

# Handbook for Extramural Grant Management

Research and Development Office  
Ashoka University

## **Research and Development Office**

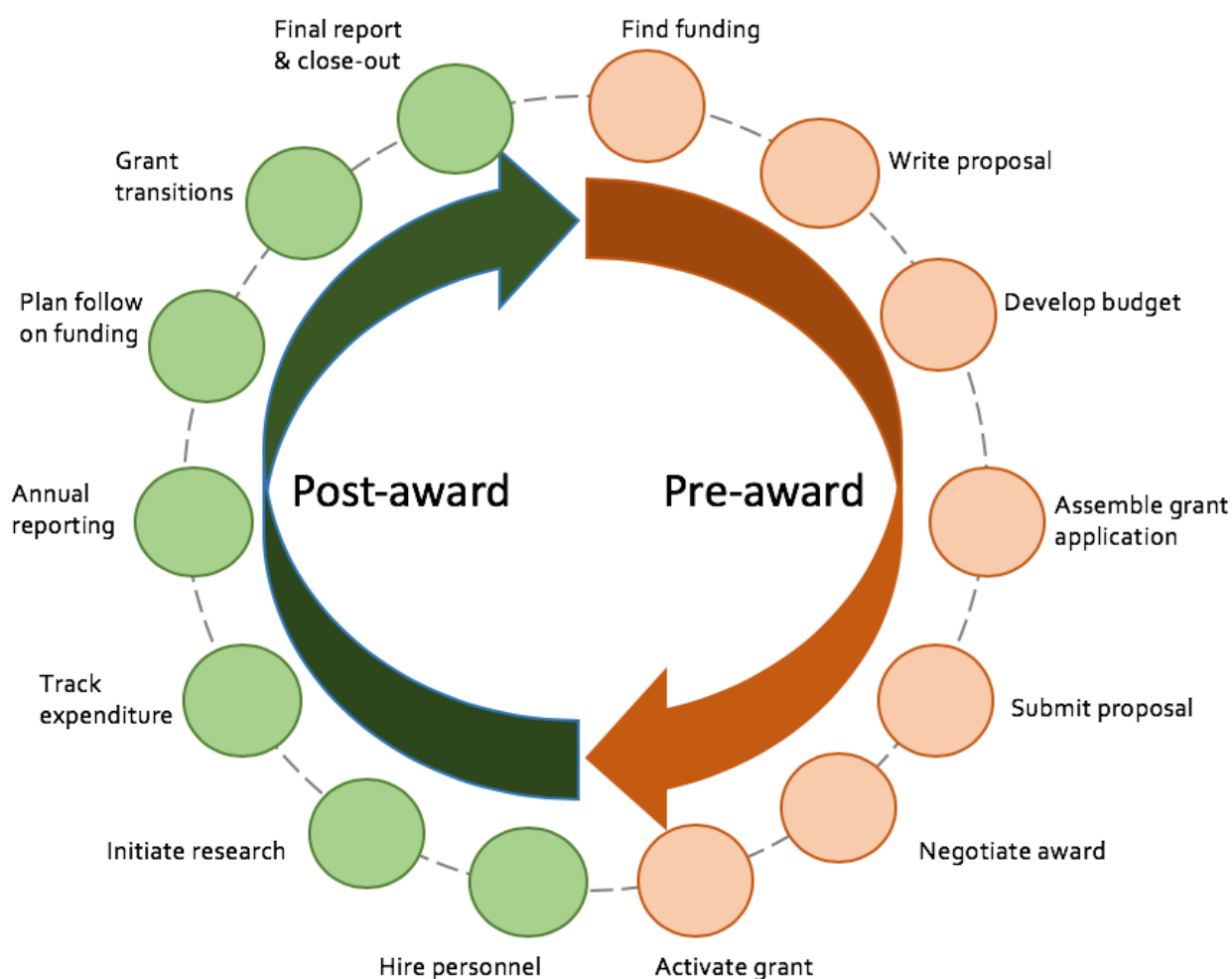
### **Introduction**

Faculty at Ashoka University are expected to demonstrate excellence in research and teaching. The University has instituted Individual Annual Research Grants<sup>1</sup> to support expenses related to research and academic requirements of members of the faculty. It is also expected that Faculty will apply for all relevant sources of external funding, from national and international sources, for their research.

The Research and Development Office (RDO) at Ashoka University has been created to provide dedicated centralized support to Ashoka Faculty/Researchers, towards academic, applied and translational research activities. The mandate of RDO is multifold:

- To facilitate external research funding in the form of research grants, consultancy projects<sup>2</sup> and others
- To enable research infrastructure developments
- To provide support (logistics, financial etc.) to research personnel
- To support new initiatives with seed funding for novel research ideas
- To support academic and research communications

With respect to external funding at Ashoka, RDO will be responsible for supporting the facilitation and management of extramural grants and consultancy projects throughout the funding lifecycle (Figure 1), at both pre-award and post-award stages. The Grant Management Vertical (GMV) of RDO will closely work with the Faculty and the administration at Ashoka to facilitate external funding. RDO will also act as intermediary between the faculty members/researchers involved and external funding agencies and will help administer the grant, manage grant-related activities such as procurement, recruitment of research personnel, research infrastructure development and maintain grant accounts in consultation with the Finance and other offices at Ashoka.



**Figure 1: The Funding Lifecycle**

## About This Document

This document sets out the processes for management of extramural research funding and consultancy projects at Ashoka University and outlines the support available from the RDO to facilitate these activities. The life cycle of a grant/research project can be bifurcated into two broader sections:

**Pre-Award:** In the pre-award process, Grant Management Vertical (GMV) of RDO will facilitate the faculty/researchers/principal investigator (PI) to maneuver and finalize their grant proposal. Both extramural grants and University sponsored grants encompass proposal writing, budget allocation, guidelines, financial information, measurable goals and proposal submission. The PI needs to submit their research proposal to RDO. The Office will provide institutional support letter to the PI. Grant Management vertical (GMV) will assist the PI to get the supportive documents verified. The team will also assist the PIs to submit their final proposal to the funding agency.



**Post-Award:** After the grant has been approved by the funding agency, Grant Management Vertical (GMV) of RDO will undertake post- grant management related activities. Grant Management team will assist the PI to manage and track their grant related expenses through the RDO software, SFACTS. The team will also assist the PIs to finalize grant expense reports, Utilization Certificate (UC) and Statement of Expenditure (SE), and closure formalities pertaining to extramural grants.

In this document, the funding cycle is presented in six blocks:

- (A) Identification of the Funding Source**
- (B) Preparation and Submission of Research Proposals**
- (C) Activation of Awards**
- (D) Management of Awards**
- (E) Closure of Awards**
- (F) Communication of Research Outputs**

### **About Principal Investigator (PI) and Co Investigator (Co-PI)**

The lead researcher with overall responsibility for the research direction and implementation of an externally funded grant is referred to as the Principal Investigator (PI). Additional investigators participating in a funded collaboration and making significant intellectual contributions to the project are referred to as co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs). Some agencies require a co-PI to serve in an administrative capacity to ensure continuity and completion of a project in unforeseen circumstances. Ashoka Faculty may participate in externally funded projects as PIs from the University and/or as co-Principal Investigators with other faculty/researcher from Ashoka or from researchers outside Ashoka on collaborative grants. The terms PI and co-PI are used interchangeably in this document and refer to participation of Ashoka Faculty/ Researchers in externally funded projects. The Grant Management vertical of RDO will support the management of external funding in both cases.



## Process for Applying for and Managing Extramural Funding at Ashoka University

### (A) Identification of the Funding Source:

Several funding opportunities are available for researchers at Ashoka University from diverse funding bodies, including Government agencies from India and other countries, industrial partners and various charitable foundations. Most of these opportunities are regularly advertised on the websites of agencies involved in funding research. Calls for funding typically include details of the scheme remit, research focus areas, applicant eligibility, team structures, budget provisions, grant duration, submission deadlines and application process.

GMV will periodically share details of specific funding calls with the faculty and will additionally assist with the identification of appropriate funding opportunities to fit specific requirements. GMV will also be able to advise on the applicant and institutional eligibility for the funding schemes as required. However, it is the responsibility of the prospective principal investigators to identify the appropriate funding schemes that meet their requirements.

*Some potential extramural funding sources are described below:*

Natural Sciences and Mathematical Sciences: [DBT](#), [DST](#), [ICMR](#), [SERB](#), [CSIR](#), [DBT/Wellcome Trust - India Alliance](#), [BMGF](#), [BIRAC](#), [INSA](#), [Semiconductor Research Corporation Ltd.](#), [Huawei Technologies Pvt.Ltd](#) and [Mphasis Foundation](#)

Economics: [IGC](#), [BMGF](#), [Azim Premji Foundation](#), [WHO](#)

Social Sciences: [ICSSR](#), [Wellcome Trust](#), [Azim Premji Foundation](#), [Research Council of Norway](#), [International Growth Centre](#), [CSRI](#), and [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation \(BMGF\)](#)

Arts and Humanities: [Andrew-Mellon Foundation](#), [EHES](#), [Global Humanities \(University of Cambridge\)](#)

International Collaborative Funding: [IUSSTF](#), [UKIERI](#), [British Council](#), [USIEF](#), [CEFIPRA](#)

Academia-Industry linkages: [BIRAC](#), [TDB](#), [GITA](#)

For Early Career Researchers: [DBT/Wellcome Trust India Alliance ECF](#), [SERB N-PDF](#)

Short-term Fellowship: [INSA visiting scientist](#), [German Academic Exchange Services \(DAAD\)](#)

In addition, internal funding from Ashoka University is also available to support new ideas and projects, details of which will be circulated periodically via RDO. Additionally, faculty members can approach the Research and Development Office for funding support for specific ideas.



## **(B) Preparation and Submission of a Proposal**

Applications for extramural funding and proposals for consultancy projects typically include an abstract, a detailed technical proposal, a budget, institutional details and the CVs of the applicants. It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that their proposals are complete in all respects, meet the requirements of the funding agency or partner, align with institutional norms for all collaborating institutions and are put together in time for any specific submission deadlines. All proposals with Faculty/Researchers from Ashoka participating as PIs or co-PIs must be approved by the RDO for onward submission to agencies.

The Grant Management Vertical (**Pre-award section**) can support the PI in various ways at this pre-submission stage, including providing administrative assistance, necessary institutional documents, advice on budgeting, liaison with external agencies for clarifications at the pre-award stage and institutional endorsements.

All applications for extramural grants and project details for consultancy projects should be routed through RDO. The PI is requested to inform Grant Management vertical ([grant.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:grant.management@ashoka.edu.in)) as early as possible, ahead of proposal submission. The team will require at least 3-5 working days for standard proposals.

RDO also assists complex multi-PI proposals, multi-institutional proposals and departmental or institutional funding bids to schemes such as DST FIST, Global Humanities and DBT BUILDER. These proposals will require additional processing time for fulfilment of due diligence and advice via RDO.

However, Principal Investigators (PIs) are responsible for ensuring that their proposals are shared with RDO well in advance of submission deadlines, for staff to undertake due diligence and necessary action on time.



## **Some Considerations for Preparing Proposals**

### ***(i) Budgeting for a Proposal***

Costs requested via extramural grants and consultancy projects can broadly be classified as direct or indirect costs.

- Direct costs on sponsored projects can be directly attributed to the project with a high degree of accuracy and are essential to the project's fulfilment.
- Indirect costs or institutional overhead costs represent the costs incurred by Ashoka University in supporting research by the PIs. Grant applications from Ashoka University should include institutional overheads at a minimum of 15% or as per agency norms. The RDO will undertake negotiations on overheads with funding agencies if required.
- Salaries for personnel hired on external grants will be expected to follow the norms of the funding agency. Where such information is not available, the salary costs of staff will be decided in consultation with the funding agency.
- Access charges for the use of centrally funded facilities should be included while budgeting for an extramural grant application. RDO will be able to provide necessary information vis-a-vis these costs.
- Travel costs on external grants will need to be budgeted as per agency norms.

### ***(ii) Online Portals***

Most of the major funding agencies now accept proposals via designated online portals. It is best for the PI to work well ahead of any submission deadlines as it allows sufficient time for such issues to be raised and resolved on time. Any technical difficulties encountered with the online portals need to be resolved by the PI working in conjunction with the technical support team at the agency. Although RDO can assist in facilitating these conversations, it is solely PI's responsibility to register at the submission portal, to familiarize themselves with the online submission requirements and to complete the online submission within the deadline.

### ***(iii) Institutional Registrations***

Most funding agencies require institutional registration. For example, grant submissions to the NIH (National Institutes of Health, USA) require the institution to have a DUNS (Dun and Bradstreet) number and to be registered with the SAM (System for Award Management). RDO can assist the PI in this regard and facilitate the collation and submission of annual reports, financial reports and authorization details to complete the institutional segments of grant applications. It is recommended for the PI to work well ahead of any submission deadlines, to allow sufficient time for such issues to be raised and resolved on time.



#### ***(iv) Leave of Absence***

Any grant or project application that requires permission for leave of absence from the University (with or without pay) requires additional prior permission from the Dean of Faculty. The approval should be shared with RDO along with a copy of final proposal. Following this, RDO will coordinate with the Finance Team and HR Team as required.

#### ***(v) Regulatory Compliance***

Any research programs involving human subjects such as interviews, seeking a response to a questionnaire, psychophysics experiments, the use of human samples, stem cells, recombinant DNA, transgenic animals and other animals should be approved for this purpose by the appropriate institutional review mechanism. Funding agencies can request copies of regulatory approval documentation at the time of grant submission, at the point of activation of an award or during the course of a funded program. RDO can facilitate the regulatory approvals and other relevant certification, as and when required by funding agencies. It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that research proposals submitted for or in receipt of external funding are also in receipt of the requisite regulatory approvals as required.

#### ***(vi) Consultancy Project Negotiations***

Consultancy projects require careful negotiations between the PI, Ashoka University and the commissioning organization, to ensure the safeguarding of intellectual rights to the University. The Grant Management vertical of RDO will facilitate discussions on the terms of the agreement with client organizations, on behalf of the University. The Grant Management vertical will also undertake due diligence on consultancy agreement drafts, working in conjunction with other internal teams including the legal team, Finance team and the Registrar's office, as required. Faculty participation in Consultancy projects is governed by Consultancy Policy<sup>2</sup> for Ashoka University.

#### ***(vii) Proposal Archiving***

A copy of the final grant submission along with all supporting documents should be sent to [grant.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:grant.management@ashoka.edu.in) for archiving.



## (C) Activation of an Award

Once a grant is approved for funding at an agency, this is communicated to the PI via a notification. At this stage, the PI and University are often obliged to complete and return several documents to aid the formal activation of the award. Examples of such documents include a Grant Start Certificate, ethical approval documents and bank transfer details. The Grant Management Vertical (GMV) of RDO will facilitate this process on behalf of the PI, working in conjunction with the Finance team as needed. The PI is expected to share all the documents and relevant content with GMV such as the final versions of ethical approval letters. GMV will then liaise with the Funding Agency on behalf of the PI.

Once the award letter is received, the PI is expected to forward the document to the GVM, RDO ([grant.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:grant.management@ashoka.edu.in)). Based on the information provided by the PI, a Grant Code (Ashoka University's Internal Code) will be generated and the information related to the grant (sanctioned amount and budget) will be uploaded in the SFACTS software; the software will enable the PI to track the expenses and initiate the purchase process by raising indents. The PI needs to mention the grant code in all the subsequent communications related to the particular grant.

PI should also communicate (to [grant.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:grant.management@ashoka.edu.in)) any intimation from the Funding Agency related to fund transfer. GMV will notify the PI once Ashoka University has received the funds.

The following details are necessary to track the inflow of the funds:

- a. Fund Release Document
- b. UTR Number/Transaction ID
- c. Amount transferred
- d. Date of Transaction

In case, the PI doesn't have any of the above documents/information, GMV will verify the amount received with all the existing grants. This takes around 6-7 working days.

For some projects, the PI may wish to start spending funds ahead of actual receipt of the fund. Please note that some funding agencies insist on fixing the start date of the project from the day when the funds are actually received by the University. In case a PI wants to start ahead of this date, they will need to seek permission from Research and Development Office (RDO) to become eligible for drawing an advance with proper justification for the urgency. These communications should be routed via GMV ([grant.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:grant.management@ashoka.edu.in)).



## (D) Managing an Award

Once awarded and activated, a grant warrants appropriate management throughout its lifetime, in proper compliance with the agency and the University norms, towards the fulfilment of the research goals. It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure correct utilization of funds allocated, recruitment of personnel, purchase of equipment, the conduct of all activities and meeting all reporting requirements.

RDO will facilitate this process at all stages, as described in this section. All purchase activities, including the appointment of project personnel, travel and other expenses for extramural grants should be routed through GMV of RDO by the PI or their personnel assigned for this purpose.

### (i) Utilization of Funds

The PI should specify the appropriate grant code in all correspondence and applications relating to advances, reimbursements and purchases. Failure to do so may result in delay in processing the grant documents.

**a. Advances:** To borrow an advance from the grant, the PI needs to submit a duly completed Advance Requisition Form to GVM ( [grant.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:grant.management@ashoka.edu.in) )

Requests exceeding Rs 50,000 will require approval from the Dean of Research. It would take around 7-10 working days to complete the transaction.

**b. Reimbursements:** The PI will need to fill the Out-of-Pocket Reimbursement Form<sup>4</sup> and attach all the necessary bills and statements along with it. It would take around 7-10 working days to complete the transaction.

**c. Purchases:** The PI shall coordinate with the Research Infrastructure Management vertical ([lab.purchase@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:lab.purchase@ashoka.edu.in)) of the RDO for purchasing any equipment/consumables from the respective grant keeping GMV ( [grant.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:grant.management@ashoka.edu.in) ) in the loop. It is mandatory to specify the grant code in the correspondences (see Figure 2).

**d. Travel:** The PI may coordinate with the Travel Desk ([traveldes@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:traveldes@ashoka.edu.in)) while keeping GMV in the loop ([grant.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:grant.management@ashoka.edu.in)). Also, the PI can complete all the necessary arrangements and submit the out-of-pocket reimbursement form to GVM.



**e. Scholar Management:** The PI shall follow the rules and regulations specified by the funding agency while hiring and managing research personnel. Scholar Management vertical of RDO ([scholar.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:scholar.management@ashoka.edu.in)) will provide necessary assistance to the PI in the following processes:

**i. Hiring Research Assistants/Research Associates/Project Fellows:** The PI may share the draft Job Description/Profile Description with Scholar Management ([scholar.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:scholar.management@ashoka.edu.in)) to be advertised on Ashoka University's Website. After completion of the interview by a panel, the PI shall share the following details of the candidate recommended for the position along with the proceedings of the interview panel:

- Full name of the candidate,
- Designation to be offered,
- Duration of the contract,
- Remuneration, and
- Housing requirement

Scholar Management Vertical will coordinate with relevant authorities as required and issue the Offer Letter to the recommended candidate.

**ii. Disbursing Remuneration to Research Personnel:** Scholar Management Vertical will email all the PIs on 25th of every month seeking approval for salary disbursement. Once approved, the Finance Team will disburse the remuneration after subtracting taxes and other deductions between 5<sup>th</sup>- 10<sup>th</sup> dates of every month.

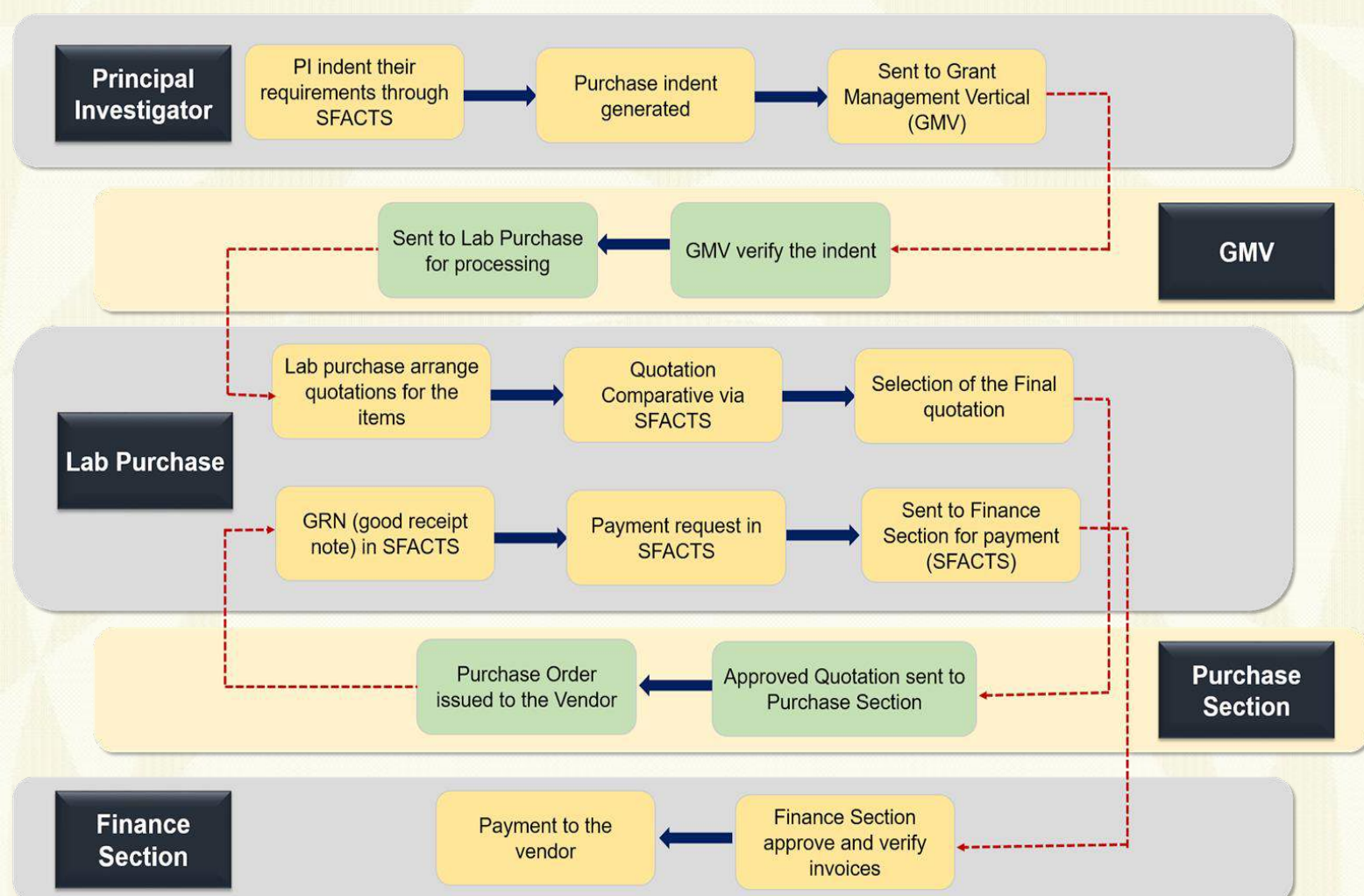
**iii. Extending/Updating/Terminating the Contracts:** The PI shall share an update with the Scholar Management Vertical ([scholar.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:scholar.management@ashoka.edu.in)) at least a week in advance and the later shall incorporate the necessary changes/updates in coordination with various authorities.

## **(ii) Reporting on Grants**

### **a. Utilization Certificate and Statement of Expenditure:**

Grant Management Vertical (GMV) will work with the PI to generate the Statement of Expenditure (SE) and Utilization Certificate (UC) for externally funded grants, as per funding agency guidelines. The GMV will assist the PI in verifying information about the expenses and getting the document authorized from the respective authorities.





**Figure 2: Purchase Process for Externally Funded Projects**

## **b. Progress Report**

The PI shall complete regular progress reports for the funded project as per agency norms. This needs to be done in the prescribed reporting format by the agency. The Grant Management vertical of RDO will assist the PI to get authorization from various Offices of the University and will forward the same to the funding agencies. The PI should submit a copy of the final version of the progress report for RDO's records.



### **(iii) Grant Extensions**

Awarded grants can be extended beyond the initial approved end date, on a no-cost or costed basis. In the case of some agencies, a grant can also be extended during the period of maternity leave for female PIs. Decisions on grant extensions shall be taken by the PIs at least 6 months ahead of the original grant end date, or as per the grant guidelines and communicated to the agency for approval. GMV will facilitate this process for the PI, with the collation of all documents needed towards the grant extension. The PI should submit a copy of the final papers to the GMV for records.

### **(iv) Grant Transfers**

In the event of movement of PI from Ashoka University to another institution, their awarded grants can be transferred from the University to the new institution. Alternatively, the administrative Co-PI from Ashoka University can ensure completion of the project at the University as originally proposed. A grant transfer from Ashoka University to another institution will require prior permission from RDO, the new institution and the funding agency. A transfer of stewardship of the grant from a PI at Ashoka University to the Co-PI at Ashoka University will also require prior permission from the Dean (Research) and the funding agency. Such arrangements will additionally require negotiation of the terms for release and utilization of any pending monies. GMV will facilitate this process and negotiations for the PI, with the collation of all documents needed towards the grant transfer and closing on tracking the funds status. The PI should submit a copy of the final papers for RDO's records.

### **(E) Closure of an Award**

Once a project has reached its intended end date, a formal closure process needs to be completed. This typically involves the collation of a completion report, closure of financial papers, details of research outputs and other requirements as per the agency guidelines. With some funding agencies, closure of an active grant in this manner is a pre-requisite for activating a new award.



Certain funding agencies also reserve the right to hold back up to 10% of the grant funds until receipt of the grant closure documentation. The GMV will facilitate this process for the PI, helping him/her to collate all the documents needed to close the grant. A copy of the final closure report should be shared with the GMV for records.

Under certain unforeseen circumstances, a PI may choose to foreclose a grant or to transfer stewardship to the administrative co-PI. Foreclosure of a grant or changes such as handover to a co-PI will require prior permission from the Dean (Research) and the funding agency. Such arrangements will additionally require negotiation of the terms for release and utilization of any pending monies. GMV will facilitate this process and negotiations for the PI, with the collation of all documents needed towards the grant closure and with tracking the funds status. A copy of the final closure report should be shared with GMV for records.

## **(F) Communication of Research Outputs**

The PI must report all research outcomes from funded projects to Research and Development Office (RDO). Funding support from external agencies needs to be acknowledged in all publications and materials arising from the funded research, as per agency guidelines. RDO will provide advice on how the agencies need to be acknowledged if required. The PI is expected to share the details of the publications (Acceptance Letter and the Soft Copy of the Final Manuscript), Books or Book Chapter, Patents, or any exceptional achievements observed under a particular grant, with the RDO.

The Academic Communication Vertical of RDO ( [academic.communication@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:academic.communication@ashoka.edu.in) ) will support the management of this data for institutional purposes. Academic Communication will also facilitate media coverage of important research outputs by faculty/researchers, working in conjunction with the Outreach and Media office of Ashoka.

Intellectual Property generated during the course of externally funded research will be protected or licensed in accordance with the IPR Policy 5 for Ashoka University.



## Contact Us:

Please write to us at [grant.management@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:grant.management@ashoka.edu.in) for any communication related to extramural grants. There is no need to copy any personal/individual email ID.

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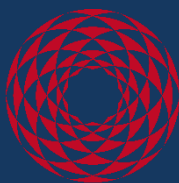
## **References: Ashoka University Policies and Documents**

1. Individual Research Grants, in the Faculty Policies Handbook; under the purview of Dean of Faculty
2. Consultancy Policy, in the Faculty Policies Handbook
3. Ashoka University PhD Guidelines (available at MyAshoka Portal)
4. Forms are available at MyAshoka Portal and by writing to GMV ( [grant.management@Ashoka.edu.in](mailto:grant.management@Ashoka.edu.in) )
5. IPR Policy ([https://ashoka.edu.in/static/doc\\_uploads/file\\_1531913974.pdf](https://ashoka.edu.in/static/doc_uploads/file_1531913974.pdf) )

## **References: Global Research Offices**

- Office for Sponsored Programs at Harvard: <https://osp.finance.harvard.edu>
- Research Office at University of Oxford: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/research-funding>
- Research funding process at Oxford: <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/research-process-overview>
- Office of Sponsored Research: <https://doresearch.stanford.edu/research-offices/office-sponsored-research-osr>
- Sponsored Projects Administration at Columbia University: <https://research.columbia.edu/sponsored-projects-administration>





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