



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Research Policy

<i>Policy No. ORGS/005-2015</i>	
POLICY ON MECHANISM FOR CHANGE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR FOR ON-GOING RESEARCH PROJECT	
<i>Last updated :</i> January 15, 2008	<i>Revised with feedback from University Research Council</i> January 16, 2014
<i>Contact Office:</i> Office of the Dean of Research & Graduate Studies	<i>This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies of the Aga Khan University:</i> Authorship, Research Misconduct, Publications and Intellectual Property Rights policies of the Aga Khan University
<i>Approving Authority:</i>	University Research Council: January 16, 2014
<i>Endorsed by</i>	Academic Council: May 26, 2016

Scope: This policy applies to all Aga Khan University faculty and staff involved as Principal Investigator (PI) on sponsored research projects.

Statement: It is the policy of the University that the PI is responsible for initiating notification of any change in his/her status and all notifications must be routed to the Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) for review and action.

Purpose: To establish a policy and best practices for change of PI on an on-going sponsored research project and to permit AKU to fulfill its obligations to the sponsor and for the responsible conduct of research.

Procedures: Research grants are awarded to the University, rather than to individuals. When a Principal investigator (PI) leaves or plans to leave Aga Khan University (AKU), after review of the following options will (a) the project be terminated and assess consequence there off, e.g. returning funds, etc.; (b) the project be transferred to another university/institution to which the PI is planning to join; or (c) a PI from existing faculty of AKU be considered. AKU's prime interest is to see that all research projects are completed. The following mechanism will be used for changing the PI on an internally or externally funded research grant.

Conditions under which policy would be applicable and implemented:

- a) PI takes a leave of absence for more than 3 months (e.g. sabbatical or sick).
- b) PI intends to leave the University.
- c) Untimely death, serious illness, or injury renders the PI unable to continue work on the project.

Definitions

Extramural grant: Any project funded by an external funding agency.

Intramural grant: Any project funded by the Aga Khan University.

Office of Sponsored Research: Office that provides primary administrative support for establishing sponsored research and reports to the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies (DRGS).

Principal Investigator: A full-time faculty or staff of the Aga Khan University who is primarily responsible for the design, execution, management and reporting of a research project (designated by the grantee and approved by the sponsoring body) and who will be involved in the project in a significant manner.

Sponsor: A person or organization that pays for the cost of an activity in a research study.

University: The Aga Khan University or The Aga Khan University Hospital.

Process

PI has to provide a written letter of notification to the OSR through his/her department Chair/Director/Dean. The letter should explain the reason for requesting a change of PI including a plan of how the research project will be completed. The letter should include certification statement from the substitute PI (*See section E*). The OSR will investigate the sponsor's requirement for the specific situation and negotiate appropriate changes with the sponsor. Specific cases are discussed in the following sections.

A. INTRAMURAL GRANTS

1. A grant that has been approved by the University Research Council (URC) but not yet activated will require approval from URC for change of PI. URC will determine if the **substitute PI is qualified** and has the experience and interest to complete the research project.

2. If the PI is unable to continue to work on a current funded project with an activated grant, which has only run for less than a quarter of its duration, **approval has to be obtained from the URC** to continue with the project under a new PI.
3. If the PI goes on a short-term leave of absence of up to one quarter of the total grant period, but not exceeding three months – then, **no replacement is required**. However, it is the PI's responsibility to inform the departmental Chair/Director or Dean and the OSR of his/her temporary absence so that the progress of the project can be monitored.
4. Ideally, the project should be completed before the PI goes on long-term leave of absence exceeding three months (e.g. sabbatical/professional/personal/medical leave). Otherwise, the PI should formally write to the departmental Chair/Director or Dean, with a copy to the OSR, informing of his/her long absence and with a request to **appoint an interim PI**.
5. If the PI leaves the University, department Chair/Director/Dean upon receiving the PI's resignation, should approach the Grants & Contracts Office and OSR to check the status of the research project(s) under the PI. If the resignation letter accompanies a formal request of transferring the PI's status to another colleague then all requirements for change of PI should be met. In case there is no substitute person available to take over as PI, the departmental Chair in consultation with the DRGS may **terminate the project**.
6. The above process is applicable to all projects funded by the Aga Khan University (e.g. Seed grants, etc.)

B. EXTRAMURAL GRANTS

1. The department Chair/Director or Dean will endorse the request for change of PI to the OSR explaining the reasons for changing the PI and include a work profile and relevant research expertise of the substitute PI and written consent of his/her willingness to devote the required time to the project. After DRGS considers the change, the OSR and PI will work with the Sponsor to formalize the change.

The Sponsor's guidelines specific to the transfer of a project to a new PI should be followed. No changeover or modification in the status of PI shall be implemented without the written authorisation of the Sponsor.

Once the approval from the Sponsor is received, a copy of the same must be sent to the OSR and the Grants & Contract Office at AKU.

The new PI should notify in writing to the University's appropriate compliance committees (e.g. Ethical Review Committee, Ethics Committee for Animal Care & Use or Institutional Biosafety Committee) regarding the change in the PI's status with a copy to the departmental Head/Director and OSR.

2. If the PI wants to transfer the research grant to another institution on which he/she is currently working, the OSR with guidance from the Dean of Research & Graduate Studies will assess each case and may:

- Favorably consider the PI's request, provided the Sponsor has allowed it; or
- Allow the PI to continue to work on the project on a part-time or honorary basis if relevant faculty within AKU is not willing to undertake the project; or
- In case the PI is allowed to transfer the project to his/her new institution, he/she may be allowed to take his/her share of the data if approved by department Chair/Director or Dean. However, AKU does not allow the transfer of patient related data or human biomaterial (e.g. tissue, or blood sample, etc).
- In consultation with the OSR, department Chair/Director and Dean may choose to terminate a project if it cannot be transferred to the institution where the PI is planning to join; if there is no suitable and willing substitute PI; or for any other reasons whatsoever.

C. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DEPARTMENTAL CHAIR

The role of the departmental Chair or Director of an institute is to ensure that the project would continue under the leadership of the new PI and the new PI would have sufficient time to carry out the assigned tasks. In case where the proposed PI is from another department, similar assurances will be required from the concerned departmental Chair/Director. If University and Sponsor have agreed mutually, the departmental Chair/Director or his/her designate will liaise the transfer of research data, if the PI makes such a request.

E. SUBSTITUTE PI CERTIFICATION: [Certification statement from the substitute PI]

“I am not debarred, suspended, or proposed for debarment or suspension by any funding agency, and I agree to accept the role of PI and the responsibility for the scientific conduct and financial oversight of the project entitled, (insert title of project). I agree to provide all reports required by the Sponsor according to the specified timelines.”

Provide signatures of original PI as well as the substitute PI at the bottom of the letter/certification.

APPENDIX

Specimen Letter for Change of Principal Investigator (amend as appropriate) (Must be printed on University letterhead)

Date

Name of contact person

SPONSOR

Address line 1

Address line 2

Re: Nomination of Change of Principal Investigator for
Grant #XXX12345, "Title of grant"

Dear [Name of contact person]

Due to [*give reason from (a), (b) or (c) – page 2*], we are requesting the appointment of Dr. [*New PI*] as principal investigator for the continuation of the project, "Title of Grant."

Dr. [*New PI*] worked with Dr. [*Original PI*] on this project from its inception and has agreed to complete the work and submit final report. A copy of Dr. [*New PI's*] biosketch is enclosed for your review.

If you need additional information about Dr. [*New PI*] or the project, please let us know. We appreciate your consideration of this request to appoint Dr. New PI as PI and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Institutional Signing Official

Department Head/Director

Dr. [Original PI]

Enclosure: Biosketch of Dr. New PI
Acceptance letter of Dr. New PI

cc: Office of Sponsored Research, Aga Khan University