

1. Preamble

The guideline covers the terms of reference for Project Research Assistantship funded under the UTAR Research Fund (UTARRF) and Research and Development (R&D) grants from external agency/institution/organisation.

2. Objectives of Project Research Assistantship

- (i) To provide researchers of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) a platform to source research assistants in research work.
- (ii) To provide opportunity for students to be involved and assist in research projects and thus enhancing their exposure and experience in research.

3. Condition:

- (i) The appointment of Project Research Assistantship is on temporary / part time status.
- (ii) A Project Research Assistant (PRA) is normally a postgraduate student registered with UTAR.

4. Operation Cost

- (i) The operation cost can be from research projects funded from the following sources:
 - (a) UTAR Research Fund (UTARRF);
 - (b) Research and development (R&D) grants from external agency/institution/organisation which fund is credited to UTAR accounts.
- (ii) The Principal Investigator of the project is fully responsible for ensuring the specification of appropriate duration and purpose of engagement and the availability of sufficient operation cost for such purpose.

5. Salary

- (i) A Project Research Assistant shall be given a monthly salary according to the recommendation from the Principal Investigator, approved amount by the University and the guidelines specified by the funding bodies, with the approval from Director of IPSR.

The following monthly salary applies for a Project Research Assistant:

- (a) with minimum Bachelors degree qualification: shall not exceed RM2,500.00 per month (not including the employer's EPF and SOCSO contributions). Employer's EPF and SOCSO contributions shall be deducted from the external R&D grant.
- (b) with minimum Masters degree qualification: shall not exceed RM3,300.00 per month (not including the employer's EPF and SOCSO contributions). Employer's EPF and SOCSO contributions shall be deducted from the external R&D grant.

Any recommendation exceeding the maximum rate will need to be approved by Director of IPSR.

- (ii) A Project Research Assistant is entitled to salary increment upon completion of one (1) year engagement, at the discretion of the Principal Investigator, with the approval from Director of IPSR.
- (iii) In the event the maximum salary payment for a Project Research Assistant of R&D grants from external agency/institution/organisation is lower than the monthly salary specified in Section 5 (i), the Principal Investigator (PI) of the project may apply for
 - (a) with minimum Bachelors degree qualification: top-up salary up to RM700.00 per month within the duration of the project or the duration as determined by the Principal Investigator;
 - (b) with minimum Masters degree qualification: top-up salary up to RM1,000.00 per month within the duration of the project or the duration as determined by the Principal Investigator.
- (iv) A Project Research Assistant is allowed to be engaged as Student Assistant for another Research Project with the following conditions:
 - (a) The Project Research Assistant must be a registered postgraduate student in UTAR.
 - (b) The combined maximum hours of engagement are 40 hours per week.
 - (c) The combined salary amount for Project Research Assistantship and Student Assistantship is as follows:
 - (1) with minimum Bachelors degree qualification: shall not exceed RM2,500.00 per month (not including the employer's EPF and SOCSO contributions). Employer's EPF and SOCSO contributions (on the PRA salary only) shall be deducted from the external R&D grant.
 - (2) with minimum Masters degree qualification: shall not exceed RM3,300.00 per month (not including the employer's EPF and SOCSO contributions). Employer's

EPF and SOCSO contributions (on the PRA salary only) shall be deducted from the external R&D grant.

- (d) The applicant is responsible to declare his/her current scheme that was awarded to him/her.
- (e) The applicant has not been awarded with the top-up salary as mentioned in Section 5 (iii).

6. Duration of Project Research Assistantship

A Project Research Assistant can be engaged for a specific term as specified in the research projects or as determined by the Principal Investigator subject to the approval of the Director of IPSR.

7. UTAR Education Foundation Tuition Fee Scholarship

- (i) UTAR Education Foundation Tuition Fee Scholarship may be given to the Project Research Assistant if he/she is registered as a student in UTAR's postgraduate programme (by research mode), subject to the following criteria:
 - (a) For Masters student: applicants must have graduated with a good Bachelor's degree with CGPA of 3.5 and above or equivalent qualification;
 - (b) For PhD student: applicants must have obtained a Master's degree and a good Bachelor's degree with CGPA of 3.5 and above or equivalent qualification.
- (ii) Terms & Conditions
 - (a) The application of this scholarship is only allowed at the commencement of study or in the first year of study.
 - (b) Covers Technical Unit Fee and Research Component Fee for the stipulated normal duration of study.
 - (c) Does not apply to Other Fees i.e. Registration fee, Activity & Service fee, Resource Centre fee, Exam & Facility fee, Caution Money, Medical & Health Insurance Premium as well as research expenditure, recurring fees, thesis examination fee, etc.
 - (d) For Conversion of Candidature from Master's to PhD Programme, does not cover Processing Fee, Conversion Fee and Other Fees i.e. Activity & Services Fee, Resource Centre Fee, Exam & Facility Fee, Dissertation/Thesis Examination Fee.
 - (e) The tuition fee scholarship award, tenable for the duration of the programme of study will be reviewed subject to the following conditions:
 - i. 'Satisfactory' progress as reported by the supervisor(s) in the Postgraduate 6-monthly progress report – scholarship continues to be in effect.

- ii. 'Non-satisfactory' or 'Non-submission' progress – scholarship ceases. Once scholarship has ceased, the Research Scholarship Holder will not be able to regain the scholarship.
- (f) The normal duration of study is:
 - i. two (2) years for Master's student;
 - ii. three (3) years for PhD student.
- (h) The tuition fee scholarship awarded will be automatically terminated at any time should the PRA withdraw from his/her programme of study.

8. **Application and Approval**

- (i) Application
 - (a) An Applicant may apply by filling up the Project Research Assistantship Application form and submit to the Principal Investigator.
 - (b) The Applicant is to indicate his eligibility for tuition fee sponsorship based on the stipulated criteria.
 - (c) Principal Investigator will consider and recommend the duration and fill up the project details.
 - (d) The duly completed form and the supporting documents shall be submitted to the Head of Department and Dean of Faculty concerned for recommendation before forwarding to Director of IPSR for approval.
 - (e) The supporting documents to be submitted are as follows:
 - One (1) certified copy of IC.
 - One (1) certified copy of SPM certificate and/or STPM certificate (which ever is applicable).
 - One (1) certified copy of qualification and transcript certificate for foundation, diploma, bachelor, master or PhD (which ever is applicable)
- (ii) Offer letter
 - (a) The offer letter for Project Research Assistantship will be issued by the Director of IPSR, with the original copy forwarded to Division of Human Resource (DHR) and a copy extended to the Principal Investigator and the Research Grant's individual file.
 - (b) The DHR will notify the applicant on the offer letter.
 - (c) The offer letter shall contain the following information:
 - Project details : title, vote number, principal investigator
 - Engagement period
 - Amount payable

- (iii) **Acceptance of Engagement**
The applicant will have to confirm the acceptance by signing the Acceptance for Project Research Assistantship letter through the DHR within two (2) weeks from the date of offer letter. DHR will then extend a copy to Director of IPSR.

9. **Extension of the Duration of Service**

- (i) The duration of the Project Research Assistant can be extended subject to the approval of the Director of IPSR based on the following:
- Satisfactory service performance
 - Sufficient allocation of research fund
- (ii) The Principal Investigator has to provide a written letter of the extension to the Director of IPSR for approval. The extension for Project Research Assistantship will be issued by the Director of IPSR, with the original copy forwarded to Division of Human Resource (DHR) and a copy extended to the Principal Investigator and the Research Grant's individual file.
- (iii) The DHR will notify the applicant on the extension of Project Research Assistantship.
- (iv) **Acceptance of Extension**
The applicant will have to confirm the acceptance by signing the Acceptance for Project Research Assistantship letter, through the DHR within two (2) weeks from the date of offer letter. DHR will then extend a copy to Director of IPSR.

10. **Termination**

- (i) The Project Research Assistantship shall be terminated at the expiry of the engagement period or any time on occurrence of any of the following:
- (a) The Project Research Assistant fails to perform his/her duties satisfactorily.
 - (b) The Project Research Assistant's services are no longer required in the project or the work assigned under the project has been completed
 - (c) The work for which the Project Research Assistant is engaged to perform has been suspended or ceased.
 - (d) Any gross misconduct, insubordination and persistent absence from work without approval on the Project Research Assistant's part.

- (ii) The Project Research Assistant can terminate his/her Project Research Assistantship by giving two (2) weeks notice in written to the principal investigator. The letter will have to be forwarded to IPSR for endorsement from Director of IPSR. The original letter will then be forwarded to DHR with a copy extended to the Research Grant's individual file.
- (iii) The Principal Investigator can terminate the Project Research Assistantship by giving two (2) weeks notice in written to the Director of IPSR. The Principal Investigator is advised to discuss with the Project Research Assistant prior to any termination.
- (iv) Upon termination, the University shall have no further obligation to the Project Research Assistant.

11. **Payment**

- (i) DHR will issue a monthly Project Research Assistant claim, to be verified by DHR and approved by Director of IPSR.
- (ii) After approval, DHR will proceed with the necessary payment process.

12. **EPF and SOCSO**

There shall be contribution to EPF and SOCSO.

13. **Annual Leave**

A Project Research Assistant shall be entitled to 12 days of annual leave per annum to be taken based on earned leave entitlement. Computation of annual leave shall be on calendar year basis. Annual leave entitlement must be utilized by the end of each contract duration, otherwise it shall be forfeited

14. **Sick Leave**

A Project Research Assistant shall be entitled to for 14 days of paid sick leave in each calendar year. All sick leaves shall be substantiated by a valid medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner or medical officer. A Project Research Assistant shall not be entitled to hospitalization leave.

15. Public Holidays

A Project Research Assistant shall be entitled to paid holidays on gazetted public holidays applicable to his/her place of work.

16. Benefits

A Project Research Assistant is not entitled to any benefits accorded to permanent staff of UTAR.

17. Personal Accident & Medical Benefits

- (i) The Project Research Assistant does not qualify for medical benefits and any other benefits accorded to permanent staff of the University.
- (ii) The Project Research Assistant is required to obtain personal accident insurance coverage with/without medical benefits. The Principal Investigator shall be responsible for ensuring this implementation.

18. Parking

The Project Research Assistant will not be accorded staff parking privilege.

19. Duties and Transfer

- (i) The Project Research Assistant is required to perform his/her assigned duties diligently.
- (ii) The Project Research Assistant may be required to serve the faculty in lab demonstration or administrative duties with the following conditions:
 - Maximum of eight (8) hours weekly.
 - The tasks are to be assigned by faculty with the consent from the supervisor.
 - Not permitted to assist in marking and/or keying in marks of examinations scripts, tutorial assignments and lab reports.
- (iii) The University reserves the right to transfer, relocate, second or reassign the Project Research Assistant to another department or faculty within the University.

20. Rules and Regulations

The Project Research Assistant is required to comply with the University's policies, rules and regulations (including any codes of conduct) currently in force and implemented from time to time. Failure to do so, the Project Research Assistant may be subjected to disciplinary actions by the University at the University's absolute discretion.

21. Occupational Safety and Health Policy

The Project Research Assistant is required to comply with the relevant provision of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994:

- (i) Take reasonable safety and health measure for himself and others.
- (ii) Cooperate with his superior or others in any duties assigned.
- (iii) Use and wear at all times, any protective equipment or clothing provided by the University.
- (iv) Comply with any instruction or measure on occupational safety and health instituted by the University.

22. Confidentiality

The Project Research Assistant must keep in strict confidence all commercial and technical information in whatever form acquired, directly or indirectly from UTAR or the project in connection to his/her engagement with UTAR, hereinafter called 'Confidential Information' for any purpose other than those contemplated in your engagement. Further, the Project Research Assistant shall not disclose any Confidential Information to any third party for any purpose without the prior written consent of UTAR.

23. Conflict of interest

Unless expressly agreed to by UTAR in advance, the Project Research Assistant shall not seek out, embark upon or be engaged in any other business industry, enterprise or appointment of any kind.

24. Proprietary Rights

- (i) UTAR shall have the sole and exclusive right to all intellectual property rights that you gained and/or acquire while performing your duties during the engagement. The intellectual properties shall include discoveries, innovations and inventions made and stored physically or electronically such as printed materials, computer software, presentation materials, etc.

- (ii) UTAR shall have the right to use these intellectual properties at its discretion in whatever form, manner or purpose.
- (iii) The Project Research Assistant shall not use these intellectual properties for any purpose other than for serving UTAR and shall not use them for their own gain or for any other employer without the prior authorization in writing from UTAR.

25. **Return of University Property**

The Project Research Assistant who has been issued with University properties shall return such items to the Principal Investigator concerned at the end of every day.

26. **Prohibition of Press Statement, Speeches and Comments**

The Project Research Assistant is prohibited from making any press or public statements and from circulating any statements pertaining to the University or his duties. He/she should not publish, broadcast or in any lecture or tutorial or speech, comment on anything relating to the University or his duties.

27. **Review of Rules and Regulations**

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman at its sole and absolute discretion may vary, modify, add, delete or amend any of the above rules and regulations of the Project Research Assistantship guideline.