



## **GRANTS INNOVATION AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

### **Terms and Conditions for the Acceptance, Utilization and Management of MRC Self-initiated Research Grants**

#### **Preface**

This document sets out the terms and conditions of MRC Self-initiated Research (SIR) funding. Awardees are required to submit a completed copy of this document, signed by the recipient and a duly authorized institutional representative, to the MRC within 30 days of receipt of notification of the award of an SIR grant. By signing this document, both the awardee and the host institution agree to abide by these Terms and Conditions.

For the purpose of effective and efficient administration as well as reporting, each grant is awarded to a particular applicant with a project title which should be used as a reference for all matters pertaining to that grant.

#### **Responsibilities of the Host Institution**

It is the responsibility of host institutions to administer the allocated SIR funding according to these Terms and Conditions. The institutions have the further responsibility to enforce their own financial controls and policies to ensure that allocated research funding is utilised appropriately, effectively, and according to the approved budgets. Host institutions are required to verify and certify the appropriateness, completeness and correctness of all information submitted by their researchers to the MRC as part of the management of SIR grants.

#### **Obligations of Grant Recipients (Awardees)**

SIR grant awardees are expected to conduct the research in accordance with the approved proposal and budget and to fulfil the obligations and conditions outlined below.

#### **Commencement of Project**

The date of commencement of the approved research project is assumed to be 1 April, unless the MRC is advised otherwise by the awardee.

#### **Grant Payments**

The MRC pays out grant funding to institutions on a quarterly basis. It is the responsibility of awardees to ensure that applicable and required documentation has been submitted to the

MRC before the payment dates. Only funding for which all grant conditions have been met will be paid over.

Before funding can be released for payment by the MRC to the host institution several supporting documents may be required, depending on the individual case. Amongst these supporting documents are:

- Letter of appointment or appointment contract plus a copy of an identity document, in the case of funding for personnel e.g. research assistants or assistantships or *ad hoc* research support.
- Proof of registration and a copy of an identity document, in the case of a postgraduate student.
- Proof of order or tax invoice for research equipment.
- Acceptance of abstract in the case of conference attendance or copy of invitation letter in the case of invited speakers.
- Annual Progress Report and Renewal Request for the renewal of funding.
- Financial expenditure report for renewal of funding.

### **Project Budgets and Allowable Costs**

Researchers apply for funding from the MRC in order to undertake specified research as per submitted and approved research proposals. If and when the MRC does allocate funding, it is with the express intent to enable the researcher to conduct the specified work. The MRC is often inundated with requests from researchers to utilize allocated research funding for purposes other than that for which the funding was approved, e.g. for the attendance of conferences, especially international conferences. While acknowledging the importance and benefits of intellectual connectedness and networking provided by the attendance of scientific conferences, the first priority should be deployment of allocated funding to do research.

The original application for an SIR grant should include a multi-year research plan that contains details of research work to be undertaken in the first year, as well as an outline of planned research over the subsequent years, where applicable. It should further include a detailed and itemized budget for the first year of the project and indicative budgets for subsequent years. Successful applicants will be granted funding for the duration of their proposed research project, up to a maximum of 3 years, with specification of the approved amounts per year. Funding will, however, be released on an annual basis based on the motivation and details contained in the *Annual Progress Report and Renewal Request* and subject to satisfactory progress. The MRC reserves the right to adjust approved funding based on the soundness of the annual motivation and the progress of the project. ***All awarded / approved funding is subject to the availability of funds.***

The following are allowable costs for SIR grants:

- Consumables or running costs (materials and supplies, laboratory and/or field work, payment for specialised services, office supplies, stationery and printing)

- (Research) Travel (maximum of R40 000). This includes travel to sites, participant /patient transport, conference attendance, and other travel to be specified
- (Research) Assistantships to a maximum of R20 000 per year
- Minor equipment (maximum value R20 000)
- Bursary supplementation to a maximum value of R20 000 per year

MRC funding may not be used for the purchase of items not specified in the award letter and definitely NOT for the following: laptop computers, cell phones, personal items or any other item that cannot be clearly justified as an essential requirement for the research project. Desktop computers and printers may be purchased only if they are to be dedicated to a specific project or to drive laboratory equipment (a clear motivation will be required).

#### Conference attendance

Grantees may utilize funding allocated for this purpose to cover the costs of air/road travel, conference registration, accommodation and subsistence. A report on the conference participation should be included / integrated into the *Annual Progress Report and Renewal Request*. One national conference annually (maximum of R5 000) and only one international conference (maximum of R20 000) may be funded for the duration of the funded research project. No further conference funding will be made available to an awardee who has not converted his/her conference contribution to a recognized publication after participating in two local conferences or one international conference.

Following notification of award, grantees may request reallocation or redistribution of their grant funding amongst the allowable items by way of motivation. Only one such change will be allowed. ***No requests to exceed the maximum values shown per category above will be considered.***

#### **Progress and Output Reporting and Renewal of Grant**

Awardees are required to submit an *Annual Progress Report and Renewal Request (APR)*, using the MRC APR Template, no later than the ***last day of February*** following the year of award of the grant and the successive year. The APR is a comprehensive report outlining in detail the research progress achieved, including progress against milestones and specific highlights, impediments to achieving progress, research outputs and outcomes. In addition, all awardees are required to submit to the MRC, on a quarterly basis, all publications that were published during the relevant quarter. This information will be utilized in the compilation of the MRC's statutory reports such as the Annual Report, the Key Performance Indicator Report and other initiatives showcasing the work conducted and supported by the MRC. The APR is also used by awardees to apply on an annual basis for renewal of their grants. The APR must be approved or authorized by, and submitted through, the relevant institutional authority. Failure to submit an APR will result in the grant being terminated.

At the end of the approved and funded project, grantees must submit an *End of Project Report (EPR)* on the MRC EPR Template no later than 3 months following the end date of the project (i.e. period for which the grant was awarded). Failure to submit an EPR will preclude the grantee from further/subsequent/future support from the MRC until the report has been

received. The EPR should be approved or authorized by, and submitted through, the relevant institutional authority.

### **Financial Reporting**

Host institutions are required to submit audited financial statements reflecting grant expenditure up until 31 December to the MRC, ***by the end of February every year*** as part of the APR. Expenditure must be reported according to the approved budgets and the following budget categories:

- Consumables or running costs
- Travel
- Assistantships
- Minor equipment
- Bursary supplementation

### **Carry Forward of Funds**

Grantees who have not spent all of their specified and approved budgets in a particular year must specifically request the carry forward of such funding into the subsequent year within their renewal application. The requested budget in the renewal application must take into account carry over funds and must clearly show how the funds will be utilized together with the new funding requirements/requests. Proof of commitment of such funding (for the purpose for which they were originally granted) must be provided. Such proof may take the form of tax invoices, employment offers/contracts, proof of expenditure, etc.

### **Research Equipment**

If research equipment is purchased using MRC grant funding, it becomes the property of the host institution and not that of the individual researcher to whom the funding was allocated. The equipment may not be removed from the host institution and/or transferred to another institution without the express written approval of the host institution and concurrence by the MRC.

### **Intellectual Property (IP)**

All intellectual property developed as a result of the SIR project shall be dealt with in accordance with the Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Funded Research and Development Act, No. 51 of 2008 and associated regulations, and the institution's IP Policy

### **Ethics**

Applicants are encouraged to obtain ethics approval for their research projects before submitting an application for funding to the MRC. MRC funding will not be released until a certificate of ethics approval for the proposed research project or a parent study within which a proposed project falls, has been received by the MRC. In the event that it is not possible to obtain ethics clearance before submission to the MRC, the MRC will process the application nevertheless, but ***awarded funding will be cancelled if the proof of ethics approval is not received by 31 May of the first year of funding.***

**Changes to Project Content and Leadership**

Leadership of a funded project may not be changed without approval from the MRC. An application for change of project leadership should be made before the change happens and should include certification by an appropriate university authority that the new nominated project leader is judged suitable. The core / fundamental nature of a funded project cannot be changed without prior written approval from the MRC and should also be certified by an authorized institutional representative.

**Acknowledgment of MRC funding**

MRC funding for the Self-initiated Research project should be duly acknowledged in all publications or publicity materials emanating from, related to or based on the project as follows: "Research reported in this [publication/press release] was supported by the South African Medical Research Council under a Self-Initiated Research Grant. The views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of the SA MRC". Any publications that do not contain this acknowledgement may not be counted as outputs of the relevant SIR grant.

Effective from January 2015



**ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT CONDITIONS FORM (Please complete)**

NAME OF GRANTHOLDER .....

TITLE OF PROJECT .....

.....

GRANTHOLDER INSTITUTION .....

YEAR OF AWARD .....

DURATION .....

RESEARCH PRIORITY AREA .....

<b>DECLARATION</b>		
I accept the abovementioned grant and agree to abide by the conditions under which the grant is made available. I further declare that this Institution will take responsibility to ensure that the conditions stated by the MRC with regard to use of and reporting on the grant will be met. The proposal has also been formally reviewed and found to comply with all specified quality and ethical requirements of this Institution.		
<b>GRANTHOLDER</b>		
Name: (Please print) .....	Signature: .....	Date: .....
<b>FINANCIAL REGISTRAR (OR OTHER AUTHORISED PERSON)</b>		
Name: (Please print) .....	Signature: .....	Date: .....
<b>INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVE (e.g. Dean or Director of Research)</b>		
Name: (Please print) .....	Signature: .....	Date: .....