

Toward an Integrated Research Ecosystem:

Qatar University Launches Interdisciplinary Collaborative Grants to Strengthen Collaboration between Research Centers and Colleges

As part of its ongoing efforts to further enhance the research and innovation ecosystem, Qatar University has launched the “Interdisciplinary Collaborative Grants” program as part of its direct college support initiatives. The program is designed to institutionalize collaboration between research centers and academic departments and to support research projects characterized by strategic relevance and long-term sustainable impact.

The program operates under the supervision of the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation, represented by the Research Support Department (Grants and Contracts), in alignment with the University’s strategic direction to build an integrated research environment that strengthens academic and research excellence, while also supporting national development priorities and advancing the knowledge-based economy.

Objectives and Strategic Dimensions of the Interdisciplinary Collaborative Grants

The program focuses on a set of strategic objectives aimed at strengthening Qatar University's research and innovation ecosystem. These include:

- Enhancing sustainable research excellence through support for projects with long-term scientific and institutional impact.
- Prioritizing research with strategic relevance linked to University priorities and national development needs, thereby reinforcing the role of research in achieving sustainable development.
- Supporting effective partnerships between research centers and academic departments, while encouraging the involvement of stakeholders and external partners where appropriate.
- Enabling research centers to plan and implement interconnected, multi-year research projects that ensure continuity, coherence, and long-term strategic outcomes.
- Strengthening interdisciplinarity across fields of expertise to develop innovative solutions to national and societal challenges.

Grant Budget

The grants are allocated to eligible research centers according to established quality and competitiveness criteria. This funding model provides research teams with adequate resources to design and implement sustainable strategic projects capable of generating cumulative scientific and institutional outcomes. The University has allocated funding of up to **QAR 500,000 per project over two years,** with the possibility of renewal for two additional cycles, bringing the total duration of each project to a maximum of six years.

General Structure and Requirements for Research Teams

To ensure academic excellence and effective collaboration, the University has established strict requirements for structuring research teams, as follows:

- **Project Leadership:** Each project phase is led by a research team headed by a Lead Principal Investigator (LPI) from either a research center or an academic department (Assistant Professor or above), subject to approval by the Center Director and relevant authorities, with at least one PI required to be affiliated with a research center.
- **The Project Coordinator** (the Research Center Director or their delegate) shall oversee the coordination of all project activities and ensure effective integration and collaboration among the participating research teams and principal investigators to achieve the project's strategic objectives in accordance with the approved plan.
- **Team Structure:** Each team must include at least two Principal Investigators (PIs) from academic departments within University colleges (Assistant Professor or higher), in addition to other PIs from research centers holding the rank of Associate Researcher or above. This structure enhances collaboration between centers and colleges, promotes interdisciplinary research, and allows for the inclusion of additional researchers and stakeholders whenever possible.
- **Student Engagement:** The initiative encourages the active involvement of students at both undergraduate and graduate levels through clearly defined training and supervision plans, intending to prepare a new generation of researchers capable of leading future innovation ecosystems.
- **Use of Research Facilities:** Proposals must clearly outline how University facilities and research infrastructure will be utilized.

Application Process

Research proposals undergo a rigorous, structured, and transparent evaluation process as follows:

1. **Initial Nomination:** After the internal call for proposals within research centers, proposals are presented to center directors, deans, and associate deans (or their equivalents), focusing on the strategic vision of each proposal. Based on this stage, each center director, in consultation with relevant academic leadership, nominates no more than three proposals per center.
2. **Scientific Review:** Internal specialized grant committees-established in coordination with the Research Support Department-conduct detailed scientific evaluations based on approved criteria and submit their recommendations to the Higher Steering Committee for Research Grants.
3. **Strategic Review and Endorsement:** The Higher Steering Committee reviews recommendations, taking into account alignment with the University's research strategy, stakeholder engagement, capacity-building opportunities, and budget availability.
4. **Final Approval:** The Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation issues the final approval for awarded grants and authorizes their activation.

Internal Governance and Evaluation

Awarded projects are subject to a comprehensive review at the end of each two-year funding cycle, in accordance with Research Support Department procedures. This evaluation assesses progress achieved against predefined strategic objectives, as well as research and societal performance indicators.

Based on the review outcomes, one of the following decisions is made:

- Renewal of funding for the next phase, which may extend for up to two additional years,





subject to an updated research plan and revised milestones.

- Modification of project scope, reprioritization, or deferral for a period not exceeding one year to improve outcomes.
- Recommendation to suspend or terminate projects in cases of significant delay or insufficient outputs.

Eligible Research Centers

The program targets a diverse network of research centers across Qatar University, strengthening interdisciplinary research and collaboration across scientific and humanities fields. These include:

- **Research and Innovation Sector:** Center for Advanced Materials.
- **Health Sector:** Biomedical Research Center.
- **College of Engineering:** Gas Research Center.
- **College of Sharia and Islamic Studies:** Research and Studies Unit.

This initiative reflects Qatar University's commitment to developing more integrated and collaborative research models that leverage diverse expertise across the University by linking specialized research centers with academic capabilities across different colleges. This approach contributes to the development of high-quality research projects capable of delivering innovative solutions to national and societal challenges.

Through these comprehensive initiatives, the University continues to strengthen its role as a leading academic and research institution committed to knowledge production, innovation, and sustainable national development based on science, collaboration, and long-term societal impact.

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