) Its benefits to students and community;
- (iv) Its contribution to the enhancement of teaching and learning with S-L elements;
- (v) Its feasibility within the time-scale indicated in the proposal;

- (vi) The track record of the investigator(s);
- (vii) The appropriateness of the budget; and
- (viii) The availability of funds.

## **1.6 Duration of Projects**

- (i) The maximum period of support is two years. Where a project is supported, but for a shorter duration than requested (e.g. as an exploratory project for, normally, one year), reduced funding will be provided accordingly.
- (ii) Grant holders are expected to make every effort to ensure that the project progresses in accordance with the time-scale agreed upon when the award was made.
- (iii) If a delay of progress is anticipated, it should be reported in advance and an application made to have the project's duration extended. The request must be made at least two months before the expiry of the agreed completion date and should be accompanied by a report on the progress made to date and the work yet to be completed.
- (iv) Extending the duration of a project without prior approval may result in the withdrawal of funding, or a delay in the consideration of any new grant application.

## **1.7 Budget Control**

- (i) The Principal Investigator (PI) is fully responsible and accountable for the approved research grant for his/her project. No compensation would be made if there is any budget over-run.
- (ii) The investigators should not transfer the unused funds of a completed project to fund other research projects; the balance should be returned to OSL.

## **1.8 Guidelines for Considering the Budget Items**

- (i) Equipment
  - (a) In general, funds are not provided for the purchase of equipment; however, the purchase of equipment specifically required for the project may be allowed if such items are normally not available and deemed essential.
  - (b) Any purchase of personal electronic devices such as cell phones, iPod, MP3 Players, digital cameras and PDAs is not expected in the utility of the grant. In addition, funding will not be provided for the purchase of standard equipment (e.g. desktop PCs, laptop computers, printers and scanners) known to be available, or reasonably expected to be provided in the institutions concerned.
- (ii) Research Support Staff
  - (a) Funds may be provided for technical support such as research assistance or clerical assistance where appropriate. Applicants must outline the number of assistants necessary, specific duties within the project and the time required.
  - (b) Support is generally provided at the lowest level (i.e. Research Assistant). The level and number of research support staff/years will be decided by OSL.

in the light of the merits of the case presented.

(c) The PI should arrange for research support staff to take permitted leave during the period of appointment. On termination of service, payment for leave not taken will be met from the project's staffing budget. There is no compensation for such payments and it is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that leave is cleared during the contractual period.

(d) For University-funded projects, expenses arising from recruitment and Mandatory Provident fund for research support staff, where applicable, will be centrally funded.

(iii) Administrative Services and Supplies

Reasonable amounts are allowed for printing, research material, stationery, postage, fax and other consumables related to the project.

(iv) Transportation

Funds for travel will be considered when they form an integral part of the project, e.g. researcher's travel or transportation of subjects to site of project.

## **1.9 Changes Associated with the Project**

The PI should apply to the Director of OSL if major changes to the approved project are required, for example:

- (a) Deferral of completion date.
- (b) Change in title of project.
- (c) Change in 'Principal Investigator' of project.
- (d) Withdrawal from the research team by any member(s).

## **1.10 Monitoring of Project**

(i) All projects receiving OSL research grant are subjected to regular monitoring by OSL. Interim progress and final reports are required and there is provision to withdraw funding from projects not making satisfactory progress or overrunning the agreed-on duration.

(ii) Final Report

The final report should include research report and financial report of the completed project. It should be prepared by the PI concerned and submitted to the Director of OSL within 2 months after the completion of project.

## **1.11 Ethical Approval**

OSL reserves the right to reject a grant application or withdraw a grant on ethical grounds.

## **1.12 Conditions of Awards**

(i) In addition to a final report, an oral presentation of the research findings should be done by the PI concerned to share the innovations derived from the research.

- (ii) OSL reserves the right to suspend payment of funds in the event of unsatisfactory progress within the agreed-on time-scale.

### **1.13 Acknowledgements**

Whenever appropriate, publications resulting from the funded research should always contain an acknowledgement of the financial support provided by OSL.