

Research collaboration: Guidelines and Good Practices with Lifestyle and Health Research Centre

August
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Lifestyle and Health Research Center

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This guideline highlights the research acceptance policy at the Health Sciences Research Center's (HSRC) facilities in compliance with the available infrastructure, resources and scientific and/ or technical staff. Since all offered services commonly include multidisciplinary sciences and different research backgrounds, establishing collaborations with researchers across Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU) or with external organizations should contribute in advancing the quality of research at the center. Moreover, due to the increased number of research partners, it is important to follow professional practice and guideline in joint collaborations to avoid any disruptions for the research process and adhere to efficient operations.

When starting a research project, a written document* between all investigators must be in place and approved by the designated staff from the HSRC. This agreement should include the responsibility for each participant in the project combined with an initial understanding of the prospective authorship roles and authors' order. Furthermore, the project's timeline must be reasonably established highlighting the expected beginning and ending dates of the project and continuously reviewed (e.g., quarterly per year) by the research's principal investigator (PI). If any unexpected circumstances are encountered before and/ or during an ongoing project, the PI is obligated to justify the issue in a written report submitted to the designated HSRC staff. Each project's PI is assigned to protect the rights of the performed research (owned by the HSRC), therefore any related communication and/ or use of the projects' outcomes (conference posters, presentations and journal publications) should be granted after obtaining a written acknowledgment from the project's PI. Finally, it is important for all members involved in a research project under the HSRC to maintain scientific integrity such as IRB, research ethical practice and plagiarism, hence generated research is subjected to data verification.

* A written agreement could be a hard version or an electronic soft version document.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU): is a public women's university located in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. It is the largest women's university in the world.

2.2 King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz University Hospital (KAAUH): is a vital part of Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, where exceptional healthcare is combined with the best learning experience.

2.3 Health Science Research Center (HSRC): is a crucial part of Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University that enables applied scientific innovation in the fields of health science research, by creating an integrated research environment, stimulating and keeping pace with the development of scientific research on the health of women, adolescents and children.

2.4 Lifestyle and Health Research Center (LHRC): is a part of the Health Science Research Center at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University. It is focusing exclusively on lifestyle behaviors and health, with emphasis on children, adolescents and women's health.

2.5 Collaboration: is a joint written agreement regulating an execution of a research project by LHRC staff in collaboration with researchers from PNU/KAAUH or an external local institution.

2.6 Written agreement: A document that specifies exactly what the roles and contributions of each member of the research team will be, including the research collaborator, and provides a mechanism for decision making for major issues such as authorship arrangement and the distribution of the research tasks throughout the research stages.

3.0 POLICY AND GUIDELINES

3.1 A research collaboration in this context is defined as a joint agreement regulating a project that is fully or partially conducted by the HSRC staff in collaboration with researchers from PNU/KAAUH or an external institution (submit applicable form for internal or external collaborations). The HSRC

welcomes research collaborations from interested and qualified researchers in which each collaborator must submit a letter of interest accompanied by a C.V. to the relevant section to be reviewed along with the research proposal. The criteria for accepting a collaborator applicant are based on opportunities for effective synergy among the collaborating researchers or research group, the collaborator's research skills and expertise and the added value to the research team, the novelty and viability of the research proposal, the potential research impact of the proposal and the availability of the resources within the center. It is essential that any collaborator, intends to join the research team in the HSRC, have a written document signed by the key investigators and approved by the HSRC before embarking on a research project that is conducted within the center. This agreement must indicate the roles of each member of the research team, including the research collaborators, and provides a mechanism for decision making for major matters such as authorship arrangement and the distribution of the research process throughout the research stages. The criteria for accepting the applicant for collaboration are based on opportunities for effective synergy among the collaborating researchers or research group, the collaborator's research skills and expertise that are going to add values to the research team, the novelty and viability of the research proposal, the potential research impact of the proposal and the availability of the resources within the LHRC.

3.2 Types of research collaboration within the HSRC:

- 1- Joining an ongoing research project that is already conceptualized and about to be executed by the HSRC members, complete form (RC-RD-A).
- 2- A collaborating researcher with a clear concept and methodology for a particular novel project that can be conducted within the HSRC and seeks to collaborate with the relevant staff within the center in executing the project, complete form (RC-RD-B).

- 3- A collaborating researcher would like to work on data that are already collected by the HSRC with the potential of further analysis and publication, complete form (RC-RD-C).
- 4- A collaborator who is a graduate student (subject to further justification by the center) and would like to utilize the research expertise and/or facilities of the HSRC in conducting his/her Master or Doctoral proposal and/ or project, complete form (RC-RD-D).
- 5- A research collaborator who would like to utilize HSRC facilities in conducting their research proposal, complete form (RC-RD-E).

3.3 An application request for a research collaboration should undergo a formal review by the HSRC scientific committee and a decision will be made within a maximum period of four weeks. Upon approving the application, the collaborator must provide an official letter from the respective department in his/her institution acknowledging such collaboration. For each type of research collaboration from (indicated above), **a conflict of interest disclosure form must be completed and attached**. In addition, the research collaborator is anticipated to adhere to the following regulations:

- The research must meet the mission and objectives of the HSRC.
- The material and human resources required for the project must be available at the HSRC, provided by the collaborating researcher or through HSRC prospective grants.
- Researchers are expected to abide to the general health and safety rules in the HSRC's laboratories, specified to each section's "Safety Management Policies and Procedures" that is published by the safety and quality office.
- All research collaborators are expected to comply with established ethical standards and good practice when conducting and reporting their research, including an approval of the research protocol from the Institutional Review

Board (IRB) at PNU or other established institution. Collaborators are advised to consult the “Guidelines for Conducting Research and Reporting Results” document that is published by the HSRC.

- All research materials produced within the HSRC authority must be consistent and in compliance with ethical and legal requirements of the center and PNU. HSRC discourages presenting or publishing its research findings in predatory conferences or journals.
- Collaborating researchers intending to engage in collaborative research projects at the HSRC must disclose any conflicts of interest.
- All collaborators engaging in research conducted at the HSRC must meet and adhere to the requirements and policies pertaining to health and work safety.
- The HSRC is the one who is responsible for archiving the research data, laboratory books or field data collection sheets, whether in hard copy or stored in a computer, an iPad, a machine or an instrument belonging to the center. All data become the property of the HSRC.
- Sharing and reusing of the research data can be granted by the HSRC upon reasonable request. However, in some cases, the release of such data may be judiciously delayed to enable protection of any intellectual property.
- Any research products (presentations, abstracts and full articles) as a result of research conducted in the HSRC, must clearly ensure that the credit and attribution are made to the HSRC (i.e., this research was conducted in the HSRC at the General Department of Health Affairs, PNU).
- The research project team is required to submit progress reports for monitoring purpose each quarter as well as final report at the completion of the research project.
- Graduate students who plan to do their research in the HSRC must ensure undergoing fair amount of training and familiarization on the use of the equipment and the laboratory safety procedures by members of the HSRC staff before starting the data collection.

- The collaborating graduate student must acknowledge the assistance of the HSRC in all reports, thesis or otherwise published materials and any form of media communication that arises from the research conducted in the HSRC.
- If the research collaborator is being a leading investigator for a research conducted within the HSRC or using resources or facility provided by the HSRC, he/she must inform the HSRC as soon as possible of any significant divergence from the original aims and directions of the research project or any event or circumstance that is likely to influence the overall delivery of the research project or study.
- Unless stated otherwise, the ownership of intellectual property rights and responsibility for its identification and management is going to be the HSRC and PNU.
- HSRC has the right to designate the public spokesperson for the collaborated research project if the findings of that research end up attracting media attention.
- Even with proper guidelines and best practices in place, conflicts can still occur between research collaborators during the course of research project. When dealing with disagreements, a collaborator should express his/her own point of view clearly and pleasantly, yet always listen respectfully to the opinions of the other members of the research team. The principal investigators should, in a friendly, non-confrontational way, try to help the collaborator identify and solve the problems or deals with whatever barriers keeping the collaboration unsuccessful. If major disputes arise and cannot be resolved by the principal investigator (or it involves the principal investigator with the collaborators), it may be time to get a third party involved; in this case, may be the director of research or the executive director of the HSRC. The decision of the director of research or the executive director of the HSRC is final.
- The HSRC reserves the right to terminate the research project (or study) should the collaborator places the HSRC reputation into disrepute.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 All researchers/investigators in HSRC will be responsible for the implementation of this APP.

APPENDECIES

5.1 Research Collaboration Agreement Form (RC-A-1)

5.2 Research Collaboration Agreement Form (RC-B-1)

5.3 Research Collaboration Agreement Form (RC-C-1)

5.4 Research Collaboration Agreement Form (RC-D-1)

6.0 APPROVALS

TITLE:	RESEARCH COLLABORATION: GUIDELINES AND GOOD PRACTICES WITH HEALTH RESEARCH CENTRE		
VERSION	HEALTH RESEARCH CENTRE		
ORIGINATING DEPT/UNIT:	LIFESTYLE AND HEALTH RESEARCH CENTRE		
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